Although the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet behind us, the time has come to think about what sort of lasting implications it is going to have on the broader geopolitical, economic and social environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it even clearer that ICTs in education and connectivity are fundamentals of the right to education in the 21st century.

UNESCO’s Education Sector must strengthen its engagement with these issues with a view to avoid an unprecedented rise in the inequalities of access to education, especially in the developing world.

We appreciate UNESCO’s efforts in mobilizing key partners in support of educational systems.

We must ensure that the response to this crisis becomes an opportunity to reinforce, through Distance Learning and Open Educational Resources, new modalities of quality learning, for which teacher training is paramount.

Let’s also not forget that school dropout, notably among boys, illiteracy, bullying at school and gender inequality in education remain major problems of today’s world.

These old and persistent challenges must be addressed when planning the future of education, bearing in mind that we are not on track to achieve SDG-4.

We welcome the contribution that Los Pinos Declaration will make to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages promoting policies that ensures the inclusion of indigenous groups, and their right to be taught in their own language.

Mr President,
We have been able to witness the role of culture in giving people hope and therefore enhancing their resilience during this crisis.

Safeguarding heritage in all its forms is more relevant than ever.

Moreover, protecting the artists and culture professional in this difficult context is crucial if we want to preserve freedom, creativity and diversity.

UNESCO’s Cultural Conventions and Recommendations constitute UNESCO’s wealth and their implementation and statutory obligations have to remain the focus of our attention despite the challenges.
In this regard, we express our deep concerns at the increase in illicit traffic of cultural properties. We call upon UNESCO to continue strengthening the provisions of the 1970 Convention and invite it to seek new mechanisms to preserve and restore cultural heritage and combat organized crime networks.

The high potential of “culture for development” of the 2005 Convention has to be recognized. It is a vehicle for diverse, inclusive and growing creative economies.

Moreover, we welcome the organized discussions, within UNESCO, on sustainable tourism. We believe that this is a crucial issue in the search for solutions to overcome the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the current context, GRULAC points out to the growing importance of advancing with greater momentum in the elaboration of the Open Science Recommendation.

We therefore urge the Secretariat to convene the Intergovernmental Committee as soon as possible in order to move forward with negotiations to elaborate a draft recommendation.

This crisis is combined with pre-existing development challenges and we believe that there is still more room for the Organization to exercise proactive and transformative leadership in the field of Natural and Exact Sciences.

Today it is crucial that the Secretariat supports Member States, by building capacities in all areas, including water resources.

GRULAC attaches great importance to the role of the IHP Committee and .....wishes to congratulate IOC for its actions in the framework of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

GRULAC welcomes the Organization’s efforts on climate change, biodiversity and, in particular, its work on resilience and risk reduction against natural disasters.

In this regard, we reiterate the need to pay special attention to the specific needs of SIDS and significantly enhance effort in the implementation of the SIDS Action Plan.

Mr. President,

We have to start rethinking the world and the lasting impact of the pandemic on societies.

In that context, the work of Social Sciences should focus not only on promoting development, as we know it, but also on contributing to the design of new forms of development and on helping to implement innovative public policies.

The future Recommendation on Ethics in Artificial Intelligence will be an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of a responsible use of new technologies, maintaining the centrality of human rights, cultural diversity and social inclusion.
Without ignoring any of the other Social Sciences programs,...

GRULAC welcomes the reactivation of the Slave Route program, with the hope that it could lead to the launch of high-level activities.

Moreover, the recent wave of mass protests across the world, brought to light the importance of UNESCO’s initiatives in favor of the elimination of racial discrimination and hate crimes.

Mr President,

This pandemic demonstrated the importance of Information and the fundamental role of independent journalism and especially of knowledge societies.

It also exposed the reality of the huge gap in access to Internet and ICTs. We have witnessed it through the difficulties encountered by some member states in participating to consultations and meetings on line during the pandemic.

On another subject, it is time to urgently speed up the reflection on the Memory of the World Program and Register in order to resume implementation as soon as possible.

Mr President,

GRULAC believes that disinformation and the spread of fake news –mainly through social media– is a major threat to the right to information and to the security of individuals and societies. UNESCO must redouble surveillance and combat these practices.

GRULAC recognizes the important roles of both IPDC and IFAP in relations to these issues.

Moreover, we are looking forward to see how the new area of work on artificial intelligence is going to unfold in the different UNESCO programs, following the regional forums and consultations namely, the Regional Forum held in São Paulo, last December”.

Mr President,

We acknowledge the importance of collecting data, indicators, statistics and the elaboration of policies to respond to the needs of Member States in all the areas of work of UNESCO.

These efforts have gone hand in hand with those carried out by Member States in terms of gathering priority information toward national programs in all sectors.

In this crisis, the vital importance of UNESCO's action in the field has also been highlighted.
We are convinced that the mobilization of Field Offices to collect and trace information on national priorities and demands in UNESCO's areas of competence, as well as to support and to adapt each UNESCO initiative to the local level, has been essential.

At a time when the Organization is planning a review of its Field Offices, the experience generated by the current pandemic situation should help us draw lessons. Any reflection on this issue should be carried out with the Member States, in an open and inclusive manner; recognizing the specific characteristics and needs of each region and sub-region, keeping in mind that there is no “one size fits all” approach.”

Para concluir, GRULAC desea dar la bienvenida a la Seniora Gabriela Ramos, la nueva Subdirectora General de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas,

(To conclude, GRULAC wishes to welcome Ms Gabriela Ramos, the new Assistant Director General of Social and Human Sciences)

Gracias por su atención