<div align="center">

**Intervention**

**40<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference 2019**

**Education Commission**

**Holy See**

**F. Friedrich Bechina**

</div>

*UNESCO General Assembly November 2019 – Contribution of the Holy See*

Mr Chairman,

The Holy See, as subject of international law, represents and coordinates the educational activities of the Catholic Church. Indeed, with about 220.000 schools and more than 1500 Higher Education Institutions in all continents and in a majority of countries all over the world, the Catholic Church is able to serve as a major global education provider. In its own organizational structure, it combines universal vision and strategy, with a profound rootedness in local communities. Thus, the Holy See proposes two main areas of closer collaboration with UNESCO and all its member States:

Firstly, we want to share fully and support the main purpose of the *Agenda 2030 for Education*, aimed at leaving no one behind. This + goal becomes an imperative of *lifelong learning* so that - in addition to access for all - adequate actions + may be undertaken throughout life. In order to give a critical contribution to reach this purpose, Pope Francis has invited world leaders to Rome on 14 May 2020 to commit to and to announce the reconstruction of a *Global Compact on Education* with the purpose to of strengthening "*the courage to form people who are willing to serve the community. Service is a pillar of the culture of encounter,*"[1] The goal of the Holy Father is to re-establish an *educational covenant*, to overcome existing divisions and to build processes of sharing and responsibility. A renewed educational pact requires a paradigm shift in educational planning: the transmission of knowledge - and knowledge itself - must be understood as a *relational good*, in which a fruitful didactic, emotional, and personal exchange allows students to grow in their ability to relate to others in a constructive way. If educating – from the Latin word *e-ducere* - means "leading out", "bringing out", in the context of the current crisis it is necessary to underline the extraordinary value of the *educational relationship*.

Even before considering such an *educational relationship* in terms of teaching techniques, skills, and competences to transmit to others, we must see it in relation to

---

[1] POPE FRANCIS, *Message for launch of the Educational Pact of 14 May 2020*, 12 September 2019.

the possibility of influencing and transforming reality. The educational relationship has the peculiarity not only of transmitting knowledge, but also of being an experience, a laboratory of relations. In order to contribute effectively to this process, we must move towards *a humanized education*, in which not only educational services are provided, but also all personal, moral, social and also religious attitudes are involved and taken care of.

The second area, in which the Holy See is willing to offer its advice, is promoting the recognition of studies and degrees in Higher Education in order to enable, promote and facilitate the mobility of students and a better sharing of human and educational resources worldwide for the benefit of the common and individual good.

UNESCO, in the last decades, has played a leading role in this field with the continental and regional Recognition Conventions - the Holy See has ratified four of them - and we are happy to celebrate with you all during these days the deposit of our instrument of ratification of the Addis Convention for the African UNESCO Region. For all these Conventions, we have played an active role in the drafting of the official texts and correlated documents.

As the Holy See has also actively supported the project and draft of the UNESCO Global Convention, we hope and expect that in this prestigious institution we will find a broad consensus for this important project, which can help bring so many important words – recurrently mentioned during the sessions of this General Conference - to action by placing the global common good (and the interest of millions of learners) before individual political opinions and particular interests.

Thank you for your attention.