

Group of 77 and China Declaration on the 70th Anniversary of UNESCO
“Building Peace and Promoting Sustainable Development for a Better World”

We, the Heads of the Permanent Delegations of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, Paris Chapter, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopt the following Declaration for the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015:

Reaffirming the mandates and fundamental principles of the Constitution of UNESCO;

Emphasizing the commitment of the Group of 77 to multilateralism, international solidarity, poverty alleviation, the Culture of Peace, human rights, and the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, inclusive economic growth, protection of the environment, and social inclusion;

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while also *noting* the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals;

Expressing serious concern at the rise of violent extremism and terrorism, deliberate attacks on cultural heritage, massive displacement due to conflicts, widening disparities between the rich and poor, and other threats and crises which face our peoples, such as climate change, natural disasters, geopolitical tensions, racism, and xenophobia;

Underscoring that cultural diversity is a characteristic of the human family;

1. On the occasion of UNESCO’s 70th anniversary, the Group of 77 and China affirm that UNESCO plays an indispensable role in creating the conditions for lasting peace in the hearts and minds of women and men throughout the world, without which there can be no sustainable development.
2. In wake of pressing global challenges, UNESCO’s purpose to promote mutual understanding, dialogue among cultures, the Culture of Peace, and international cooperation in the fields of education, the natural and social sciences, culture, and communication and information, remains as important as ever.
3. To fulfill its crucial role, UNESCO must proactively contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, particularly Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all; Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls; Goal 6 on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Goal 13 on taking urgent to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14 on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; and Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

4. As we take stock of the achievements of the Organization and look towards its future, we envision a UNESCO that is empowered to affect positive change on the ground and make a lasting difference in the lives of the most vulnerable and those in most need, especially in least developing countries and small island states.
5. We affirm our support to the Global Priorities of UNESCO, gender equality and Priority Africa, and express the desire that they be furthered strengthened to deliver concrete benefits for Member States.
6. All five programme sectors of UNESCO need to be equally strengthened, especially in terms of the Organization's capacity to respond to the needs of Member States through capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer, development cooperation, and policy advice.
7. We are firmly committed to the 2030 Education Agenda and UNESCO's central role in its implementation. We believe that quality and inclusive education is a human right and a pathway to ensuring peace and sustainable development of our societies. We support Global Citizenship Education, including human rights education and training.
8. Developing countries disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change and natural disasters. We appeal that UNESCO, within the fields of its mandates, enhance its cooperation and assistance to the Member States of the Group of 77 which are most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters.
9. As we recall our commitment to a successful 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we recognize the important roles of the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Program, the International Hydrographic Program (IHP), and the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) to address the adverse effects of climate change on our countries.
10. In the field of the social sciences, we highlight the role of the Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST) in assisting Member States design evidence-based policies for sustainable development.
11. We reaffirm that culture is an enabler and driver of sustainable development that can contribute to poverty alleviation and inclusive growth. We reiterate the importance of achieving a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List.
12. We strongly condemn the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Mali, Libya, and Tunisia, as well as the illicit trafficking and sale of cultural property. We welcome the Bonn Declaration adopted at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee. We urge that protection of cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, especially in armed conflict be enhanced. We commend UNESCO's Unite4Heritage campaign and strategy in this regard.

13. We believe the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) should further address the digital divide and improve access to information and knowledge in developing and least developing countries, to harness information and communications technology for sustainable development.
14. We highlight the importance of South-South cooperation, and note that many of our Member States implement substantial cooperation programs with fellow countries from the South. We aim to work closer with the Secretariat to retool the South-South Cooperation Fund for Education and develop other platforms to enhance South-South cooperation in the fields of UNESCO's mandates, which complement, and do not replace, traditional North-South cooperation and official development assistance.
15. We express our concern regarding the financial situation of the Organization and its overdependence on extra-budgetary contributions. We wish to see more balance and emphasis on program design and execution, as well as greater transparency and accountability throughout the Organization.
16. We call on all States to support UNESCO and constructively engage on Governance Reform in an inclusive, transparent, and holistic manner, recognizing the intergovernmental nature of the Organization and the relevance of its mission for all peoples.
17. The Group of 77 and China shall continue to extend support to UNESCO, firmly devoted to the common objectives of building peace and promoting sustainable development for all for a better world today and tomorrow.