



The Delegation of France

UNESCO

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“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”. In this day and age we face global problems that require tireless collective work to resolve. France as an international “big player”, is not hidden from these issues. With a permanent seat of the UN security council, NATO, G-8, and many other multilateral organizations. With increased integration into the European economy, France has experienced increased stability and international emergence in the past few decades. According to France’s governmental organization, their “domestic governance strategy affirms that a State founded on efficient, honest, transparent administration that is close to the citizens is essential for sustainable human development.” In the case of this UNESCO topic, education can be seen as a large portion of said “sustainable human development”. They stress the importance of uniformity between the government, the people, and everyone in between. In France, the educational programs are governed by the Ministry of National Education. The next topic, World heritage conservation, is very important. This issue has, more or less, re-emerged due to the increased conflict in the Middle-East, specifically pertaining to the World Heritage Sites in Syria. France is no stranger to significant cultural locations and items, and sympathizes as well as encourages the discussion of plausible solutions. Lastly, France recognizes the importance of Education 2030 and is excited to enhance international educational levels to new levels. With a fairly stable hold on its own educational system, France believes that there is a lot that they can contribute towards this 2030 goal. On balance, France embraces the opportunity to discuss and

learn from other nations while battling these issues, as well as play an integral role of helping and educating those countries who need some help.

On an international scale, we are observing serious hits to our education at the hands of the misuse of governance. The governance issues come from a few distinctive roots. Firstly, corruption, the unfortunate reality is that we face corruption in all aspects of our modern world. However, it is arguable that education takes a large brunt of the hit. The abuse of power and evident bribery restricts the ability to provide the resources, policies, and infrastructure to support growth in the education sector. The second being political instability, this is a bit more of an inevitable issue, as it can pertain to conflict and shocks that cannot be predicted and therefore when these occur, resources need to be re-allocated in order to solve the largest problem at hand. France is not without problems in terms of education at the governance level. This can be outlined with a few eye opening statistics. Firstly, approximately 17% of all students leave school without a high school diploma, and in a recent mandatory military and civic service day, it was found that 1 in 10 of 17 year olds could not understand basic French.¹ This data has shown that there has been a decrease in the standards of written comprehension and mathematics since 2000. France's new education minister has overhauled the high school system, implementing plans such as technology in classrooms. One of the largest challenges is ensuring that differences in ideology getting in the way of proper education, and this is more important in certain areas such as the suburbs as they are more ideologically in sync as the larger urban areas. In terms of solutions there are many ways that the issue of governance tied to education can be handled. UNESCO has a role to address this issue, or at the very least hand everything that can be handled or expected. One possible solution is increasing the wages of public workers, France acknowledges that this is an intriguing solution, however this is not an easy thing to change as there are not funds flooding out of government building doors. France believes in the empowerment of education in terms decreasing corruption. If there is a more educated population, it has been discovered that corruption will decrease. Another avenue that is interesting is the use of technology. Technology as a medium of connecting the governing with the governed or as a medium to bypass the governed could do wonders in terms of

¹ "High Flyers and Sad Failures." *The Economist*. The Economist Newspaper, 14 May 2015. Web. 04 Nov. 2016.

decreasing corruption. The delegation of France is eager to debate and explore many resolutions to solve this pressing issue.

The second topic of preserving and protecting heritage sites is very important as well. This is, as stated before, a problem which affects the global community on an unbelievable scale. This being said, the delegation of France would like to take into account past actions taken by the United Nations within the global community. In 1992, the creation of the World Heritage Center occurred under the eye of the UNESCO.² Along with deciding on which sites to deem globally important, this sub-organization raises awareness around the importance of heritage while keeping the public informed of any at risk heritage sites.³ France has also taken the important steps in order to preserve our own heritage, the establishment of the “heritage code”⁴, which governs the conservation of Heritage and the organizations that strive towards that goal. France continues to celebrate its heritage with over forty notable World Heritage Sites including the Gulf of Porto in Corsica⁵. However, it is clear that simply being aware of one’s heritage is not enough in this world. Although France is not in direct harm of the destruction of heritage within the Middle East, it is clear that all countries must have set plans in order to protect their heritage, as France must protect its aforementioned sites. The underlying reality is that the destruction of heritage sites is most always a product of conflict, unlike popular opinion. This mass issue is not one that has begun in recent years, as early as 333 B.C. looting began, when Alexander the Great decided he would enter the tent of King Darius III and take tapestries among other important goods.⁶ Of course there have been efforts to preserve national heritage sites, however evidently they have not been effective enough. The World Heritage Convention of 1972 commits to aiding, financially and otherwise, the preservation of heritage sites for its members.⁷ These steps need to be built upon towards a greater effort in terms of the preservation of these important landmarks. With the delegation of France pushing for the creating of a strong culture based education, one must remember there are other proposed solutions as well. Primarily, as one of the main issues being that culturally significant buildings are being destroyed in the crossfires of war, we believe that a preservation task force devoted to

² "World Heritage Centre." *UNESCO*. Web. 18 Jan. 2016.

³ Ibid

⁴ "France." *Heritage Portal*. N.p., 9 May 2013. Web. 04 Nov. 2016.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Poole, Robert. "Looting Iraq" *Smithsonian Magazine*. Web. 19 Jan. 2016.

⁷ "The World Heritage Convention" *UNESCO*. Web. 19 Jan. 2016.

rescuing and evacuating these places of significance, if at all possible. This force could be most effective by acting before a smaller conflict erupts into violence, and while predicting this may prove difficult they could as well prove to be valuable in terms of maintaining national heritage. Lastly, we should begin more effectively enforcing and increasing strictness in treaties to ensure that signatories are in no way associated in the destruction or theft of cultural heritage items. These points are some of many that this delegation is ready to bring to the table to conquer this horrific reality.

The final topic of supporting and accomplishing 2030 is another topic that is of huge importance. The goal to enhance international education without exclusions is very paramount in a world that is becoming increasingly competitive, but equally increasingly reliant on the younger generations. With UNESCO's goals in terms of education that state they wish "to provide global and regional leadership in education, strengthen education systems worldwide, and respond to contemporary global challenges through education"⁸, it is easy to see that UNESCO has a passion in terms of striving towards increases the quantity, quality, and efficiency of the educational systems in place around the world. As stated previously, France has its fair share of issues in regards to education, and this delegation is eager to discuss and eventually implement changes to make the next generations better off. France believes it is important that Education 2030 under the ever-important Development Goals of the UN goes under certain reforms in order to increase its specificity in an effort to create a more effective outcome, and a larger international success come 2030 and on. The biggest disparities that exist in France is the education quality and level between the *banlieues* or suburbs and the urban areas. Education 2030 aims to solve problems like this by both providing free school at the lower levels and by utilising local governing to access areas that are most in need and are hard to reach. Another main goal of Education 2030 is helping grow the education system in areas which have been damaged by natural disasters, and while France is not in this category, this delegation certainly sympathizes with this idea. In areas such as Haiti, the United States, and other recently damaged areas, there is not only a lack of funds, but a lack of advocacy and urgency placed on the restructuring and rebuilding of proper education. It is unbelievably important to have a plan in place to ensure that from 2030 and into the future that does not occur, and that education is placed on a pedestal of sorts in terms of importance. France agrees with many countries in

⁸ "Education for the 21st Century." UNESCO. 2013. Accessed May 28, 2016.
<http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-21st-century>.

terms of understanding that the implementation of the SDG educational goals is something that has to be thoroughly thought out and reformed. This delegation believes an intermediary needs to be put in place that effectively plants these systems in their respective countries, and monitors the progress closely. Only until this is possible, the effectiveness of this huge project can be seen and evaluated. Although much hard work has gone into these goals and the policies that come along with them, France believes there is so much that has to be done in the remaining 14 years, and this delegation ensure that France will be at the forefront of these improvements, not just for their own country and people, but for this coalition of nations, in which we have so much trust and admiration.

In conclusion, the delegation of France is excited to debate, discuss, and resolve these issues of great importance. UNESCO is such an important organization within the United Nations and this delegation respects the role necessary to contribute to this group of nations that have so much potential to change the world as we know it.