

membership of any other State in UNESCO. On behalf of Palestine and the Palestinian people, history, heritage, present and future, which we are charting together today, I urge you individually and State by State to think carefully and assume your responsibility and make justice the basis of your vote, and that you give careful consideration to this vote today and its implications for tomorrow, and to the historic responsibility we are assuming at this precise moment to remove albeit a small part of the historic oppression committed against the Palestinian people. We ask for your vote today in order to give hope and to consolidate the values of equality, justice and right. I ask you to vote in favour of Palestine; a vote for Palestine is a vote in favour of right, justice and the future. Thank you.

49. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency (*applause*). Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we would now like to continue our session. This was our last speaker for this morning. We thus conclude this year's national statements. I wish to thank you very much for your inspiring remarks, observations and suggestions. The Director-General and her staff have been listening closely and taking good note of your comments. Madam Bokova will deliver her reply this afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to inform you that I have requested a live webcast of the next part of this meeting.

Item 9.1: Request for the admission of Palestine

Point 9.1: Demande d'admission de la Palestine

Punto 9.1: Solicitud de admisión de Palestina

Пункт 9.1: Просьба о приеме Палестины

البند ٩, ١: طلب انضمام فلسطين إلى عضوية اليونسكو

项目 9.1: 要求接纳巴勒斯坦加入教科文组织

50. **The President:**

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we will examine item 9.1, "Request for the admission of Palestine to UNESCO". This item has been placed on the agenda in conformity with Resolution 74 adopted by the General Conference at its 35th session and is the subject of the Executive Board's recommendation at its 187th session as required in the Constitution in Article II. Now, I would like to give the floor to the Chair of the Executive Board. Your Excellency, Ms Mitrofanova, the floor is yours.

51. **Ms Mitrofanova** (Russian Federation), Chair of the Executive Board:

Thank you very much. Madam President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, pursuant to 182 EX/Decision 52, the Executive Board, at its 187th session, considered the request for the admission of Palestine to UNESCO. Following a vote taken by roll-call, with forty votes in favour, four votes against and fourteen abstentions, the Executive Board adopted 187 EX/Decision 40, by which it recommends that the General Conference admit Palestine as a Member of UNESCO. Madam President, on behalf of the Executive Board and in conformity with Article II, paragraph 2 and Article V.B, paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Constitution of our Organization, may I therefore recommend that the General Conference adopt the text of the aforementioned Board decision. Thank you very much.

52. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. According to Article II, a two-thirds majority vote of the General Conference is required for admission to membership of the Organization. Ladies and gentlemen, you have in front of you document 36 C/PLEN/DR.1 submitted on this item by 43 Member States and co-sponsored by another 11 Member States. It is my understanding that we may proceed to a vote unless I see any objections. I see that Canada wishes to take the floor. Canada, the floor is yours, Excellency.

53. **M. Bachand** (Canada) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. J'aimerais demander que nous votions par appel nominal. Merci.

54. **The President:**

Does anybody wish to second that? Netherlands, the floor is yours, Sir.

55. **Netherlands:**

Thank you, Madam President. My delegation seconds the proposal of Canada.

56. **The President:**

Ladies and gentlemen, according to Rule 88 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, vote by roll-call shall be taken if it is requested by not less than two Members. Further to the request of the representatives of Canada and the Netherlands, the General Conference will now proceed to vote by roll-call. Let me remind you that, according to Rule 85, paragraph 1(a) of the Rules of Procedure, the decision requires a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting. The Secretary will now call on each Member State alphabetically. The Member called upon shall vote on whether it is in favour of adopting the draft resolution contained in document 36 C/PLEN/DR.1. Those in favour should say Yes. Those against, simply, No. Members can, of course, also abstain. Mr Secretary, you may proceed with the roll-call.

57. **A vote by roll-call is taken. The results are as follows:**

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, France,

Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe;

Against: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, Palau, Panama, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sweden, United States of America, Vanuatu;

Abstention: Albania, Andorra, Bahamas, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Georgia, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zambia;

Voting rights suspended: Antigua and Barbuda, Central African Republic, Comoros, Dominica, Guinea-Bissau, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone;

Absent: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guyana, Madagascar, Maldives, Mongolia, Niue, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan.

58. **Le Secrétaire:**
Le vote est terminé.

59. **The President:**
Ladies and gentlemen, the vote is now finished and the Secretariat is counting the votes. While we are waiting for the results, let me remind you again that, according to Rule 85, paragraph 1(a) of the Rules of Procedure, the decision that has been just voted requires a two-thirds majority of the Member States present and voting.

The meeting is suspended while the votes are counted.

60. **The President:**
Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the votes have now been counted. Here is the result: number of Members entitled to vote: one hundred and eighty-five; number of Members present and voting: one hundred and seventy-three; number of abstentions: 52; majority required: 81; votes in favour: 107 (*applause*); votes against: 14. Ladies and gentlemen, the General Conference has voted to **adopt** the draft resolution and **decided** to admit Palestine as a Member of UNESCO. (*Applause*) Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me congratulate Palestine on behalf of the General Conference for its admission to membership of UNESCO.

Statements in explanation of vote

Déclarations en explication du vote

Declaraciones en explicación de voto

Заявления по мотивам голосования

بيانات مدلى بها في إطار تعليل التصويت

对投票的解释性发言

61. **The President:**
Let me share with you just a few thoughts as the President of the General Conference. We are here in the home of cultural diplomacy. I myself see our world as a global cultural space, a multilayered treasure. The process of inspiration followed by the creativity of people working together is to me the most beautiful aspect of this varied cultural space and if we truly believe that diversity in thoughts, ideas and cultures is a source of inspiration and not a burden, we can make the world together a better place. I would like to remind everybody that the role of Members of UNESCO is to endeavour to overcome existing divisions and differences, to build a better future for our children, a future of peace and prosperity. And now we come to the statements in explanation of vote. Ladies and gentlemen, Member States who now wish to do so may request the floor to make a statement or explain their vote. Each speaker will have two minutes. After that, I will give the floor to the representative of Palestine and, at the very end, I will ask the Director-General to make her statement. Before I give you the floor, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to make an appeal to all speakers to respect this solemn moment, as well as UNESCO as the house of culture and dialogue. I would like to give the floor to the United States of America.

62.1 **Mr Killion** (United States of America):

Thank you, Madam President. The United States has voted against Resolution 9.1 because we cannot accept Palestine's premature admission as a full Member to a United Nations specialized agency such as UNESCO. No nation is more committed to the quest for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians than the American people. As President Obama said in May, "A lasting peace will involve two States for two peoples; Israel as a Jewish State and the homeland for the Jewish people, and the State of Palestine as the homeland for the Palestinian people; each State enjoying self-determination, mutual recognition, and peace." **The United States has been very clear about the need for a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but the only path to the Palestinian State that we all seek is through direct**

negotiations. There are no shortcuts, and we believe efforts such as the one we have witnessed today are counterproductive.

62.2 Madam President, President Obama has made strong multilateral engagement across the United Nations system – including at UNESCO – a top priority and a core aspect of United States foreign policy. We are here in UNESCO today because the contributions it continues to make – including its mission of building peace; promoting education, culture and science; and its praiseworthy focus on Africa and on women and girls – are so very important to the United States. However, we recognize that this action today complicates our ability to support UNESCO's programmes; there are other ways of promoting the cause of the Palestinian people that would not have involved seeking premature membership of UNESCO. We sincerely regret that the strenuous and well-intentioned efforts of many delegations to avoid this result fell short.

62.3 Madam President, let there be no doubt, the United States remains deeply committed to UNESCO and its noble mission to build peace in the minds of men and women. Despite the challenges ahead, we pledge to continue our efforts to find ways to support and strengthen the important work of this Organization. Thank you, Madam President.

63. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. And now I would like to give the floor to India. Your Excellency, the floor is yours.

64. **Mr Oberoi (India):**

Thank you, Madam President. I speak with a sense of history, with a sense of responsibility and a sense of constructive anticipation. I speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the affirmative and significant vote in favour of Palestine and welcomes Palestine to the UNESCO family. The Group believes that this will strengthen the inclusiveness of UNESCO and enhance its role as a platform for discussion and dialogue, as a place where ideas and thoughts mingle in a common and just cause in the promotion and furtherance of peace. Thank you, Madam President.

65. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. I give the floor to Mexico.

66. **Sr. de Icaza (México):**

Gracias, señora Presidenta. La comunidad internacional ha realizado ingentes esfuerzos para lograr una paz duradera en el Medio Oriente que atienda todos los aspectos del conflicto entre palestinos e israelíes. Las Naciones Unidas, los países que tienen responsabilidades en la zona y los Estados de la región se han involucrado decididamente en esta compleja tarea. A pesar de ello, el conflicto perdura y no se han resuelto los temas que permitirían ponerle fin de manera duradera e integral y que conduzcan a la creación de un Estado palestino soberano e independiente, política y económicamente viable que conviva con Israel en paz, dentro de fronteras seguras e internacionalmente reconocidas. Este objetivo siempre ha sido compartido e impulsado por México y continuaremos respaldando todas las iniciativas que conduzcan hacia esta solución porque creemos firmemente que es la única forma de modificar sustancialmente las condiciones de vida tanto de los palestinos como de los israelíes. No debe haber duda del pleno apoyo de México a la causa palestina y a las legítimas aspiraciones de su pueblo. La solicitud palestina que acabamos de considerar debe apreciarse desde la perspectiva más amplia de otros procesos en curso dentro y fuera de las Naciones Unidas. En este preciso momento, los miembros del Consejo de Seguridad están considerando la solicitud de ingreso de Palestina a las Naciones Unidas, en seguimiento de una iniciativa que fue planteada a finales de septiembre. Al mismo tiempo, los miembros del Cuarteto están trabajando con ambas partes para que en un plazo de tres meses presenten propuestas concretas. Si bien comprendemos las razones que animan la solicitud de ingreso de Palestina a la UNESCO, mi delegación estima que hubiera sido preferible dar prioridad a estos procesos antes de determinar la conveniencia de presentar este proyecto de resolución. **En opinión de México, la UNESCO no es el foro competente para alcanzar la solución duradera integral a la que todos aspiramos. Más aún, consideramos que la decisión adoptada hoy podría perturbar las otras iniciativas en curso que serán determinadas para resolver de una vez por todas este largo conflicto. Por estas razones, México ha tomado la decisión de abstenerse en la votación del proyecto de resolución.** Muchas gracias.

(66) **Mr de Icaza (Mexico) (translation from the Spanish):**

Thank you Madam President. The international community has made enormous efforts to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East, taking into account all the aspects of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. The United Nations, the countries that have responsibilities in the region and the States of the region have committed themselves fully to this complicated task. Despite all this, the conflict persists and the themes that could attain a comprehensive and lasting solution have not been resolved. These themes would lead to the creation of a sovereign and independent, politically and economically viable Palestinian State, living in peace with Israel within safe and internationally recognized borders. This goal has always been shared and promoted by Mexico and we will continue to support all initiatives leading to this solution as we firmly believe that this is the only way to substantially change the living conditions of Palestinians and Israelis alike. There should be no doubt that Mexico fully supports the Palestinian cause and the legitimate aspirations of the people. The Palestinian request we have just considered should be understood from the wider perspective of other processes under way inside and outside the United Nations. In this precise moment, Security Council members are debating Palestine's request to join the United Nations following an initiative introduced at the end of September. At the same time, members of the Quartet are working with both parties so that in three months' time, concrete proposals can be made. Although we understand the reasons behind Palestine's request to join UNESCO, my delegation considers that it would have been preferable to give priority to those processes before determining the advantages of submitting this draft resolution. In Mexico's opinion, UNESCO is not a competent forum in which to attain the comprehensive and lasting solution that we all desire. Moreover, we believe that the decision adopted today could disrupt other initiatives that are being carried out to resolve this long-term conflict once and for all. Consequently, Mexico decided to abstain from voting on the draft resolution. Thank you very much.

67. **The President:**

Thank you very much. And now I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Israel.

68. **Mr Barkan (Israel):**

Thank you very much. Madam President, Madam Director-General, Madam Chair of the Executive Board, distinguished delegates, this resolution of the General Conference is a tragedy for the idea of UNESCO and a great disservice to international law and to chances for peace. In UNESCO, we have twice expressed our severe disagreement with its content, most recently in the speech of Minister Sa'ar here last Thursday. UNESCO deals in science, not science fiction. However, a large number of States, though most emphatically less than two thirds of the Member States of this Organization, have adopted a science fiction version of reality **by admitting a non-existent State** to the science Organization. We are grateful to those who wisely supported reality and would not be dragged into this fiction. The supporters forced on UNESCO a political subject, outside its competence, refusing to render the United Nations the respect it deserves by waiting, not a very long time, for its decision. With eyes wide open, they are forcing a drastic cut in the contributions to the Organization. This cut will severely curtail its positive work and may also lead to severe politicization of its programmes, tarnishing its image for many years to come. It is a sad day for any organization when it decides to disconnect itself from reality. It sows the seeds for its potential implosion. That is, unfortunately, what has happened here today. Thank you.

69. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to Sweden.

70. **Mr Ahnlid (Sweden):**

Thank you Madam President. I would like to make the following explanation of our vote on the resolution before us today. Sweden completely understands the aspiration of Palestine to become a Member of UNESCO. Sweden has long been deeply committed to the international efforts towards achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East and the two-State solution with an independent, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel. We believe that such a solution can only be reached through negotiations. We therefore strongly welcome the Quartet's result-oriented approach with clear expectations of concrete proposals and timelines for this endeavour. Sweden has long been a major partner of Palestinian State-building and provider of assistance to the Palestinian people. We congratulate Palestine that the ad hoc liaison committee's assessment is that the Palestinian institutions are above the threshold of a functioning State. Sweden takes note of the United Nations application which is now before the Security Council. **Our vote on the draft resolution today has to do with its timing, not its substance.** It should be viewed from the perspective of the urgency we attach to reaching a two-State solution within the timeframe set by the Quartet. It does not in any way prejudice the position that Sweden might take if the question of the status of Palestine is brought before the United Nations General Assembly. Thank you, Madam President.

71. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Pakistan.

72. **Ms Inayatullah (Pakistan):**

For over six decades Palestinians have proven to be superb human beings but have regrettably remained without their rights. Today I shall humbly laugh; this inexcusable wrong has been righted. Today they stand proud in the committee of nations, and UNESCO, in exercise of its mandate, has enabled this to happen. Madam President, I hasten to add that Palestine's admission as a Member State places a profound responsibility on all three organs of UNESCO and I refer to our Constitution; I refer to creating peace in the minds of men and women in Palestine and Israel. I invite and request UNESCO's leadership, three magnificent women, to immediately put in place an initiative with and through youth, taking them up on their Youth Forum Declaration. This is an idea whose time has come. Madam President, for peace in the world, the momentum of today's momentous decision must be sustained. Common sights of a Palestine of defaced mosques, defaced schools, burnt hamlets, death and destruction must, from today, be a thing of the past. Democracy and majority rule has prevailed; the statehood bid of President Mahmoud Abbas has been realized, the honour of Palestinians stands vindicated and Pakistan dedicates the success of which it is proud to be a part to the inimitable hero, the one and only Yasser Arafat. We do so in the name of our late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who used his intellect and political skills and recognized international standing as an untiring advocate of the just cause of the Palestinians for their homeland. Thank you.

73. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement. I give the floor to the Russian Federation.

74.1 **Г-н Гатиллов (Российская Федерация):**

Благодарю вас. Российская позиция в вопросе о приеме Палестины в члены ЮНЕСКО всегда была последовательной и прагматичной. Мы считаем, что рассмотрение палестинской заявки должно было проходить без излишней политизации и искусственного затягивания. Что касается принципиальной позиции России в отношении признания Палестинского государства, то она хорошо известна. Хотели бы вновь напомнить, что государство Палестина мы признали уже более двадцати лет назад и с 1990 г. в Москве функционирует его посольство. С удовлетворением отмечаем, что палестинские представители твердо исходят из того, что их обращение в ООН и другие международные структуры не является альтернативой достижению переговорного решения с Израилем. Это принципиальный момент, поскольку только через переговоры можно обеспечить создание полноценного территориально целостного Палестинского государства, которое будет жить в безопасности и мире бок о бок с Израилем и другими странами региона. На это, собственно, и направлено содержание министерского заявления квартета, принятого 23 сентября этого года в Нью-Йорке.

74.2 В целом оздоровление ситуации на Ближнем Востоке могло бы существенно способствовать продвижению процесса переговоров по ближневосточному урегулированию, основные параметры которого определены и зафиксированы и в резолюциях Совета Безопасности ООН, и в Мадридских принципах, и в Арабской мирной инициативе. Этими подходами мы руководствуемся и в Нью-Йорке при рассмотрении этого вопроса Организацией Объединенных Наций. Благодарю вас.

(74.1) **Mr Gatilov** (Russian Federation) (*translation from the Russian*):

Thank you. The position of the Russian Federation on the admission of Palestine as a member of UNESCO has always been consistent and pragmatic. We consider that examination of the Palestinian claim should have taken place without unnecessary politicization and artificial delay. As regards Russia's position of principle concerning recognition of the Palestinian State, it is very well known. We should like to recall, once more, that we recognized the State of Palestine more than 20 years ago, and its embassy has been operational in Moscow since 1990. It is with satisfaction that we note that the Palestinian representatives are clearly proceeding on the assumption that their approach to the United Nations and other international structures is not an alternative to the achievement of a negotiated settlement with Israel. This is crucial, as only negotiations can ensure the establishment of a Palestinian State with full territorial integrity, which would live in security and peace side by side with Israel and the other countries in the region. This is, specifically, the thrust of the ministerial statement of the Middle East Quartet adopted on 23 September 2011 in New York.

(74.2) On the whole, the improvement of the situation in the Middle East could have essentially contributed to the promotion of the negotiating process on a Middle East settlement, whose basic parameters are defined and set in resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, the Madrid Principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. We will be guided by these approaches in New York as well on consideration of this issue by the United Nations. Thank you.

75. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I would like to give the floor now to Egypt.

٧٦,١ السيد رمضان (مصر):

السيدة الرئيسة، اسمحي لي في البداية أن أتقدم، بالنيابة عن المجموعة العربية، بالتهنئة إلى المؤتمر العام لليونسكو وإلى المنظمة على هذا القرار الهام والعاقل والتاريخي الذي يؤكد أنّ الدول الأعضاء في المنظمة، تقف في الجانب الصحيح للتاريخ. إنّ اعتماد القرار لا يثبت فقط حيادية المنظمة وإعلاءها للمبادئ السامية التي قامت وتقوم عليها، بل يؤكد أيضاً احترام اليونسكو لقواعد المشاركة السياسية وللديمقراطية في اتخاذ القرار على المستوى الدولي، الأمر الذي يتطلب منا جميعاً أن ننظر إلى المستقبل وأن نمضي قدماً في الاضطلاع بمسؤولياتنا المشتركة تجاه المنظمة وأهدافها دون تسييس. واسمحي لي الآن يا حضرة الرئيسة بإلقاء كلمة قصيرة بالنيابة عن حركة عدم الانحياز، وسألقبها بالإنجليزية.

(76.1) **Mr Ramadan** (Egypt) (*translation from the Arabic*):

Madam President, allow me at the outset, and on behalf of the Arab States group, to congratulate the General Conference of UNESCO and the Organization on this important, just and historic decision, which affirms that the Member States of the Organization as a whole stand on the right side of history. The adoption of this resolution not only demonstrates the neutrality of the Organization and its upholding of the lofty principles that it has defended and continues to defend, but also UNESCO's respect for the rules of political participation and democracy in decision-making at the international level, which requires us all to look to the future and to move forward in shouldering our common responsibilities towards the Organization and its objectives without politicization. Now, Madam President, allow me to make a short statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which I shall deliver in English.

(The speaker continues in English)

76.2 Madam President, Egypt, in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), would like to welcome this historic decision of the General Conference to admit Palestine as a Member of our Organization. In this regard, we would like to report the decision of NAM at its 16th Ministerial Conference in Bali at the end of May 2011. We, like other groups and countries that supported the decision, believe that the membership of Palestine is a positive step forward towards upholding the universal principles that UNESCO stands for, and should also be viewed as a contribution to the realization of peace, stability and development. Thank you, Madam President.

77. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor now to Austria.

78. **Ms Plassnik** (Austria):

Madame la Directrice générale, the question of Palestinian membership of UNESCO has been debated thoroughly within the European Union (EU). Austria very much regrets that we have not achieved a common EU position on the matter. Austria's yes vote today is a vote in favour of the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian people gaining full access to the valuable work of UNESCO. We hereby underline that the application of Palestine for membership of the United Nations is being dealt with by the Security Council according to the established procedures. Thank you.

79. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Now I give the floor to Belgium.

80.1 **Mme Chainaye** (Belgique) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Aujourd'hui, une très large majorité des États membres de l'UNESCO, dont la Belgique, a voté en faveur de l'admission de la Palestine à l'UNESCO. Elle devient donc membre à part entière de cette Organisation.

80.2 Ceci reflète le fait que l'Autorité palestinienne a considérablement progressé sur la voie de la constitution d'un État, grâce, notamment, aux contributions de l'Union européenne et de mon pays.

80.3 **L'admission à l'UNESCO n'est cependant qu'une étape sur cette voie.** Les semaines qui viennent s'annoncent cruciales pour faire démarrer un processus de véritables négociations entre la Palestine et Israël. Pour la Belgique, il n'y a pas d'alternative aux négociations, aussi difficiles soient-elles et en dépit du fait que les positions des deux parties restent très éloignées. Israël et la Palestine doivent pouvoir vivre côte à côte en paix et en sécurité.

80.4 La Belgique espère que, dans les mois qui viennent, la Palestine démontrera qu'elle est un membre responsable et fiable de l'UNESCO. Enfin, la Belgique appelle tous les États membres à maintenir leur appui aux actions que mène l'UNESCO dans le cadre de sa mission en faveur de la construction de la paix, notamment dans les domaines de l'éducation et du dialogue interculturel, et réitère son soutien sans faille à l'action de l'UNESCO en ce sens. Je vous remercie.

81. **The President:**

Merci beaucoup. Now I give the floor to Libya.

٨٢,١ السيد اليقوي (ليبيا):

سيدتي الرئيسة، حضرات السادة والسيدات، أود أن أتقدم، باسم بلدي ليبيا، بالتهنئة إلى المؤتمر العام لاتخاذ قرار انضمام فلسطين إلى اليونسكو. والقرار كما هو واضح ليس ضد أي أحد، وإنما هو اعتراف بحق إنساني وبحق الشعب الفلسطيني في التعليم والثقافة والمعرفة شأنه في ذلك شأن كافة شعوب العالم. إن قبول فلسطين عضواً في اليونسكو قبل قبولها عضواً في الأمم المتحدة ليس بدعة أو بالأمر الجديد فقد انضمت دول من قبل إلى اليونسكو قبل انضمامها إلى الأمم المتحدة.

٨٢,٢ حضرات السادة والسيدات، إننا نعتقد جازمين بأن قبول فلسطين عضواً في اليونسكو سيكون دعماً لحق إنساني، ودعماً دون شك لعملية السلام في المنطقة، هذه العملية التي تعثرت لعقود طويلة. ويُعدّ هذا الأمر في الوقت ذاته ترجمة حقيقية لمبادئ اليونسكو وتطبيقاً عملياً لحق الشعوب في التعليم والترقية والثقافة والمعرفة. وأقول مرة أخرى إن انضمام فلسطين إلى اليونسكو ليس دعماً للسلام في المنطقة فقط، بل هو وبكل تأكيد دعم للسلام العالمي وإنصاف لشعب طالما عانى من الإقصاء. وشكراً سيدتي الرئيسة.

(82.1) **Mr Eliagoubi (Libya) (translation from the Arabic):**

Madam President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my country, Libya, I should like to present my congratulations to the General Conference for having adopted a resolution allowing Palestine to join UNESCO. It is clear that the decision is not directed against anyone; rather, it is recognition of a human right, the right of the Palestinian people to education, culture and knowledge, the same as for all the other peoples of the world. Palestine's becoming a member of UNESCO before it becomes a member of the United Nations is nothing new; other States have joined UNESCO before joining the United Nations.

(82.2) Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we believe firmly that accepting Palestine as a member of UNESCO would provide support for a human right, and no doubt support for the peace process in the region, this process that has faltered for long decades. At the same time, this represents a faithful translation of the principles of UNESCO and a practical application of the right of peoples to education, culture and knowledge. I say once again: Palestine's joining UNESCO is not only in support of peace in the region; it is a reaffirmation of world peace and justice for a people which has suffered too long from exclusion. Thank you Madam President.

83. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I give the floor to Germany.

84. **Ms Nibbeling-Wießnig (Germany):**

Thank you very much, Madam President, Madam Director-General, for allowing me to explain why Germany could not support the draft resolution submitted under item 9.1, "Request for the admission of Palestine to UNESCO". The basic request for membership has been submitted for a number of years and until now the Executive Board and the General Conference were wise enough not to push for a decision. This year, however, Palestine has also applied for full United Nations membership. That application is now being examined by the Security Council of which Germany is a member. As everybody knows, a decision has not been taken yet. On 23 September, the Quartet proposed a timetable and framework for the resumption of negotiations. A first meeting of the Quartet took place a week ago. The next three months will be crucial. We have called on all concerned to do everything possible to foster this process and to avoid everything that might interfere with or prejudice the outcome of this process. Our goals remain to see a Palestinian State alongside a secure State of Israel. **Germany has repeatedly asked for the postponement of the decision on UNESCO membership for Palestine while deliberations in the United Nations Security Council are ongoing and the Quartet is in a sensitive phase. We regret that our request to postpone has not met with sufficient support.** Germany fully understands the Palestinian wish to obtain UNESCO membership as soon as possible and has been looking forward to welcoming Palestine as a Member of UNESCO at the appropriate time and under the right circumstances. Germany's support for the two-State solution is not in doubt. I hope delegations will understand that, at this point in time and for the reasons mentioned, Germany had to vote against the proposal. This vote should by no means be interpreted as prejudging our position in other fora; and we are confident that we all together here will do our best in a spirit of cooperation to ensure that the functioning of our UNESCO will not be jeopardized by the decision of the General Conference. Thank you very much.

85. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Lebanon.

٨٦ السيدة فضل الله (لبنان):

شكراً السيدة الرئيسة. إنها لحظة تاريخية نشهد فيها انضمام فلسطين إلى منظماتنا كعضو كامل العضوية ترسيخاً لمبادئ التضامن والعدل والحرية المكرسة في ميثاقنا التأسيسي، هذه المبادئ التي نسعى جميعاً إلى تحقيقها. ففلسطين العريقة بتاريخها وتراثها، والغنية بثقافتها وعلومها، وجدت اليوم المكان المناسب لتعاون متبادل وتضامن فكري ومعنوي وثيق. وأود أن أهنئ، باسمي وباسم لبنان، فلسطين بعضويتها في منظماتنا. وإني واثقة بأنها ستساهم بفعالية في توطيد المبادئ العريقة للمنظمة، وفي إرساء برامجها الثقافية والتربوية والعلمية. إنها لحظة تاريخية في حياة منظماتنا التي قامت، إذ أتاحت لفلسطين الانضمام إليها في مؤتمرنا العام هذا، بمنح دور محوري أكيد للثقافة في بناء وإرساء السلام في النفوس والعقول. وشكراً.

(86) **Ms Fadlallah (Lebanon) translation from the Arabic:**

Thank you Madam President. This is an historic moment in which we witness the admission of Palestine to our Organization as a full member, in consolidation of the principles of solidarity, justice and freedom consecrated in our Constitution, these principles which we all strive to put into practice. Venerable Palestine, with its history, heritage, culture and science, has today found the right place for mutual cooperation and close intellectual and moral solidarity. I should like to congratulate Palestine, on behalf of Lebanon and in my own capacity, on its membership in our Organization. I am confident that it will contribute effectively to reaffirming the venerable principles of the Organization and to consolidating its cultural, educational and scientific programmes. This is an historic moment in the life of our Organization, which has now afforded Palestine the opportunity of joining it at this General Conference, and thereby granting a pivotal role to culture in the building and consolidation of peace in people's souls and minds. Thank you.

87. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I give the floor to New Zealand.

88.1 **Ms Hallum (New Zealand):**

Thank you, Madam President. New Zealand supports increased Palestinian participation in international bodies, in particular as a way to further build on Prime Minister Fayyad's State-building agenda and in recognition of the general success of this agenda. New Zealand supports the aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a representative voice in international organizations. We also recognize that a number of countries have become Members of UNESCO prior to or without becoming United Nations Member States. **It was our preference, however, that the issue of Palestine's United Nations membership be addressed first in the United Nations Security Council before UNESCO decided on Palestinian membership.**

88.2 Membership of the United Nations and membership of UNESCO are of course different and separate issues. Furthermore, we wish to make clear that New Zealand's abstention here today does not indicate how we might vote on future related issues in New York. We continue to urge all parties to give every chance for the necessary compromises to be reached so that renewed negotiations might have an opportunity for success. We hope and expect that the broader question of Palestine taking its place within all international organizations can be resolved in the near future. Thank you, Madam President.

89. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement. And now I give the floor to Sri Lanka.

90.1 **Mr Jayatileka (Sri Lanka):**

Thank you, Madam President, Madam Director-General. One of our distinguished colleagues reminded us that André Malraux said that *Man is what he does*. May I add that this is also true of international organizations. The Open UNESCO exhibit has a blue disk on the wall by the exhibit's end, which quotes the great Asian statesperson Jawaharlal Nehru who said that "*UNESCO is the conscience of the world community*". And today UNESCO has acted precisely as the conscience of the world community. Jawaharlal did not say that UNESCO is the conscience of the world community if that is okay with New York or if it flies over the hill or if it plays in Peoria. UNESCO is the conscience of the world community. This we have shown by what we have done.

90.2 Madam President, there has been a specious argument here that what we have done is somehow contradictory to the bid for a negotiated settlement and efforts going on elsewhere, such as in New York. I fail to see the logic, Madam President. I think that by showing that Palestine's independence is an idea whose time has come and that this has broad recognition in the world community, we have in fact bolstered all the efforts which we respect towards a negotiated peace and towards the recognition that is sought in the Security Council. I would conclude by quoting something that Yael Dayan, herself a soldier in the Six-Day War and the daughter of the great soldier-diplomat Moshe Dayan, after whom I have the good fortune of having been named by my parents, said to Russian television yesterday when she was interviewed on whether or not the Palestinian bid to seek recognition in various arms of the United Nations system was helpful to the bid for peace. And Yael Dayan, the soldier-daughter of a soldier, said "*Yes, it is helpful because if national efforts are somehow blocked or retarded as they seem to be, then the international effort becomes all the more important*". So I think we have made a positive contribution to a negotiated peace today. Thank you.

91. **The President:**

Thank you, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to Saudi Arabia.

٩٢ السيد الدريس (المملكة العربية السعودية):

شكراً السيدة الرئيسة. سأهنئ اليونسكو قبل أن أهنئ فلسطين. اليوم خرج رأس المولود الفلسطيني الجديد من رحم العالم، وسيستكمل خروج بقية الجنين أو المولود هناك في الأمم المتحدة في نيويورك خلال الأيام القادمة بإذن الله. اليوم لم تولد فلسطين فقط، بل ولدت يونسكو جديدة، يونسكو ملامحها قوة العدالة لا عدالة القوة التي هيمنت لعقود مضت. اليوم نحن أمام أول نتاج لإطار الإنسانية الجديدة التي دعت إليها السيدة إيرينا بوكوفا في حملتها الانتخابية في

عام ٢٠٠٩. فهذا هو المسار الذي جعلته ضمن حملتها آنذاك. وها هي السيدة بوكوفا تفي بوعدها الانتخابي وتقوم بدورها المحايد، فتفتح المجال الديمقراطي لأي دولة لكي تتقدم لنيل عضوية اليونسكو، وها قد فعلت فلسطين اليوم وكسبت. لقد سمعنا كثيراً من الدول الأعضاء وهي تتحدث وتثني على الربيع العربي، وكنت أتساءل لماذا أرادت هذه الدول التي قالت لا لفلسطين أن تظلّ فلسطين في الخريف وألا تدخل في الربيع مثل بقية الدول العربية؟ لن أستبق الأحداث، لكنني أقول إذا أقامت فلسطين والدول العربية، أو المجموعة العربية، احتفالية بهذه المناسبة، وأتوقع أنها ستفعل ذلك، فسنوجه الدعوة إلى الذين قالوا لا قبل الذين قالوا نعم، حتى نؤكد ونسترجع روح أسرة اليونسكو الواحدة، ولأننا نعلم بأنهم لم يقولوا لا لأنهم يكرهون فلسطين لكن لأنهم مكرهون على قول لا بسبب ضغوط خارجة عن إرادتهم. باسم وفد المملكة العربية السعودية، نهنئ مجدداً فلسطين على حصولها على عضوية اليونسكو ونأمل أن يكون هذا تدعيماً للمسار السلمي. وشكراً.

(92) **Mr Al-Drees (Saudi Arabia) (translation from the Arabic):**

Thank you, Madam President. I should like to congratulate UNESCO before I congratulate Palestine. Today the head of the newborn Palestine emerged from the womb of the world; the rest of the baby will come out at the United Nations in New York in the next few days, God willing. Not only has Palestine been born; UNESCO, too, has been born anew. The hallmark of UNESCO is the force of justice rather than the justice of force, which has been the dominant paradigm over the past few decades. Today we find ourselves in the presence of the first fruit of the new humanism framework urged by Ms Irina Bokova in her electoral campaign in 2009. This is the course that she traced in her campaign at that time. And now, Ms Bokova has kept her electoral promise and is playing her neutral role by opening the democratic field to any State to enable it to become a member of UNESCO. And this is what Palestine has done today and won. We have heard much from the Member States as they speak of and commend the Arab Spring. I was wondering why these States which said "no" to Palestine wanted Palestine to remain in the autumn rather than to enter the spring like the other Arab States. Without wishing to jump ahead of events, I nevertheless say that if Palestine and the Arab States, or the Arab States group wished to hold a celebration of this occasion, and I expect they will, we shall extend an invitation to those who said "no" before those who said "yes", so that we may reiterate and recover the spirit of the single UNESCO family, because we know that they did not say "no" because they hate Palestine, but rather because they are obliged to say "no" as a result of external pressure beyond their control. On behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we congratulate Palestine once again on having obtained full membership in UNESCO, and we hope that this will be in support of the course of peace. Thank you.

93. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement, Your Excellency. And now I give the floor to Serbia.

94. **Ms Tomić (Serbia):**

Madam President, Serbia's vote in favour of the draft resolution on the admission of Palestine to UNESCO is consistent with its recognition of the State of Palestine, which dates back to the times of the former Yugoslavia, and in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and the unequivocal support within the international community, including the parties concerned, for the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Serbia was able to support this draft also because the procedure for the admission of new Member States provided for in UNESCO's Constitution has been fully adhered to and that the prerequisites have been fully met. Serbia has therefore joined the overwhelming majority of UNESCO Member States in supporting the admission of Palestine to the Organization. Thank you.

95. **The President:**

Thank you very much. And now I give the floor to Portugal.

96. **Mr Castro Mendes (Portugal):**

Thank you, Madam President. In our delegation's view, today's vote comes at an untimely moment. At the Security Council the Palestinian application for United Nations membership is being assessed and discussed in a meaningful way, and these discussions have not yet come to an end. In this regard, Portugal is assuming its special responsibilities as a non-permanent member of the Security Council whereby we are committed to promoting a sustainable compromise. We firmly believe that until the debate is over, we should avoid taking any action or position that would prejudice or in any way influence the result of such discussions. That was the sense of the approach we have been adopting in order to find the solution that would have avoided the need for this vote at this particular juncture. This approach reflects the position and call by the European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton that we very much supported. We believe that the solution for the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians can only be achieved through negotiations in accordance with the well-known principles, timeframe and roadmap defined by the Quartet and endorsed by the European Union. This is the track on which we must responsibly concentrate all our work. Since the efforts to resume negotiations are still ongoing, we abstain today together with a large group of European Union Member States; but in the same vein and consistent with the action and purpose manifested by Portugal at the United Nations General Assembly last September, it should be noted that we would never have voted against. **Portugal has always stood for a sovereign, independent, democratic and contiguous, viable State of Palestine** and the State of Israel living side by side in peace and security. Thank you, Madam President.

97. **The President:**

Thank you, Your Excellency. I give the floor to Denmark.

98. **Mr Dam Kristensen (Denmark):**

Thank you, Madam President. Denmark is a strong supporter of Palestinian rights and aspirations for statehood within the framework of international law. We support Palestinians, Palestine's participation in the important work of UNESCO, including the efforts to ensure the protection of heritage located in Palestinian territory. **Denmark believes that the issue of United Nations membership should be properly dealt with in New York before turning to specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies.** Equally, Denmark believes that the ongoing efforts by the Quartet following its statement on 23 September are essential for getting negotiations restarted. For these reasons, Denmark has decided to abstain; but we do call on all Members to continue their support for UNESCO's mission. This is about peace, identity,

culture, heritage and freedom of expression. We should do everything we can to prevent damage to the very United Nations organization which places these themes at the heart of its work. Thank you, Madam President.

99. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I give the floor to China.

100. **施女士 (中国):**

谢谢主席女士。中国代表团热烈祝贺巴勒斯坦成为教科文组织的成员。我支持 77 国加中国主席、印度大使的讲话。我还支持大会主席您自己的讲话。中国一贯支持巴勒斯坦人民争取恢复民族合法权利的正义事业，认为独立建国是巴勒斯坦人民不可剥夺的合法权利，是实现巴勒斯坦、以色列两个国家和平共处的基础和前提，有利于中东地区的长治久安，也有利于中东地区国家在教科文组织的职责范围内开展教育、科学和文化领域的国际合作以及地区合作。因此，我呼吁所有的会员国团结起来，团结合作，共同努力，完成历史赋予我们共建和谐世界和共建世界和平的崇高使命。谢谢！

(100) **Ms Shi (China) (translation from the Chinese):**

Thank you, Madam President. China warmly congratulates Palestine's admission as a UNESCO Member. I endorse the intervention of the Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Ambassador of India, and I endorse your speech, Madam President. China has always supported the Palestinian people in their just cause of the restoration of their legitimate rights. We believe that the foundation of an independent State is the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people. It is also the foundation and prerequisite for the peaceful coexistence of Palestine and Israel, which will contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East and to regional and international cooperation among countries of the Middle East, in terms of education, science and culture within UNESCO's fields of competence. Hence, I call for the unity of all Member States in order to build a harmonious and peaceful world, the noble mission entrusted to us by history. Thank you.

101. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Now I give the floor to the Czech Republic.

102. **Ms Kaiserová (Czech Republic):**

Thank you, Madam President. Allow me to explain why the Czech Republic decided to vote against the resolution on admission of Palestine to membership of UNESCO. The Czech Republic reiterates its support for negotiations leading to Palestine statehood, all efforts and steps to that end and its readiness when appropriate to recognize the Palestinian State. The Czech Republic is of the opinion that the issue of United Nations membership should be properly dealt with in New York before turning to specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies. Equally we believe that ongoing efforts by the Quartet are essential for getting negotiations seriously started. We deem the Palestinian initiative in UNESCO ill-timed and to be further complicating the process aimed at restarting negotiations between the parties as proposed in New York by the Quartet declaration of 23 September and pending a Security Council decision on the Palestinian request for admission to the United Nations. Palestinian statehood should not be an issue resolved by unilateral steps. We refuse to accept such an approach. We call upon both sides to avoid steps that run counter to the Quartet's efforts to restart negotiations. We especially deplore the acts of violence constituted by the renewed rocket attacks from Gaza this past weekend. Our decision today should by no means be interpreted as prejudging our future position. Thank you.

103. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to Cuba.

104. **Sra. Flórez Prida (Cuba):**

Gracias, señora Presidenta. Señora Directora General: ante todo, mi delegación desea apoyar las declaraciones formuladas por las delegaciones de la India y de Egipto en nombre del Grupo de los 77 y China, y del Movimiento de Países No Alineados, respectivamente. Señora Presidenta, señora Directora General: hoy hemos presenciado un momento histórico en nuestra Organización. La admisión de Palestina como miembro de pleno derecho de la UNESCO, por una abrumadora mayoría de los Estados Miembros presentes en esta Conferencia, reafirma el carácter universal de la UNESCO y rectifica una injusticia histórica contra el sufrido pueblo palestino. Esta decisión confirma además el liderazgo y visibilidad de la UNESCO en la arena internacional. Cuba da la bienvenida a Palestina. Muchas gracias.

(104) **Ms Flórez Prida (Cuba) (translation from the Spanish):**

Thank you Madam President. Madam Director-General, above all, my delegation wishes to support the declarations by the delegations of India and Egypt in the name of the Group of 77 and China, and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively. Madam President, Madam Director-General, today, our Organization has witnessed an historic moment. The admission of Palestine as a full member of UNESCO, supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States present at this Conference, reaffirms the universal character of UNESCO and rectifies a historical injustice inflicted on the long-suffering Palestinian people. This decision also confirms the leadership and visibility of UNESCO in the international sphere. Cuba extends a warm welcome to Palestine. Thank you very much.

105. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to Indonesia.

106. **Mr Rachman (Indonesia):**

Bismillāh ir-rahmān ir-rahīm. As-salāmu 'alaikum wa-rahmatu llāhi wa-barakātuh (In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you). Indonesia would like to congratulate UNESCO. God has created mankind with different races, different languages and different opinions so that people will make efforts to understand each other. Today, Madam President, UNESCO has answered and made the effort to understand mankind and for people to understand each other. Indonesia congratulates UNESCO for such a remarkable and valuable historic moment accomplished together, and the responsibility we have taken for the coming generation. *Al-ḥamdu lillāh* (All thanks and praise be to God). Indonesia trusts that UNESCO will be successful in the

future in achieving peace as our responsibility on this planet. Thank you very much. *As-salāmu ‘alaikum wa-rahmatu llāhi wa-barakātuh* (Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you).

107. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

108. **Mr Sudders** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland):

Thank you, Madam President. The United Kingdom calls for the urgent resumption of negotiations that will lead within an agreed timeframe to a two-State solution with the State of Israel and **an independent, democratic viable State of Palestine**, living side by side in peace and security. **We recognize that with this vote the Palestinian people are sending a message to the international community that that process must be speeded up.** In the context of UNESCO we support initiatives that ensure the protection of Palestinian cultural and natural heritage and enhance education cooperation with Palestine. Nonetheless, we still believe that the issue of United Nations membership should be properly dealt with in New York. For this reason, we decided to abstain. This vote was about the here and now and must not be read as giving any indication of our position in another place or at another time. We call on all Members of UNESCO to now pause for reflection before taking any precipitous action here or elsewhere. As my Danish colleague noted, at the centre of this issue are themes of peace, identity, heritage, culture and freedom of expression. We must be absolutely sure in moving forward from this decision that we avoid damaging the very United Nations Organization that places those themes at the heart of its work.

109. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Now I give the floor to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

110. **Sr. Bonilla** (República Bolivariana de Venezuela):

Gracias, Presidenta. Para el Gobierno bolivariano es motivo de especial alegría la decisión que hoy acaba de tomar la UNESCO. Consideramos de especial importancia ratificar que hoy se reconcilia este cuerpo con buena parte de los grandes anhelos de la humanidad. Cuando escuchaba la votación de los diferentes países a favor de la admisión de Palestina, lo que escuchaba eran las risas de millones y millones de niños, niñas y adolescentes que creen en un mundo de paz, de justicia y de igualdad. Con esta votación, la UNESCO ratifica que una educación basada en la justicia social es la mejor garantía para la paz. Bienvenida, Palestina, a este cuerpo.

(110) **Mr Bonilla** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*translation from the Spanish*):

Thank you, Madam President. For the Bolivarian Government, the decision that UNESCO has made today is a cause for celebration. We believe that it is highly important to reaffirm that today, this body has reconciled with a widespread desire of humanity. When I was listening to different countries voting in favour of Palestine's admission, what I heard was the joy of millions and millions of boys, girls and teenagers who believe in a world of peace, justice and equality. With this vote, UNESCO has confirmed that education based on social justice is the surest guarantor of peace. Welcome, Palestine, to this Organization.

111. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Singapore.

112. **Mr Murthy** (Singapore):

Madam President, while we can understand and sympathize with the desire of the Palestinians to participate in UNESCO, we should not brush aside the fact that this application for UNESCO membership comes at a particularly contentious time for the United Nations as a whole and indeed for the Middle East generally. This position cannot be considered independently of its broader political context. The question that we therefore asked ourselves was whether this position at this point in time would help or hinder UNESCO's primary mission of promoting education, science and culture. The answer was to us obvious: that it has already divided and politicized the Organization is evident from what we heard when the resolution was considered by UNESCO's Executive Board. Furthermore, this resolution was submitted just after Palestine had applied for full membership of the United Nations. That application is still being considered by the Security Council in New York, and we understand that there is a possibility of some action on this matter in the General Assembly as well. We cannot ignore the fact that UNESCO's position would be a political judgement that would have implications for Palestine's application for United Nations membership and was, perhaps, intended to influence that application. **It is no part of UNESCO's mandate to play such a political role.** For these reasons, Singapore decided to abstain on the vote to admit Palestine to UNESCO. Thank you, Madam President.

113. **The President:**

Thank you very much. I give the floor to Argentina.

114. **Sr. Estrella** (Argentina):

Muchas gracias. La Argentina tiene una relación profunda y legendaria con la UNESCO y, si su adhesión ha sido siempre constante y militante, es por los principios con que fue creada esta institución que nosotros queremos tanto. Conozco muchísimo y admiro y quiero la historia del pueblo judío. En Argentina conocemos mucho más de la historia del pueblo judío que de la historia de un pueblo como el de Palestina. Es en esta casa, en el año 88, en que el Director General de entonces me nombró Embajador de Buena Voluntad que pude conocer a Isaac Rabin, a Shimon Peres y a Arafat, los tres. Arafat –me acuerdo que en ese escenario– abrazó a sus dos hermanos judíos diciéndoles: “Somos los tres hijos de Abraham”, lo cual es cierto. Dijo: “Falta la pata cristiana, mi mujer es cristiana”. Bueno, desde ahí la UNESCO me encomendó trabajar uno de los programas como Embajador de Buena Voluntad en Medio Oriente y así pude conocer la tragedia del pueblo palestino, de un pueblo ocupado. Por eso, eso que es mucho menos conocido que el dramático camino del pueblo judío, yo lo viví *in situ*, conversando con los palestinos de los campos palestinos, trabajando con los niños, haciéndolos cantar, haciendo música para ellos. Entonces, yo no puedo considerar de ninguna manera prematuro que esta institución, que es clave para los que somos humanistas en el mundo entero, haya decidido

dar luz verde al queridísimo pueblo palestino para que sea un verdadero Estado. Y estoy seguro que la paz de Israel va a ser garantizada. Mi hermano el colega de Arabia Saudita, que es poeta, también lo dijo de una manera mucho más bonita que yo, pero creo que la paz es posible y que tenemos que meditar, y la UNESCO tiene que ser la primera, tiene que estar en la primera fila, luchando para la paz en Medio Oriente, para la seguridad de Israel y para la existencia real de un pueblo que está ocupado. Gracias.

(114) **Mr Estrella** (Argentina) (*translation from the Spanish*):

Thank you very much. Argentina has a profound and longstanding relationship with UNESCO, and its steady and loyal membership is only so because of the principles upon which this institution, so dear to us all, was established. I know, admire and love the history of the Jewish people very much. The Jewish people's history is much better known to Argentina than that of the Palestinian people. It was in this house, in the year 1988 that the Director-General at the time appointed me UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, thus enabling me to meet Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Arafat, all three of them. On that occasion, Arafat, I recall, embraced his Jewish brothers saying, "We are the three sons of Abraham", which is certainly true. He said, "A Christian hand is missing, my wife is a Christian". Then, after that, UNESCO put me in charge of one of the programmes as Goodwill Ambassador to the Middle East, and that is how I learned more about the Palestinian people's tragedy, a people under occupation. That is how I gained first-hand experience of a situation that is less well known than the dramatic story of the Jewish people; I did it by chatting with the Palestinians in camps, working with children, making them sing, making music for them. Therefore, I cannot consider it premature that this institution, which is essential for humanists like us throughout the world, has chosen to give the green light to the dear Palestinian people so that they can become a real State. And I am sure that Israel's peace will be guaranteed. My brother, colleague and poet from Saudi Arabia said this in a much more charming way than I did. However, I believe that peace is possible and that we need to give thought - with UNESCO first in line and leading the way - to the struggle for peace in the Middle East, for safety in Israel and for the existence of a real State for an occupied people. Thank you.

115. **The President:**

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to France.

116.1 **M. de Canson** (France) :

Madame la Présidente, le 21 septembre dernier, devant l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, le Président de la République française, M. Sarkozy, présentait la vision de la France pour avancer sur le chemin de la paix au Proche-Orient, pour avancer sur le chemin d'une solution au conflit israélo-palestinien.

116.2 Il proposait que l'Assemblée générale élabore une résolution permettant à la Palestine de rehausser son statut au sein de l'ONU en devenant un État non membre observateur. Nous continuons à penser qu'une telle résolution constituerait une avancée légitime vers la reconnaissance d'un État palestinien, sans créer, comme nous pouvons le craindre d'une démarche au Conseil de sécurité, une confrontation diplomatique majeure qui conduirait à l'impasse.

116.3 Aujourd'hui, la question qui était posée était de savoir si la communauté internationale répondait oui ou non à la demande d'adhésion de la Palestine à l'UNESCO. Certes, nous aurions préféré que cette question fût posée après le traitement du sujet par l'Assemblée générale à New York. Mais, à partir du moment où elle l'est aujourd'hui, **il nous faut prendre nos responsabilités et répondre sur le fond. Sur le fond, la France dit oui. Oui, la Palestine a le droit de devenir membre de l'UNESCO.**

116.4 La Palestine a le droit de devenir membre de l'UNESCO, cette organisation dont la vocation est d'œuvrer à la généralisation d'une culture de la paix au sein de la communauté internationale. Une telle adhésion entre pleinement dans la logique de la démarche à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies proposée par le Président de la République.

116.5 La France a toujours été, est aujourd'hui et restera demain du côté de la paix. Elle soutient les responsables palestiniens, au premier rang desquels le Président de l'Autorité palestinienne, **dans leurs efforts pour l'édification d'un État palestinien** vivant côte à côte, en paix et en sécurité avec l'État d'Israël.

116.6 Le Président de la République l'a souligné le 21 septembre devant l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies : si quiconque, à travers le monde, menaçait l'existence d'Israël, la France serait immédiatement et totalement aux côtés d'Israël. Nous le disons et le répétons. C'est avant tout par le biais de négociations entre Israéliens et Palestiniens que l'objectif de deux États vivant en paix et en sécurité sera atteint. Nous appelons les deux parties à faire tous les compromis nécessaires pour que ces négociations puissent reprendre sans délai. Je vous remercie.

117. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement. Now I give the floor to Switzerland.

118.1 **M. Imhoof** (Suisse) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente de la Conférence générale. La Palestine vient d'adhérer à l'UNESCO. La Suisse le comprend comme démontrant l'intention de la Palestine de participer et de contribuer à la mission de l'Organisation, celle d'une culture de la paix, d'une compréhension des diversités culturelles par l'éducation, la science et le rapprochement des cultures.

118.2 Le débat sur le statut de la Palestine constitue un enjeu politique majeur, en particulier pour le Moyen-Orient, dont il ne faudrait pas préjuger l'issue. **Si la Suisse s'est abstenue lors de ce vote, c'est qu'elle considère que le débat n'a pas à être mené dans le cadre d'une organisation à vocation technique comme l'UNESCO.** Il appartient davantage aux organes politiques de l'Organisation des Nations Unies de considérer la question.

118.3 **La Suisse continuera d'œuvrer pour que des négociations en vue de la création d'un État palestinien** viable, vivant côte à côte avec un État d'Israël et établi dans des frontières sûres et reconnues, conduisent à un règlement durable de ce conflit. Merci, Madame la Présidente.

119. **The President:**
Merci beaucoup. And now I would like to give the floor to Norway.
120. **Mr Eriksen (Norway):**
 Madam President, I will explain the Norwegian vote. Norway is a strong supporter of Palestinian rights and aspirations for statehood within the framework of international law. Given the difficult circumstances in which the Palestinians work to protect their cultural and natural heritage, we support initiatives that would ensure the protection of this heritage in the Palestinian territory. Our vote, a yes, is consistent with the need to recognize the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations and needs as regards the protection of this heritage. Our national procedures to formally recognize the State of Palestine are still pending. Norway supports the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace can only be achieved on the basis of a negotiated solution between the parties. Thank you, Madam President.
121. **The President:**
 Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Nicaragua.
122. **Sra. Henríquez González (Nicaragua):**
 Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta. Señora Presidenta, señora Directora General: Nicaragua, al decir sí a la adhesión de Palestina a la UNESCO, ha sumado su voz a la de tantos otros países en aras de la construcción de la paz y la fraternidad universal, a favor del diálogo y la diversidad cultural, del derecho a la educación, la cultura y la ciencia, que constituyen los pilares sobre los que se alza la UNESCO, los cuales queremos, en un acto de justicia, sean cada vez más sobre los que también se alce el pueblo palestino de ahora en adelante. Por eso, dentro del marco de los principios fundamentales que guían a esta institución y de la solidaridad internacional, Nicaragua acoge con beneplácito y satisfacción la adhesión de Palestina a la UNESCO y la felicita calurosamente. Muchas gracias.
- (122) **Ms Henríquez González (Nicaragua) (translation from the Spanish):**
 Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, Madam Director-General, when Nicaragua said “yes” to the admission of Palestine to UNESCO, it added its voice to that of many other countries in favour of building peace and global kinship, in favour of dialogue and cultural diversity, the right to education, culture and science, the pillars on which UNESCO stands tall. These pillars should become, through an act of justice, the ever-growing support for the Palestinian people from now on. Therefore, within the framework of these fundamental principles that guide our institution and international solidarity, Nicaragua welcomes with satisfaction Palestine’s membership of UNESCO with hearty congratulations. Thank you very much.
123. **The President:**
 Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Japan.
124. **Mr Kiso (Japan):**
 Thank you, Madam President. Please let me emphasize that Japan is and always has been deeply understanding about the long-cherished aspiration of Palestine for statehood. However, Japan feels that the submission of this particular resolution was premature when the request by Palestine for membership of the United Nations itself is still being considered by the United Nations Security Council. UNESCO’s pre-empting the discussions at the United Nations in this manner can further complicate matters and, therefore, is not deemed desirable. Under the circumstances, Japan had no choice but to abstain. I will also add that Japan, as the second largest contributor to UNESCO, considers the implications that this accession might have on UNESCO’s financial management in the months ahead to be a matter of great concern. Thank you.
125. **The President:**
 Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to the Netherlands.
- 126.1 **Mr Zeldenrust (Netherlands):**
 Thank you, Madam President. The Netherlands wishes to record its concern about the vote we have just taken. Full Palestinian membership at this point in time runs counter to the interests of UNESCO. It pre-empts the outcome of deliberations in the Security Council on the Palestinian bid for full United Nations membership and will make the negotiating process between Israel and the Palestinians more difficult. For any if not all these reasons, the Netherlands believes that this General Conference should not have taken up the proposal at hand.
- 126.2 Let me make it clear that the Netherlands supports the Palestinian ambition to become a full Member of the United Nations. This should happen as a result of a negotiation process between the parties themselves, to which end initial and important steps were taken by the Quartet with the parties on 26 October. This should lead to the establishment of a viable, democratic and peaceful Palestinian State and secure, internationally recognized Jewish State of Israel living side by side in peace and security. The only way to get there is for the parties to immediately engage in negotiations without preconditions and to abstain from unilateral steps that prejudice the outcome of these negotiations. All efforts of the international community should be geared towards making negotiations happen rather than towards making them more difficult. Unilateral steps will not get us closer to peace. This is not the time or the place for decisions like the one at hand. The Netherlands endorses the timeframe outlined by the Quartet and we stand ready to assist where we can. We are a major donor to the Palestinian Authority. Our message is simple and clear: negotiate. Thank you, Madam President.
127. **The President:**
 Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your statement. Now I give the floor to Spain.
128. **Sra. Garmendia Mendizábal (España):**
 Tras las intervenciones que me han precedido, quisiera hacer una muy breve intervención y señalar que, como ministra del Gobierno de España, me siento afortunada por haber podido estar hoy aquí y muy orgullosa de haber

formado parte de este gran momento de emoción compartida. España quiere hacer llegar al pueblo y a las autoridades de Palestina una calurosa y emocionada felicitación por su admisión a la UNESCO. Y nosotros también desde España lamentamos que Europa no haya alcanzado una posición común, seguiremos trabajando para alcanzarla y confiamos en que nuestras responsabilidades tras el resultado de la votación refuercen realmente las posibilidades y el éxito de una negociación de paz en Oriente Medio, en beneficio tanto de Palestina como de Israel. Muchas gracias.

(128) **Ms Garmendia Mendizábal** (Spain) (*translation from the Spanish*):

After the speeches we have just heard, I would like to briefly mention and point out that as a Minister in Spain's government, I feel lucky to have been here today and very proud to have been a part of this significant and emotional moment that we have shared. Spain would like to extend to the Palestinian people and authorities warm and heartfelt congratulations for its admission to UNESCO. In Spain, we also regret that Europe has not reached a consensus on the matter; we will continue to work towards this and trust that our responsibilities, especially after this vote, are able to increase the chances of success of peace talks in the Middle East for the benefit of both Palestine and Israel. Thank you very much.

129. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Algeria.

130.1 **M. Sbih** (Algérie) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. L'Algérie salue la décision historique de la 36^e session de la Conférence générale, qui consacre enfin l'admission de la Palestine en tant que membre à part entière de l'UNESCO.

130.2 Cette importante décision, votée à une majorité significative, constitue un acte de paix conforme aux idéaux et objectifs de l'Organisation et représente une avancée majeure dans la reconnaissance attendue de la Palestine comme État membre des Nations Unies. Je vous remercie.

131. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Australia.

132.1 **Ms Kamath** (Australia):

Thank you, Madam President. **Australia strongly supports the aspirations of the Palestinian people for their own State** and believes the negotiated peace process between the parties is the way to achieve this. Our decision to vote against reflects Australia's strong concern that consideration of Palestinian membership of UNESCO is premature. The matter of Palestinian membership of the United Nations has recently been placed before the United Nations Security Council for its consideration. We should allow the United Nations Security Council process to run its course rather than seek first to address this question in different United Nations fora.

132.2 Our decision also reflects our concern about the possible implications of the successful vote on UNESCO funding. Australia has been a consistent supporter of the peace process. We have provided extensive support and committed to over \$300 million in humanitarian and development assistance during the next five years for the building of the institutions of a future Palestinian State. Australia has made clear our strong support for efforts to achieve a comprehensive and enduring peace based on a negotiated two-State solution. We urge both parties to return to direct talks. Thank you.

133. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement. Now I give the floor to Canada.

134.1 **M. Bachand** (Canada) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Le Canada souscrit sans réserve à l'objectif d'une paix globale, juste et durable entre Israël et le peuple palestinien, **y compris la création d'un État palestinien** viable et indépendant, coexistant avec Israël dans la paix et la sécurité grâce à un accord négocié entre les parties.

134.2 Toutefois, le Canada est profondément préoccupé par les initiatives unilatérales de l'Autorité palestinienne pour devenir membre des organes des Nations Unies, y compris l'UNESCO. Le Canada est l'un des principaux partisans du processus de paix et a mis en œuvre un programme d'aide quinquennal de 300 millions de dollars destinés à l'Autorité palestinienne pour renforcer les capacités dans les domaines clés de la réforme du secteur de la justice et de la sécurité et favoriser une croissance économique durable.

134.3 Le Canada fournit également une aide humanitaire en Cisjordanie et dans la bande de Gaza. Il a toujours soutenu que la seule façon de parvenir à un État palestinien était de négocier un accord avec Israël. Des dispositions relatives à la sécurité aux frontières doivent être négociées. Des solutions aux questions des réfugiés et de Jérusalem doivent être trouvées.

134.4 **Contourner le processus de négociation bilatérale comme on tente de le faire par cette démarche est inutile et nuisible aux efforts visant à trouver un règlement négocié.** Suggérer que les Palestiniens peuvent obtenir un État sans négocier un accord de paix avec Israël mine le processus de paix. Le Canada regrette profondément que l'Autorité palestinienne ait choisi de demander un statut de membre de l'UNESCO plutôt que de chercher à obtenir un règlement négocié avec Israël.

134.5 Le Canada regrette aussi profondément la décision de la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO d'approuver la demande palestinienne de devenir membre de l'UNESCO. De telles actions ne contribueront pas à faire progresser le processus de paix, ne changeront pas les faits sur le terrain et ne rapprocheront pas les vues. Pour ces raisons, le Canada a voté contre cette demande. Le Canada exhorte les parties à reprendre les pourparlers de paix directs sans tarder et sans condition préalable à la suite de la Déclaration du Quatuor du 23 septembre. Merci, Madame la Présidente.

135. **The President:**
Merci beaucoup. I would like to give the floor to the Dominican Republic.

136. **Sra. Hernández de Grullón** (República Dominicana):
Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta. Solo para decir que la República Dominicana aprueba la admisión de Palestina a la UNESCO porque el ingreso de Palestina a esta Organización representa un paso para alcanzar la paz, la defensa de los principios universales defendidos por la UNESCO, y no es posible que hoy en día se le niegue a un pueblo el derecho al acceso a la educación, la ciencia, la cultura y la comunicación a través de una organización con tanto prestigio y con tanta credibilidad como lo es la UNESCO. Muchísimas gracias.

(136) **Ms Hernández de Grullón** (Dominican Republic) (*translation from the Spanish*):

Thank you very much, Madam President. I just want to say that the Dominican Republic approves the admission of Palestine to UNESCO because Palestine's membership with this Organization represents a step towards achieving peace, the defence of the universal principles defended by UNESCO. It is not possible that, in this day and age, people should be deprived of the right to education, science, culture and communication through an Organization with such prestige and credibility as UNESCO. Thank you very much.

137. **The President:**
Thank you very much for your statement. Now I give the floor to Ecuador.

138. **Sra. Rodríguez** (Ecuador):
Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta. Señores delegados: mi país, acorde con su política internacional, ha venido sosteniendo un apoyo sostenido a la paz en Medio Oriente. Consideramos que el reconocimiento de Palestina en la UNESCO es un paso en esa dirección y nos congratulamos de que muchos países en esta sala hayan dado este paso también importante de reconocimiento a Palestina. Auguramos lo mejor para Palestina y cuenten con el apoyo permanente de nuestro país para este esfuerzo tanto en reconocimiento en este organismo como también en las Naciones Unidas. Muchas gracias.

(138) **Ms Rodríguez** (Ecuador) (*translation from the Spanish*):

Thank you very much, Madam President. Dear delegates, my country, in line with its international policy, has long supported peace in the Middle East. We believe that the recognition of Palestine within UNESCO is a step in the right direction and we are pleased that many countries in this room have taken this step to recognize Palestine, which is such an important action. We are sure that good things await Palestine and would like to reiterate the unwavering support from our country in this process of recognition as much in UNESCO as in the United Nations. Thank you very much.

139. **The President:**
Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to the Syrian Arab Republic.

١٤٠ السيد الراشد (الجمهورية العربية السورية):

السيدة المدير العام، السيدات والسادة، إن تصويت الدول الأعضاء في اليونسكو بمنح الأمل بعد أكثر من ستين عاماً من الحرمان للشعب الفلسطيني ومعاناته اليومية في حياته الثقافية والتعليمية والتربوية. والجمهورية العربية السورية، التي عرفت في الجولان السوري المحتل وما تزال تعرف وطأة الحرمان التعليمي والثقافي على أبنائها، تتطلع إلى رفع المعاناة والظلم عن الشعوب المطالبة بحقها في تقرير مصيرها. وذلك بما ينسجم مع ما ينص عليه الميثاق التأسيسي لليونسكو، وهو بدايةً ببناء حصون السلام في عقول البشر. وتحتئ الجمهورية العربية السورية فلسطينين بعضويتها في اليونسكو كمنظمة رائدة. وشكراً لكم.

(140) **Mr Al Rasched** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*translation from the Arabic*):

Madam Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, this vote by the Member States of UNESCO allows us to have hope after more than 60 years of deprivation for the Palestinian people in its daily suffering in its cultural and educational life. The Syrian Arab Republic, which has known the occupant in the Syrian Arab Golan, and continues to suffer the heavy foot of educational and cultural deprivation for its citizens, looks forward to lifting the suffering and oppression from the peoples demanding their right to self-determination, in accordance with the provisions of UNESCO's Constitution, which calls first and foremost for the defences of peace to be constructed in the minds of men. The Syrian Arab Republic congratulates Palestine on its admission to UNESCO, a pioneering organization. Thank you very much.

141. **The President:**
Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Thailand.

142. **Mr Vacharathit** (Thailand):
Madam President, Madam Director-General, Thailand abstained in the vote on the issue of Palestine, but please allow me to clarify that Thailand fully supports a two-State solution leading to peaceful coexistence between Israel and Palestine. We support negotiations under the Quartet roadmap for peace and the Arab peace initiative. Your recognition of the State of Palestine is an important issue that has been on the agenda of the Thai Cabinet for some time. However, owing to a national emergency of having to deal with flash flooding in Thailand and helping the people involved, the Cabinet has been prevented from deliberating on this matter. Thailand hopes to be able to give this issue the thorough examination that it deserves in due course. Thank you.

143. **The President:**
Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Peru.

144. **Sr. Businza** (Perú):
Gracias, señora Presidenta. Señora Presidenta: hace poco un gran amigo de Israel, el Premio Nobel de Literatura Mario Vargas Llosa, escribió lo siguiente: "El reconocimiento del Estado palestino por las Naciones Unidas es un acto de justicia con un pueblo cautivo en su propio país que vive una servidumbre colonial intolerable en el siglo XXI". Reconocer este hecho no implica justificar a las organizaciones terroristas ni a los fanáticos que se niegan a reconocer

el legítimo derecho a la existencia de Israel, sino enviar un mensaje de aliento a la gran mayoría de palestinos que rechazan la violencia y aspiran solo a trabajar y vivir en paz, como los indignados israelíes. Aunque representan ahora solo una minoría, muchos ciudadanos de Israel están lejos de solidarizarse con las políticas extremistas y luchan por la causa de la paz. Los verdaderos amigos de Israel debemos afiliarnos con ellos en su difícil resistencia, porque son ellos quienes advierten con lucidez y realismo que las políticas belicistas, intolerantes, represivas y de apoyo a la expansión de asentamientos en territorios ocupados tendrán consecuencias catastróficas para el futuro de Israel. Señora Presidenta: el Perú, amigo de Israel, e Israel no debe tener ninguna duda de esto, y amigo de Palestina, ha votado esta mañana en favor de la admisión del Estado palestino como miembro de la UNESCO. Y ha votado en favor porque se trata de un acto de justicia. Señora Presidenta: la búsqueda de la justicia forma parte del espíritu humano. Desde que comenzamos a pensar, los seres humanos buscamos de manera incansable una y otra y otra vez la justicia, y hoy, en esta sala, la tuvimos al alcance de la mano y no la dejamos escapar. Estoy convencido, señora Presidenta, de que el tiempo nos va a dar la razón. La justicia siempre traerá la paz, y por ese motivo deseo felicitar no solamente a Palestina por su admisión a la UNESCO, sino también al muy querido pueblo de Israel. Muchas gracias, señora Presidenta.

(144) **Mr Businza** (Peru) (*translation from the Spanish*):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, only recently, a great friend of Israel, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature Mario Vargas Llosa wrote that "the United Nations' recognition of the State of Palestine is an act of justice for a people captive in their own country and undergoing colonial servitude that is intolerable in the twenty-first century". Recognizing this fact does not mean justifying terrorist organizations or fanatics that refuse to accept Israel's legitimate right to exist. Rather, it means sending a message of support for the great majority of Palestinians who reject violence and only wish to work and live in peace, as do the indignant Israelis. Although they represent only a minority now, many Israeli citizens do not support extremist policies but pursue the cause of peace. As true friends of Israel, we should stand by them in their difficult resistance, because they are the ones that lucidly and realistically warn us that warmongering, intolerant and repressive policies that support the increasing settlement in occupied territories will have catastrophic consequences for Israel's future. Madam President, Peru, a friend of Israel, (Israel should be assured of that) and a friend of Palestine, voted this morning in favour of the admission of Palestine into UNESCO. It voted in favour as an act of justice. Madam President, the search for justice is engrained in the human spirit. Since we began to think, we human beings have tirelessly and repeatedly sought justice, and today, in this room, it came within our reach and we held on to it. I firmly believe, Madam President, that time will prove us to be right. Justice will always bring peace, and this is why I wish to congratulate not only Palestine for its admission to UNESCO, but also our very dear friend Israel. Thank you very much, Madam President.

145. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I would like to give the floor to Gabon.

146.1 **Mme Ossakedjombo-Ngoua Memiaghe** (Gabon) :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Madame la Présidente, le Gabon a voté tout à l'heure en faveur de l'admission de l'État de Palestine. Le Gabon souhaite dire qu'il reconnaît l'État de Palestine depuis les années 1980, puisque l'Ambassadeur Abu Amine Assira a été doyen du corps diplomatique pendant 14 ans.

146.2 Le Gabon note que le vote d'aujourd'hui intervient alors que trois grandes dames, originaires de Bulgarie, de Hongrie et de la Fédération de Russie, sont à la tête des instances de notre Organisation à l'occasion de ce vote historique d'admission de la Palestine à l'UNESCO. Ce n'est pas surprenant car, premièrement, ce sont des femmes, c'est-à-dire des êtres qui donnent la vie – et, à ce titre, elles ne peuvent être silencieuses devant les souffrances de femmes, d'enfants, de vieillards, d'hommes vivant l'oppression –, et, deuxièmement, parce qu'elles savent ce qu'est un régime d'oppression.

146.3 Mesdames, nous souhaitons, à ce stade de nos travaux, vous féliciter toutes les trois pour avoir conduit ce processus et dire qu'il n'a pas été mené contre Israël. Il est mené précisément pour permettre aux deux pays de continuer à négocier, de s'asseoir pour trouver une solution satisfaisante par l'existence de deux États, israélien et palestinien, vivant en bonne intelligence et en bon voisinage.

146.4 Madame la Directrice générale, c'est le chercheur sur le Moyen-Orient qui s'exprime et qui exprime également ici la position de son Gouvernement. Je vous remercie.

147. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement, Your Excellency. Now I give the floor to Turkey.

148. **Mr Türkoğlu** (Turkey):

Madam President, as a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, my delegation congratulates Palestine and the General Conference for today's historic, just and legitimate decision. Turkey, also as an active supporter of the Middle East process and the two-State solution, believes that UNESCO's admission of Palestine as a Member will constitute a contribution to peace and, at the same time, to the credibility and inclusiveness of UNESCO and of the United Nations system through UNESCO. My delegation hopes that Palestine's membership will also help UNESCO to work efficiently to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people regarding their educational institutions and the conservation of their heritage through the implementation of the relevant Executive Board decisions. Now we think it is time to work together with Palestine for a stronger and united UNESCO. Thank you.

149. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now I give the floor to Malta.

150. **Mr Bondin** (Malta):

Madam President, I shall try not to repeat what others have said, but for us, being in the middle of the Mediterranean, the peace process is extremely important. We have always valued and worked very hard for peace in the Mediterranean, and that means giving all the necessary security and support to both Israel and Palestine. However, peace cannot even be discussed without giving Palestine its full rights as a nation, as a people. UNESCO is more than

asking us about people, about peace, about giving the right for a people to speak about their culture, their education system, their size. So, I am sure that history will eventually look upon this decision in a very positive way. As a step forward in bringing peace and nothing else, UNESCO has shown today that it is not looking at certain legal problems or maybe problems with regards to financing, but has made the decision solely on the basis of the principle that Palestine has a right to be here like all the other nations. Thank you.

151. **The President:**

Thank you very much. And now I give the floor to Brazil.

152. **Ms da Rocha (Brazil):**

Merci, Madame la Présidente. En admettant la Palestine comme État membre, l'UNESCO réaffirme sa tradition avant-gardiste dans le système international. En votant en faveur de l'admission de la Palestine à l'UNESCO, le Brésil réitère sa position traditionnelle en faveur d'un État palestinien démocratique, géographiquement contigu et économiquement viable, coexistant en paix avec l'État d'Israël qui est un pays ami avec lequel nous entretenons des relations bilatérales qui n'ont jamais été aussi fortes. Aux Palestiniens, Madame la Présidente, nous souhaitons la bienvenue dans la grande famille de l'UNESCO. Je vous remercie beaucoup.

153. **The President:**

Thank you very much. Now ladies and gentlemen I will give the floor to Jordan.

154.1 **Ms Kawar (Jordan):**

I just want to say a word, being neighbours with Palestine and sharing many of their concerns, if you may.

(The speaker continues in Arabic)

١٥٤,٢ أود أن أتقدم بأصدق مشاعر التهئة والمباركة إلى الوفد الفلسطيني، ومن خلاله إلى شعب فلسطين الشقيق، على قبول فلسطين كدولة عضو في اليونسكو. ويُعدّ انضمام فلسطين اليوم إلى المنظمة أمراً تاريخياً، إذ يدلّ على دعم المجتمع الدولي لطموح الشعب الفلسطيني إلى الحفاظ على تراثه وثقافته ولرغبته في التقدم نحو آفاق أوسع في مجال التربية والعلوم. ويؤسس هذا الأمر لمرحلة جديدة من مراحل الكفاح الفلسطيني من أجل قيام الدولة الفلسطينية المستقلة وإحقاق السلام. وقد جاء دعم الأردن للمسعى الفلسطيني إيماناً بمشروعية التطلعات الفلسطينية، والتزاماً بالدور الداعم والمساند لهذه التطلعات الذي يفرضه حكماً عمق العلاقة الأردنية الفلسطينية. كما يأتي الموقف الأردني منسجماً مع ما أكدت عليه اللجنة الوزارية لمبادرة السلام العربية التي اجتمعت أمس في الدوحة حيث جددت دعمها القوي للطلب الفلسطيني الخاص بالحصول على العضوية الكاملة.

١٥٤,٣ وأود أيضاً أن أتقدم بالشكر العميق إلى كل من ساند هذا المسعى الفلسطيني، منتبهة الفرصة لأؤكد أن المصلحة الدولية تقتضي الاعتراف بالحق الفلسطيني في إيجاد حلّ عادل وشامل لقضيته قائم على أساس حلّ الدولتين، تقوم بموجبه الدولة الفلسطينية المستقلة وذات السيادة على خطوط الرابع من حزيران/يونيو ١٩٦٧ وعاصمتها القدس الشرقية. وشكراً.

(154.2) *(translation from the Arabic)* I should like to offer sincerest congratulations and blessings to the Palestinian delegation, and through it to the fraternal people of Palestine on Palestine's admission as a Member States of UNESCO. Palestine's joining the Organization today is an historic event which demonstrates the support of the international community for the aspirations of the Palestinian people to preserve its heritage and culture and its desire to advance towards ever broader horizons in the fields of education and science. This event paves the way to a new stage in the Palestinian struggle for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and for the establishment of peace. Jordan's support for the Palestinian efforts is rooted in its belief in the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations, and in its commitment to its own supporting role for these aspirations, which is imposed by the deep-seated Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. The Jordanian role is also consonant with what was reaffirmed by the Ministerial Committee for the Peace Initiative, which met yesterday in Doha and renewed its strong support for the Palestinian request to obtain full membership.

(154.3) I should also like to offer sincere thanks to all those who supported this Palestinian endeavour, and to take this opportunity to reaffirm that the international interest requires us to recognize the Palestinian right to find a just and comprehensive solution to its cause based on a two-State solution with an independent and sovereign Palestinian State within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Thank you.

155. **The President:**

Thank you very much Jordan. And now I give the floor to Palestine.

١٥٦,١ السيد المالكي (فلسطين):

شكراً سيدي الرئيسة، إننا فعلاً للحظة تاريخية نعيد فيها لفلسطين، عبر هذا التصويت، بعض حقوقها ومكانتها الطبيعية بين الدول والشعوب. أشكركم على تصويتكم لعضوية دولة فلسطين في منظماتكم. فتصويتكم التاريخي يعتبر جزءاً لا يتجزأ من المحافظة على التراث والحضارة والثقافة الإنسانية والدولية. ففلسطين مهد الديانات، ومنبت الحضارات والثقافات، ومنبع التعايش والتسامح. وأود في هذا المجال أن أؤكد لكم أن فلسطين، بعد حصولها على العضوية الكاملة في اليونسكو، ستقوم بكل جهد ممكن حتى تستمر هذه المنظمة العريقة في القيام بمهامها ومسؤولياتها على أكمل وجه. إن فلسطين تؤكد استعدادها للتعاون مع جميع الدول الأعضاء في الحفاظ على التراث الحضاري والإنساني الموروث. ولقد كنا في سعينا للعضوية نكرس حقاً طبيعياً لنا.

١٥٦,٢ والآن شكري لكل الدول والمجموعات التي وقفت معنا طوال الفترة الماضية وآزرتنا، ودعمت رغبتنا في العضوية على مرّ السنين، وساهمت في تحقيق هذا الإنجاز اليوم. وأخص بالذكر الدول العربية والإسلامية والأفريقية، ودول عدم الانحياز، ودول أمريكا الجنوبية وأمريكا الوسطى والكاربي، والدول الآسيوية والأوروبية، دولة دولة، أقول لكم، باسم شعبي وباسم حكومتي، شكراً، شكراً جزيلاً من أعماق أعماق قلوبنا. نعاهدكم أن نكون عنصراً إيجابياً فاعلاً لصالح

أهداف هذه المنظمة وأهداف الإنسانية جمعاء. أما بالنسبة للدول التي صوتت ضد عضوية فلسطين، فأود أن أؤكد أنّ فلسطين لن تُضمر أي ضغينة لتلك الدول التي صوتت ضد عضويتها، أو لتلك التي امتنعت عن التصويت. فنحن، بعد قبولنا عضواً، نرغب في فتح صفحة جديدة من العلاقات بين الدول الأعضاء من أجل تقوية المنظمة وتحقيق أهدافها وإنجاح برامجها. وسنسمو فوق كل ذلك، ونتمنى أن تعطونا الفرصة لثبث للجميع مدى التزامنا بمبادئ المنظمة واستعدادنا لنكون عنصراً إيجابياً لصالح الإنسانية جمعاء التي نحن جزء منها. لقد اتصل بي الرئيس الفلسطيني محمود عباس عقب التصويت، وهو يشكركم جميعاً على إتاحة هذه الفرصة لفلسطين لتأخذ مكانها الطبيعي في منظومة الأمم وفي اليونسكو تحديداً. شكراً لليونسكو، وألف مبروك لكم جميعاً ولشعبنا الفلسطيني في كل أماكن تواجده. وشكراً.

(156.1) **Mr Al-Malki (Palestine) (translation from the Arabic):**

Thank you Madam President. This is indeed an historic moment in which, by means of this vote, we are restoring to Palestine some of its rights and its natural position among States and peoples. I thank you for voting in favour of admission of Palestine as a Member State of your Organization. This historic vote is an inseparable part of the preservation of the humanitarian and international heritage, civilization and culture. Palestine is the cradle of religions, the birthplace of civilizations and cultures, and the seedbed of co-existence and tolerance. I should like in this connection to reiterate to you that Palestine, following its admission to full membership in UNESCO, will spare no effort to ensure that this venerable Organization continues to perform its tasks and shoulder its responsibilities in optimal fashion. Palestine reiterates its readiness to cooperate with all Member States to preserve the human cultural heritage we have inherited. In our efforts to obtain membership we were consecrating a natural right of ours.

(156.2) Now, my thanks go to all the States and groups which stood with us throughout the past period and supported us and backed our search for membership over the years and contributed to this great achievement today. Special thanks go to the Arab, Islamic and African States and the non-aligned States, the States of South America, Central America and the Caribbean, the Asian States and the European States, each and every one. I say to you, on behalf of my people and my government, "Thank you, thank you very much from the bottom of our hearts!" We vow to you that we will be a positive element in the service of the objectives of this Organization and the objectives of all humankind. With regard to the States that voted against Palestinian membership, I should like to state that Palestine will harbour no rancour towards those States that voted against membership or towards those that abstained from voting. Now that we have been accepted as a member, we should like to turn over a new leaf in relations between Member States in order to strengthen the Organization and achieve its objectives and ensure the success of its programmes. We shall rise above all that and we hope that you will give us an opportunity to demonstrate to all our commitment to the principles of the Organization and our readiness to be a positive element in the service of all humankind, of which we are a part. The Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, contacted me following the vote to say that he thanks you all for giving Palestine the opportunity to take its rightful place in the concert of nations and in UNESCO in particular. Thank you, UNESCO, a thousand thanks to you all and to our Palestinian people wherever they may be. Thank you.

157. **The President:**

Thank you very much for your statement, Your Excellency. And now I would like to give the floor to the Director-General of UNESCO.

158.1 **La Directrice générale :**

Madame la Présidente de la Conférence générale, Madame la Présidente du Conseil exécutif, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, nous ressentons tous, en cet instant, le moment historique, la portée symbolique et l'importance de cette décision pour le peuple palestinien et pour l'UNESCO.

158.2 Elle est le fruit de l'aspiration d'un peuple à rejoindre pleinement la famille des Nations Unies du monde, liées entre elles par une même ambition de paix et le partage de valeurs communes. Comme l'a souligné le Secrétaire général de l'ONU, M. Ban Ki-moon, une solution où les deux États vivraient en paix et en sécurité dans la région se fait attendre depuis longtemps.

158.3 Je souhaite la bienvenue à la Palestine et je voudrais saisir cette occasion pour rappeler que notre coopération remonte à de nombreuses années. Je pense à notre action en faveur de la formation des enseignants ou bien encore de la scolarisation des étudiants dans la bande de Gaza. Je pense également aux bourses d'étude que nous finançons, aux ateliers de formation à la sécurité destinés aux journalistes. L'UNESCO s'est fortement investie dans la préservation du patrimoine culturel et la mise en place d'un plan de gestion durable des sites de Tell Balata à Naplouse, du parc archéologique et des mosaïques de Qasr Hisham et de l'Église de la Nativité et du Musée de la Riwaya palestinienne à Bethléem.

158.4 J'entends toujours, plus fort que jamais, l'appel du peuple palestinien à l'UNESCO afin qu'elle intensifie son engagement et renforce son action dans ses domaines de compétence. En réponse à cet appel, je tiens à réaffirmer que je veillerai à poursuivre cette coopération, animée de la plus profonde conviction que la qualité du système éducatif, comme le dynamisme culturel ou le pluralisme des médias, sont le fondement solide de toute société.

(La Directrice générale poursuit en anglais)

158.5 Ladies and gentlemen, the admission of a new Member State is a mark of respect and confidence. This must be an opportunity to strengthen the Organization and not weaken it, a chance for all to commit once again to the values we share and not to be divided. Let me be frank. As Director-General, it is my responsibility to say that I am concerned about the potential challenges that may arise to the universality and financial stability of the Organization. I am worried we may confront a situation that could erode UNESCO as a universal platform for dialogue. I am worried about the stability of its budget. It is well known that funding from our largest contributor, the United States, may be jeopardized. I believe it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure that UNESCO does not suffer unduly as a result.

158.6 I am thinking of those thousands of girls and women in Afghanistan, in Africa and around the world, who have learned to read and write, with the help of UNESCO. I have in mind Khalida, this young Afghan woman from the Paktika

Province, enrolled in a UNESCO training course, who said, and I quote: "My family was hesitant at first about me joining this programme. But I have learned many new techniques and realized that, as an Afghan woman, I can work together with men and service my community." Khalida benefits from UNESCO's work to enhance literacy in Afghanistan.

158.7 I am thinking about the illiterate policemen in Kabul, in Kandahar and other cities, who are learning to read and write to better protect their citizens, thanks to us. I am thinking of the Iraqi education satellite channel that supports learning for Iraqi girls and boys, including refugees and internally displaced persons. I am thinking of the hundreds of journalists around the world who are at this very moment harassed, killed or imprisoned, because they stand by the truth -- UNESCO stands by them and speaks out for them. I am thinking also about the stolen treasure of Benghazi, Libya, for which UNESCO was first to ring the alarm bell. I am thinking of the millions of lives that may be saved by the tsunami warning system we launched in the Indian Ocean six years after the disaster on 12 October this year. At this time, I know these thoughts are also on your mind as well.

158.8 The fabric of our societies can be easily torn and is long to mend. I am saddened by the possible loss of momentum and energy in UNESCO. I cannot imagine we would let these women and men down. UNESCO's work is too important to be jeopardized. Our Organization was created 66 years ago to ensure that education, the sciences, culture and communication bring people together and foster a culture of peace. This is our role as a specialized agency of the United Nations. We are committed to taking our vital mandate forward. I appeal to you to keep up UNESCO's ability to act. In welcoming once again Palestine to the UNESCO family, let me state out loud: we need each and every Member of this Organization to be fully engaged. Thank you for your attention.

159. **The President:**

Thank you very much Madam Director-General for your statement. We have come to the end of our agenda for this meeting. I would suggest that this afternoon's meeting start here at 4.30 p.m. *This meeting is now adjourned.*

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.
La séance est levée à 15 h 10
Se levanta la sesión a las 15.10
Заседание закрывается в 15.10
رفعت الجلسة في الساعة ٣, ١٠ بعد الظهر
会议于 15 时 10 分结束