

## **MESSAGE OF DR. SHAHBAZ KHAN, DIRECTOR AND REPRESENTATIVE OF UNESCO JAKARTA**

**EVENT:** UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines Partner's Forum and Fellowship

**THEME:** "Reimagining Sustainability: Safeguarding Culture, Protecting the Environment and Advancing Quality Education in a Changing World"

**DATE AND PLACE:** 03 March 2020, Philippine International Convention Center- Manila

Greet:

1. Undersecretary Ernesto C. Abella, Officer-in-Charge, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines
2. Ms. Len Barrientos, Deputy Executive Director, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines
3. Shigeru Aoyagi, UNESCO Bangkok
4. Dr. Gil S. Jacinto, National Focal Person, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)
5. Commissioners and Partners

Message

I praise and acclaim the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines for organizing this Partner's Forum and Fellowship that seeks to strengthen UNACOM's partnership with other Government agencies, UN Offices, NGOs, and academic institutions to advance the initiatives of UNESCO in the country and most importantly, to express gratitude to all its partners for the past years.

Today's global challenges are too great for any organization to tackle alone. For this reason, UNESCO believes that there is a pressing need for partnerships that bring together international organizations, networks, and cooperation with the public and private sectors. The definition of partnership to which UNESCO adheres is that set out by the United Nations – "They are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in

which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.”

UNESCO is the only UN Agency to have a global network of national cooperating bodies known as National Commission for UNESCO. With this, UNESCO National Commissions are not treated as “external partners” but as members of the wider “UNESCO family.” The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines is one of the 199 National Commissions across the world. They constitute a truly global family with as an authoritative network of stakeholders, partners and experts and offer a comparative advantage to the Organization within the United Nations systems. They are uniquely well placed to support UNESCO in demonstrating the relevance of UNESCO at country level and supporting UNESCO’s engagement and networking with partners such as national governments, local government units, donors, key constituencies in civil society, non-governmental organizations, global and regional organizations, UNESCO family partners and project specific implementation partners.

Since UNESCO was founded, its mandates and functions have evolved and expanded over the years. Responding to and influenced by the development of the organization, the mandates and functions of the National Commissions, including the Philippines, have also changed and expanded significantly both in the Organization’s legal texts and in practice. The Charter of National Commissions for UNESCO, adopted in 1978, called upon Member States to broaden their tasks by adding the functions of the preparation and evaluation of UNESCO’s programmes. In turn, National Commission’s cooperation with the Secretariat has intensified and its role in the National Government has been reinforced.

Although UNACOM in the Philippines has come a long way in advancing UNESCO’s objectives and implementing its programme in the country, there are still a lot of room for improvement, with the help of the national government, UNESCO Secretariat and its partners, to ensure that the country’s National Commission further advance its relevance to unremittingly contribute in reimagining sustainability, safeguarding culture, protecting the environment and advancing quality education in the country.

For one, Member States need to provide UNACOM with the required human and financial resources to fulfill their missions. The support of national governments varies greatly from country to country, but overall, there is a mismatch between the broad and expanding mandates and expectations of National Commissions and their human and financial resources. The result is that it is difficult for many Commissions to ensure continuity of engagement with the Secretariat and to sustain strategic alliances with civil society, the private sector and other external partners.

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines should also identify ways to raise its profile and revenues outside the traditional financing channels to make the agency more self-sustainable. This includes fundraising from donors and the private sector as well as income-generating activities through, for instance, the translation of UNESCO publications, organization of conferences and sponsorship of events.

The coordination of the network of National Commissions can also be improved for greater efficiency and effectiveness. The relationship between National Commissions, if properly used could open up numerous possibilities for interaction, cooperation, co-creation, learning and development of and among National Commissions. We were happy to note that in 2019 the German and the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO implemented the Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) program for designated teachers of the Bicol University. This is such a good example on how to create synergies between the work of National Commissions and how this leads to more innovation and increased motivation of all concerned. This further allows the National Commissions to further enhance their contribution to the mission and work of UNESCO.

UNACOM, with the help of UNESCO Secretariat, also needs to continue developing a mechanism to better manage the knowledge generated from its projects and activities. The interesting insights, ideas and partnership experiences and practices can be considered one of the most important assets of the Organization, which is lost if it is not organized, shared, used and built upon. The approach to knowledge management should lead to a sustained learning, stronger cooperation and more visibility of the results achieved. A comprehensive knowledge management mechanism would ensure that good practices and

lessons learned are systematically identified, analyzed and shared with internal and external partners, and other members of the National Commission network to ensure learning across the organization.

These are just some of the challenges that UNACOM can address to ensure that they can continue to act as a national entity geared to pursue the task set by the government and provide support in advancing the work of UNESCO.

The main purpose of UNESCO, as assigned by its constitution, is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world without distinction or discrimination. If the Organization is to achieve this purpose, that in each Member State it should have the active support of the intellectual and scientific communities and the co-operation of the various sectors of the population.

That is why today, as we gather for the Partnership's Forum and Fellowship, we also commend and extend our sincerest gratitude to all of UNACOM's partners – by actively supporting and providing UNACOM with all the intellectual, scientific, artistic, administrative and project management assistance that it may require, you are also directly participating in the promotion of the mandate and mission of UNESCO and realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNESCO has been known to work with a wide range of partners in all of its fields of competence. Partnerships are a key enabler for meeting global challenges, generating sustainable change, and providing long-lasting impact. Partnerships are firmly embedded in UNESCO's way of working at global, regional and national levels. By joining forces with its partners UNESCO can leverage resources, expertise and competencies to promote all UNESCO's ideals and values, to achieve common development goals, and to strengthen visibility and impact of its action.

That is why with the presence of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines and with all of your help, we are confident that, in due time, we can create lasting peace, equitable and sustainable development and ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you very much!