

DELEGATION OF FINLAND

The 36th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO

Intervention by Mr Paavo ARHINMÄKI

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Mrs. President

Mrs. Chair of the Executive Board

Mrs. Director-General

Distinguished Delegates,

Madam President, let me congratulate you on your election as President. We cordially thank the outgoing President, Mr. Hepburn. Finland concurs with the statement to be made by Poland on behalf of the EU. As a strong UNESCO supporter, Finland also expects a lot — in areas upon which so much of our well-being and societies depend and thrive: from building **education for all** to advancing **freedom of speech** and the press. The **human rights** perspective is invaluable, as is **gender equality**.

We are very encouraged by the DG's "reform to perform". Finland firmly supports the follow-up of the **Independent External Evaluation**. It will, through joint efforts, enhance relevance, credibility and visibility. We foresee sharpened systemic approaches, new policy mixes, more coherence and concentration. It will make a difference for delivery and impact in the Member States, within the UN, and for the **Medium-Term Strategy**.

In a world with tough economic times ahead, Finland thanks the DG for the effort embedded in the **Zero Nominal Growth** programme. The still ambitious programme calls for **innovative funding** and a clear roadmap for **strategic partnerships**. We urge all Member States to pay their fees in full and on time.

We welcome the increased focus on implementation and improvements made regarding prioritized allocations. Nevertheless, Finland and others have moved a resolution for increased allocations for **EFA** and **freedom of expression and the press**. We strongly support all work to improve the safety of journalists and impunity for their murders. In the programme, focus should be on the most vulnerable in **SIDS**, as well as on **gender equality and Africa** as continued global priorities.

Finland is happy with the pro-active involvement in the **UN inter-agency** work, and hopes that the **field network reform** will spark off of a new momentum. We support and believe in the **capacity and**

relevance of a number of institutes, such as the ones on **Statistics** and **Educational Planning**. They are decisive for **knowledge** based decision making.

Madam President,

We are here to determine the **common interests** to prevail over national priorities and to respond to the **real concerns of people** far from Place de Fontenoy. Our strong common interest is the **MDG agenda**, also beyond 2015. Despite the progress made, can we be satisfied? Finland thinks not.

Recent movements in North-Africa and the Middle East show that the objectives of **development, democracy, human rights, security and good governance** are interlinked. It is critical to create a future for and with **young people**. Everyone must be able to enjoy civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. This must not be a time of frustration, dashed hopes and social exclusion. Youth must be empowered through inclusion, schooling and job creation.

Despite efforts to uproot all forms of **racism, intolerance** has increased. Finland calls on UNESCO to work for **global and human rights education**, the most important pillars of the Culture of Peace Program.

All three dimensions of sustainable development must be respected: **social, economical and ecological**. If even one of these is missing, development cannot be sustainable. UNESCO can make a huge contribution through ESD and institutional capacity building for **African higher education and science policies**. The Convention on **Cultural Diversity** is key. The role of culture and linguistic diversity is too often neglected.

Access to educational opportunities for all is a **right, not a privilege**. UNESCO's post-2015 EFA agenda should be based on quality, equity and inclusion, and a refined EFA architecture. Finland stresses curriculum development, literacy, teacher training and TVET.

Education of **women and girls** is a top investment. **Gender equality** calls for bolder benchmarks and indicators. We must make **full use of half of the world's intelligence**. Let us turn our time to an era of opportunity for all. We all want, we all deserve, and we are all entitled to have our rights observed.

Thank you.

DG Director General

EFA Education for All

EU European Union

ESD education for sustainable development

IIEP International Institute for Educational Planning

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

SIDS Small Island Developing States

TVET Technical and Vocational Education

UIS Institute for Statistics