



Speech of H. E. Mr. Lautaro Sandino Montes, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nicaragua to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the European Union, Czech Republic and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Nicaragua to UNESCO

During the turn-over ceremony between

H. E. Dr. Gisele Marie Hortense Ossakedjombo-Ngoua Memiaghe, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Gabonese Republic to UNESCO and to the OIF

and

H. E. Mr. Lautaro Sandino Montes, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nicaragua to the Kingdom of Belgium, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the European Union, Czech Republic and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Nicaragua to UNESCO

Paris, 24 January 2013

Dear Ambassadors, colleagues and friends

Let me express my gratitude, on behalf of the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of President Daniel Ortega Saavedra, for the confidence and the honor you have given to my country Nicaragua and myself for the important task of Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

I wish to thank H. E. Dr. Gisele Marie Hortense Ossakedjombo-Ngoua Memiaghe, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Gabonese Republic to UNESCO and to OIF and all the members of her staff for their hard work and compromise with our Group during her presidency. Ambassador, your contribution has been important, appreciated and valuable. I want to thank Ms. Mary Joy Capayas-Brocard of the Secretariat of UNESCO, for having exercised the functions of Secretariat for the Group 77 and China and hope that she will continue working with us.

I would like to take this opportunity to express to the Permanent Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and to Ambassador Rebeca Sánchez Bello, my wishes for the health of Hugo Chávez Frías, hoping that he will return to his duty very soon as President of Venezuela.

Our organization, UNESCO, is living a crucial moment. Renovation and adjustments have become common words in our house. To make our organization more effective and to fulfill the purpose for which it was created, in our Group, solidarity and cooperation are the core ideas that have allowed us to create unity amongst diversity. I am convinced that dialogue and seeking of consensus are the unique and better way to achieve the aims of our Group. For this reason, I commit myself to it and would be the guidelines of our presidency.

We are all aware that the G-77 and China is the biggest opinion and political group in UNESCO. We have been influential and we have facilitated a real change in the world. We have to congratulate ourselves for the great achievement of the rightful inclusion of Palestine as full member state of UNESCO. After we made this first step, other UN bodies have taken the same step. We, in UNESCO, were the first ones. The G-77 and China unite the best and most progressive part of mankind.

For the year ahead, let me propose to you that our Group Focus in some concrete areas:

1. We should continue reflecting on the future of UNESCO, its aims and objectives; we have to be proactive and not only say what we don't like but also how we can improve our Organization. We should tackle this task with an open mind and the construction of our position must be the result of a real consensus among us; a result of the contribution of the different groups.
2. We should continue our reflection on Education for All and review the implications for developing countries of the initiative of the UN Secretary General "Education First". What about if we retake, as well, the idea of Science and Technology for All. An initiative that was approved by UNESCO some time ago.
3. We should keep our interest on the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970. Let us work on how to guaranty its continuing works and adjustment. This Convention must be kept alive.
4. Also, we have to continue our work on World Heritage, its functioning and how we can improve the mechanism of work not only formally but as well as its concept. As well as with regards to the World Heritage Education Programme.
5. Finally, keeping the web page of the G-77 and China UNESCO Chapter updated with all the information and activities that we do.

This entire task will be achieved only with the participation of all the members of our Group. I invite each one of you to lead one of these activities. I have the confidence that our Bureau will play an important role, their guidance and support will have the most importance for me.

Dear Ambassadors, colleagues and friends

Our commitment, as a country and mine personally, is to serve and facilitate, work for our consensus so our voice will be stronger.

Thanks again for your confidence.