



“UNESCO: collective intelligence in action”

Audrey Azoulay

Audrey Azoulay (France) was appointed to the post of Director-General of UNESCO on 10th November 2017. The former French Minister of Culture and Communication is the 11th Director-General of the Organization and the second woman to occupy this position. With a long-standing commitment to the universal values of peace, she is determined to maintain this commitment as the head of UNESCO: “a modern UNESCO, which will contribute to shaping “the world of tomorrow”.



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Audrey Azoulay at the investiture ceremony on 13 November 2017.

“My ambition is that UNESCO plays a major role in giving a human face to globalization,” Audrey Azoulay said, on 13 November 2017, during her installation as Director-General of the Organization. She considers that UNESCO is a standard-setter that helps society advance – as an expert agency contributing to the dissemination of knowledge to the greatest number of people, and as an intellectual forum for the world of tomorrow.

The world of tomorrow needs unity, she believes. And to rebuild this unity, it is necessary to rely on the universal values of peace through education, culture, science, and freedom, and to ensure that our action is rooted in the long term. “By virtue of its missions, its voice and its action, UNESCO is in direct contact with the future of humanity in the long term,” she noted. “This mandate is exercised with a key priority given to Africa and women. To Africa, in the conviction that it is the continent that crystallizes the challenges and solutions of our common future.” And to women and girls, so they may “restore their rightful place as agents of their own destiny and a force of progress in our societies.”

Audrey Azoulay also stressed on UNESCO’s special role in orchestrating international cooperation and bringing together the normative and operative as effectively as possible. “This supposes that we continue thinking, nurturing the crucial link with intellectual circles, especially in all scientific areas, that continuously probe the complexities of the current era,” she said. One of the major enterprises of our century in which UNESCO should play a leading role, as it cuts across each of the pillars of its mandate is, according to the Director-General, “the reconciliation between the unprecedented digital and scientific revolution that we are living and the humanist values that we uphold.”

Based on UNESCO’s clear skills to provide for the [2030 Agenda](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change, she stressed the need for more alliances with other stakeholders: United Nations agencies, Member States, regional organizations, cities and civil societies.

Convinced that none of the major challenges facing the world today can be met by any one country on its own, without relying on the fundamental pillars of science, education and culture, the Director-General believes that UNESCO must participate fully in a world order based on multilateralism and humanist values: “UNESCO’s promise and what we owe to the world is to work in this multilateral framework by acting on the root causes of our collective destiny,” she said.

In the face of the multiple challenges that we all share, a world without collective intelligence would be powerless, according to Audrey Azoulay, who describes UNESCO as “collective intelligence in action.”