

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Hundred-and-tenth session

SUMMARY

The Chairman hereby submits to the members of the Executive Board, for information, a letter which Mrs. Maria de Lourdes Pinacilgo has asked him to bring to their attention.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro





Lisbon, 16 August 1980

Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo  
Al. Santo Antonio dos Capuchos 4-5<sup>o</sup>  
1100 LISBON,  
Portugal

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The welcome you gave me when I visited Paris in July was, as always, an expression of the solidarity and friendship which have long cemented our relations. I am most grateful to you.

I should like, through your intermediary, to extend my gratitude to the Executive Board as a whole. In reading the relevant documents, I realize the endeavours which the Executive Board, and its Bureau in particular, made in a bid to minimize the untoward consequences of the absence of one of its members at the 109th session and of the obstacles which, against that member's will, place her mandate in abeyance.

Those consequences were unequivocally spelt out in the statement which the Director-General made on the matter at the private session of the Executive Board on 5 June. The most trivial event must be followed right through to its logical conclusion if its significance is to be brought out clearly as regards the respect shown by all the Member States for the undertakings they have given and the workings of the institutions which the States themselves have created. Matters would otherwise be viewed in terms of an outmoded "diplomacy" and no account would be taken of the objective truth of the facts. I am one of those people who, on many occasions, have spoken of Unesco as being "the moral conscience of the United Nations system" and, in my view, that conscience has to be seen in action in dealing as much with the major issues involved in its Programme as with the institutional structures which enable it to function properly.

On reading report 110 EK/2107/12.5 para. 36 et seq., I realize that Mr. Hummel was the spokesman of the Bureau of the Executive Board in its representations to the Portuguese Government and I am grateful to him for his willingness to take on that task. My only regret is that I was not able to welcome him in Lisbon as behoves colleagues sitting on the same body for, quite apart from the pleasure of seeing him again, I could have acquainted him with the dispositions of the Portuguese Constitution underlying the matter concerning us, which do not transpire from the report of his conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I should be grateful, therefore, if you would allow me to refer briefly to the main issue raised in para. 37.3, in which it is stated that "the Minister would be prepared to allow Mrs. Pintasilgo to take her seat on the Executive Board, provided that she resigned from her post as Permanent Delegate".

In the Portuguese institutional framework, ambassadors are appointed and dismissed by decree promulgated by the President of the Republic, in pursuance of Article 138 para. (a) of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, which deals with the powers of the President of the Republic in regard to international relations.

Ambassador Ghans Eldine El-Wakil,  
Chairman of the Executive Board of Unesco,  
7, place de Fontenoy,  
75001 Paris





The President of the Republic, who asked me in July 1979 to lead the fixed-term government whose task it was to prepare for the unscheduled elections, is accordingly the only authority empowered to dismiss me. In spite of the Government's proposals to that end, the President of the Republic did not do so and maintained towards me an attitude that reflected both a clearcut political position (a President of the Republic does not withdraw the confidence which he has placed in a Prime Minister whom he appointed and praised publicly for the way in which she has discharged her functions) and the moral consistency and integrity that are characteristic of him (after displaying unflinching confidence in me in the face of the attacks which the coalition currently in power unleashed against me, the President of the Republic is not going to break up that solidarity, even in the absence of any institutional links).

In these circumstances, there can plainly be no question of my resigning. The issue is one not only of the complete identity of views existing between the President of the Republic and myself on foreign policy, but of my own consistent response to his undivided support and confidence.

Hence there can be no question of my contemplating the possibility of resigning from my functions as Permanent Delegate before the legislative elections on 5 October next.

As for the possible outcome, I am very conscious of the fact that the Executive Board has other matters to discuss on the eve of the General Conference and I do not wish to burden it unduly. Thus, having explained my position and the reasons dictating it, I feel that I am in a position to accept the solution that creates least difficulty for the Executive Board, namely the appointment of deputies for the coming session.

I should like to make one last point, albeit a minor one. In the report, in document 109 EX/PRIV/SR.5, which Mr. Hummel made on his conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, it is stated that an "alternative" proposal had been put to me. This is in fact correct. The Minister of Foreign Affairs proposed in January that I resign from my post as Permanent Delegate. I replied at once in the negative and I accordingly could not be expected to make any further reply.

I should be obliged if you would bring this letter to the attention of my colleagues on the Executive Board. I hope that this unfortunate incident will not affect the good relations existing between Unesco as a whole and my country.

On that hopeful note, I should like to conclude by thanking you once again for your own generous attention.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo

