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UNESCO OER RECOMMENDATION
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(Speaking French).
>> MODERATOR: Ladies, please do come in.
Welcome. Thank you. If I continue in English, is that okay?

(Speaking French).

Okay. All right. So -- (Speaking French).

(Speaking French. No English translation).

>> I will talk in English later. It will be a little easier for me, and I think also not difficult for you to listen. Thank you.

(Speaking French).

>> When I speak English, it turns to French? Yeah? Okay. It does -- you don't have -- it doesn't have interpretation. Right. It turns -- it's -- okay. Would you like to introduce yourself? Would you like to introduce yourself? Okay.

And are you from university or -- okay. Nice to meet you. Welcome. Sir?

>> (Speaking French).

>> MODERATOR: Mobile learning week.

>> (Speaking French).

>> I'm the technical director of the regulatory agency, and we are in -- he's my boss. We are interested in this issue, because in our country, we are developing the e-Government, and we would like to identify the -- I mean, all the challenges that these issue is about. Thank you.

>> Hello, I'm Mina Kim, with UNESCO. Thank you.

>> (Speaking French).

>> MODERATOR: So I think it's very nice we have a chance to interact. The first presentation I will do is just to give you an outline of the issues that we are discussing. So -- so basically, in September last year, we had the second world OER Congress, which was organized by the government of Slovenia. The first objective was to examine the solutions to mainstreaming educational resources in educational systems. Often educational resources are any educational resources, books, videos, learning objects, that are available on an open license and are free.

Showcasing also best practices in OER policies, initiatives, and networking of experts, and providing recommendations for mainstreaming open educational resources into education systems.

So this was building on a meeting that we had in 2012, and a declaration which came out of it. This declaration is on the screen. There are 10 points. This declaration has ten points which can be resumed in the four points on left. So basically understanding and use, facilitating, understanding use, capacity building, reinforcing strategic alliances and forward-looking actions such as research.

The punchline, the most important, the one that's the most

poignant is j, the last one. And it's to encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds what that means is in a country, if taxpayers pay the government in order for the government to produce educational materials, it would seem illogical that they would have to pay again to have access to these educational materials. That was the logic of the declaration in 2012.

I have it. Okay.

Okay. Thank you. The second world OER Congress brought together 500 stakeholders, 500 people from over 100 countries, including 14 ministers of education, produced two things, first the Ljubljana action plan which we will discuss now, and the second world OER Congress ministerial statement, and the ministerial statement supported the Ljubljana. We had the 39th session of the general conference. Now the general conference happens every two years in which all the Member States of UNESCO come together it vote on the budget and the program for the two years to come. It's the most important meeting we have at UNESCO, in order for its planning and budgeting.

And during that meeting, it was -- there was a resolution to start the process to develop a UNESCO recommendation on open educational resources. Now, this is a standard setting document, which is -- there are not very many recommendations and there are no recommendations in the area of a modality of education. Most of the recommendations are on levels of education. There are recommendations on teacher education, teachers, the status of teachers. There are recommendations on technical vocational education, but this is the first time that there's a recommendation on a modality of education that has been approved for development.

Now, while we're doing all of this, the umbrella, the point, the most important reason that we are doing this is for sustainable development goal 4, which inclusive quality education. The wording of it is on the screen now and it is the umbrella in which we do our actions in this area.

Now, in terms of the preparation for this second world OER Congress, we had regional consultations and we did a global survey of OER use, of governments and other stakeholders. And we did the survey and the regional consultations with our colleagues at the Commonwealth of Learning who ran these two operations.

In terms of the consultations they were to identify what was happening at the national level. What is the status of the declaration that we just -- I showed you at the beginning. How

is it being implemented? How are the five challenges which I'm going to speak of in a second being main streamed in OER and also to build awareness about the upcoming Congress.

This is where they were. Last year this time was a very busy time. We -- so it was very intense and in each session, it was the same questions that were asked, and different responses and different areas were brought up during the discussions.

These are the challenges that we have been discussing. Basically, there are five. The first one is the capacity of users to access, reuse and share open educational resources. The greatest challenge to using OER is a lot of people don't know how to access them. They don't know how to reuse them or to create them. It's not very complicated but there are stills that are needed concerning the use of licenses and the sharing of materials.

As you can imagine, the reason that we are talking about it at WSIS is because it -- and in the eLearning discussion is because, in fact, the use of technologies is the most -- is the modality in which the resources are shared the most. So there are issues of that, and the second is language and cultural issues. In terms of language, OER is not spared from everything else on the web. Most of the materials that are available and the majority are in English. So there's a need to ensure that there are resources in other languages.

Cultural issues. We are talking about the issue of whether -- how knowledge is received and how knowledge is given, and how it's accepted. What I mean here is that in some cultures, it's not acceptable for students to create knowledge that's shared as part of the course because they are students and the knowledge should be shared from a professor's point of view.

In other cultures, it's acceptable that students create knowledge and share. In other cultures, knowledge has to -- it's a very -- it's a very complex issue and it's something that has to be addressed for open educational resources development to be accepted.

Linked to this is the issue of inclusive, equitable access to quality OER. Now all of those words in UNESCO talk are very -- are keywords. Inclusive, we are talking about persons with disabilities, ensuring that open educational resources are done in an accessible format, and the reason for this is very simple. 15% of the world's population, which is pushing 7 billion -- so if you do the math, that's a lot of people is disabled in one form or another, and this is not going to get better, because we have -- because of wars, the aging

population, and the climate crisis. So it's very important that resources that are done electronically are done in a manner that's accessible.

There are tools on the Internet. There are tools in ICT development that allows for this and it's developing much -- developing very quickly and it's really an area where in terms of open educational resources it should be exploited. In terms of everything else on the net too, of course.

Equitable access, there are different mediums in which people access the Internet and access the information on the Internet. Since we are only about five -- there's only -- there's nobody here that's on their phone, but most people access the Internet with this. But it is not possible -- it's very difficult to actually create and -- and actively use OER to be able to create OER and share them on a mobile device. It's easy to access, but not easy to create.

So that's an issue that has to be taken into place. Now, I understand there are not many people that are at the educational field. I'm sure if there were people here who were part of the university community, they would jump on the next word which is "quality." It's linked to quality assurance. And quality assurance is a huge bag that opens up. How do you quality assure, an educational resource? Should it have special mechanisms. Should it go through the regular mechanisms but also include peer review because it's done in a collaborative manner? All of these discussions have to be had when it's -- the issue is brought up. And in terms of quality assurance, what has come out of the discussions is it's an educational resource that needs to have the same scrutiny as any other educational resource that's put before a learning situation.

Developing sustainability models. This one, when we first started the draft and the discussions, this title was developing business models. But, in fact, it's all about how -- how can the development of open educational resources, which are free, be made sustainable? What are the different ways in which the development process can be funded?

And then, of course, policy environments. What are. Different ways and what are the policy environments that have to be taken into consideration?

Oops.

Okay. These are basically what I just said. If you want to take a minute.

In terms of -- you have -- it's basically the same, I think. Okay?

We produced a document, and it was the first time in UNESCO history that we have had an open document. It was so surprising that we didn't even know how to do it. We were advised by outside sources. Basically, what we did was the -- we produced -- it looks like this. We put it on the web. We said this is the document. It was in PDF. We said, please send your comments in, based on each section. You -- there's a form. So these were the different parts of it. And we asked people to put in their comments into it. It was open to everybody who had Internet access! And we took everybody's comments. A lot of comments repeated themselves. Many people had similar issues. The other issue was that there was -- there were some -- it was a very rich process, because there were some issues -- there were some solutions that came out of the discussion that honestly, I don't think we would have ever gotten otherwise, because it was completely open. And we took the inputs. It was on for six weeks.

The first week, there was nothing. The second week there was nothing. The last two weeks, the last ten days, the last five days, it just flooded in. We took the comments in. There were 55 different comments that were sent. Some of them were like this...

And some of them were just one page or two. We went through the document. We put in the document. I don't know if the next one -- it looks like this. People put in their comments on the side and they put in as an individual or as an institution. And then they gave some information about themselves. And then they sent it. Oops. Sorry.

And then they sent it. We revised it. We put in the document who said what part in the comments and the document was then taken to the -- to the second world OER Congress and discussed in the Congress and it was adopted there.

There were 55 comments and we also -- so, for examples of good practice, which were developing in another manner.

The document identified stakeholders and in terms of stakeholders, we normally at UNESCO documents, what we do is we talk about governments, institutions, teaching, teaching bodies, student bodies and quality assurance and recognition bodies. Those are our classic education stakeholders. This one we couldn't do that because, in fact, the stakeholders are very, very wide. You have your teacher trainers, librarians came into this. Educational policymakers, student associations, members of student -- of intergovernmental organizations, funding bodies, because funding bodies are very important in this area. And they were all in a list, and it was stated that

no matter what, you need to have the support of your -- of your decision makers.

In terms of regulators -- because we have regulators here. I just want to bring up one thing. We have a number of projects in East Africa and what has worked very well is that the projects are done with the Ministry of Education and done with the -- with UNESCO, and sometimes with an institution and what has happened is that the regulators in East Africa have actually provided free access to the Internet for the teacher training institutions, the time that they did the course. And that has proven to be very effective for making the knowledge be shared and also for supporting the use of the open educational resources. So that's been one area that's been really useful and regulator has been a very important stakeholders within this process. And I can provide you more information on this after if you like.

The action plan looks like that. There's an introduction, a context outlining. It's online and I can send you -- the link is there on the screen.

The context, the five issues I said, and the conclusions on the indications for monitoring and evaluation.

The main issue, however, is that no matter what you do, in this field, and in any other field, and this is a take home from ICT and education, it's only useful if other good pedagogical practices and conditions are in place. So this is not a pill to solve all of your problems, but it is definitely' modality that's innovative and cost effective and can provide very good solutions to challenges in education.

So this gives you an idea of what one of them looks like, one of the things. If you look it up on the web, you will find the same thing that I give you. And the ministerial statement is here. You have the countries that were there. And basically, the -- the endorsement of the ministers.

And now there's a discussion of turning this work and working on an OER recommendation at UNESCO. With that, I thank you and I stop because I give the floor to my colleague Jasper, because he will have to leave us quite soon. So he needs to present.

>> GASPER: So thank you, Zeynap. I will have to be a little impolite to all of you, because I have a train leaving in less than an hour. But I was asked by my colleagues from UNESCO to come here and to give you an idea about the -- just right now presented OER action plan adopted at the world Congress taking place last September in Ljubljana, in my home country, from a national perspective.

How our government has approached after the action plan was adopted and it makes me a little smile, probably, because I was also in the position to attend the first world OER Congress in 2012 in Paris, and Zeynap introduced the major point, j, from the Paris OER declaration in regards to openly license educational materials or resources which are funded publicly.

And I remember that in Slovenia itself, after 2012, nothing happens in this regard from the government point of view, and our national UNESCO commission, the office of it is situated in the ministry of education, and we talked then after the Congress happening in our capital, we talked about this, what can be done? It's not an easy issue. You can tell me what I have to press here.

And I will not make the same presentation about the OER objection plan like Zeynap did.

The way forward. So what can happen? And our minister who was very supportive in organizing the world Congress, giving also some funds for that, a third of the overall budget, and then we discussed, but, you know, financing publicly educational resources is not covered only by one ministry in our country. So it's many different ministries, agencies, public agencies, nonpublic agencies who are involved in that.

So we succeeded after the Congress at least that all involved organizations and institutions, they have to make an overview of what has to be done. It's regulated. It's public law that has to be changed in order to make it possible that publicly funded educational resources can be openly licensed in the future.

But that's first step that was done by our government, and I'm happy. Okay, it's more than five years after the first world OER Congress, but at least. On the other hand, okay, Slovenia was asked to host the second world OER Congress because of its achievements. Probably not only on the governmental level, but, okay, however we have an OER policy. We have governmental acts who regulate the use and the regulation and mainstreaming of OER in our national education systems. But especially in the private field, Slovenia has demonstrated in the past that we are somewhere, could be recognized as one of the leading countries in this field. And that's why UNESCO approached us and asked us, wouldn't you be probably interested in hosting the second OER Congress?

Okay. And that's what we did. And after the Congress, we put ourself, not only worldwide, but with us in Slovenia, a homework. So what should we do with the Ljubljana action plan and with the ministerial statement that was signed by our

minister as a host of the Congress? What can we do now?

We thought, okay, a national level, that's our point. We have to do our homework at home. But we would like to go further. So we are working closely with UNESCO in regards of the establishment or the adoption of a recommendation on OER. So here we will remain for the next one and a half years still a steady and active partner in this regard.

We are thinking about an initiative that we call a Dynamic Coalition on open educational resources. This is not a plan to invite governments because we know how difficult international collaboration and governmental level is. But this initiative was somehow presented and initialized during the Congress, during the discussions, but we would like to go on. We will make another step during the next week mobile learning week at -- in Paris at UNESCO, where some experts from worldwide will come together and sit to go and talk and discuss the first draft of the recommendation, which will be put online after these meetings as presented by Zeynap. We would like to introduce a Dynamic Coalition of willing and interested countries that would like to collaborate in a more active way as this usual procedures on governmental level do.

So we will invite those experts who will sit together that they are not necessarily representatives from governments or from ministries. This could be experts from universities or research institutes, from the teacher field. And so on and so on.

So we would like to invite them to establish this informal coalition, to further enhance international collaboration in this field because we have seen during all the process presented a few minutes ago, we have seen there is big interest from many countries all over the world. So from every region. Okay. It can become difficult in countries like -- who have -- which have federalized educational systems for example the US or Canada or Germany or so. They have more difficulties to introduce and produce a common national policy on OER because there are many stakeholders playing the games.

Smaller countries like Slovenia, that's a little easier. So why not play our leading role as, okay, a small country in this world, but, however, initializing such a process of activities in the field of open education.

That's one effort.

We think about also about the regional cooperation, during the region of the Congress, our minister invited them from the southeastern European region, having a common breakfast together, and signing a memorandum of understanding to closely

collaborate regionally in the field of open education. We called it opening up southeast Europe. First we called it opening up the Balkans but we invited more countries into this group. We had one meeting after the Congress already, and we are looking forward also before this summer there will be another meeting. So it's becoming reality, such a cooperation.

Then we are thinking about this could become a little more difficult. We are thinking about to initialize a process, a similar process like the UNESCO OER recommendation. Also the European Union, where Slovenia is a member, has its own processings of regional or European standard setting instruments. I just talked to a colleague that it could become difficult because there's a big issue now about open educational resources because the EU is presently adopting a new, I think directive, about -- about copyrights. And if this directive in its common -- in its present form will be adopted, then -- then the future of open educational resources and open licensing and free licensing in Europe are in the framework of the European Union will become very, very difficult if not also some development against the EU law because the publishers who are the only buddies, actually, who could have something to say against the development, what we are presenting right now.

They brought through this directive as I just explained. However, Slovenia has contacts, big contacts with active contacts with present European Commissioners who are responsible for the field of open education. We even succeeded -- I mean, the new legislation, the new administration. EU under -- in this present form, they have put out open educational resources out of their agenda, but they succeeded to invite one of the European Commissioners who is responsible for the field of education and other fields, and after the Congress also we had active contacts with three other European EU commissioners. And so there are interests also in the fame work of the European Commission to more actively work in this field again. It was before and now to work again. And because as it says on my slide here, during the procedures in UNESCO, it was ten EU Member States that expressed their support about the development which was presented by my colleague Zeynap.

So they signed and they cosigned our efforts in regard of the the enhancement and the empowerment of the international cooperation in the field of OER and the mainstreaming process of OER and as well now the recommendation process at UNESCO. So having ten EU Member States as supportive as they demonstrated to be, so why not go that way when the ex U would adopt

something in the direction of a recommendation or declaration or so on OER.

So that would be all from my side at this point. I will have one small probably also to excuse myself to my colleagues here because in ten minutes -- or in five minutes, I will have to unfortunately leave you.

However, if you have the chance, come and visit us to Slovenia. Not only because of OER, but the 500 people from worldwide who were in Ljubljana last year, they said it's a beautiful country. So welcome to Slovenia. Thank you very much. My email, if you would have questions, I will not be in a position to debate longer today, but contact me. I would with pleasure keep contact and answer to all of your inquiries.

Thank you very much.

(Applause).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you, Gaspar. I think we will have to say good-bye to you.

>> GASPAR: Yes.

>> ZEYNAP: So I give the floor to Sophie.

>> SOPHIE: (Speaking French).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you, Sophie. Can you go back to the last slide?

Are there any questions?

Okay. As you can see, there's two of us and now eight or ten of you. And we can't keep talking to you for another hour and a half.

It would be really boring and also, there are a lost things we would like to hear from you, actually. So we would like to ask that you join the conversation right now.

Where is the gentlemen -- excuse me. We have an activity that we would like you to do with us. But to do this, ladies, we will have to ask that you come together and we would like to ask you gentlemen also to move closer in.

What we would like to do now is to have your feedback and your ideas on the five elements that we spoke of. I'm going to put them back on the screen. And I would like to ask, perhaps if you gentlemen could work together and then if you would like to work together -- sir, you can work with the gentlemen or the ladies, as you like. Basically two groups.

If you could -- if you could work together and you could answer three questions on five topics. Just to think it through and we'll come by. Sophie and I will come by and discuss with you, if you have questions on the issues.

What we would like to know -- (Speaking in French).

After I will say it in English.

The task is this, I will put the five elements on the screens. What we would really sincerely like to know from you, are your views on what are the issues related to discussions in the five areas. Who are the actors? And what are some of the actions? Those are three points. I can only put one thing on the board at a time. There you can have a better idea of what are the issues. I can only put this on the board. So if you can just write down issues, actions, actors. And we are sincerely interested in what you have to say. Because, in fact, what is the added value of this forum is that you are not the audience that we usually have discussing this. You are coming from different fields and your inputs will be very important to us to understand how these issues can be taken on from different perspectives.

So we have -- it's now 2:30. We have only -- I will give you a half hour. And that's a lot of time, to go through these five issues, as a group, and to come up with answers to the three questions. Issues, actions, actors.

(Speaking French).

(Working in groups).

>> ZEYNAP: Hello, ladies and gentlemen. We have trans -- we have interpretation into French or English. You have to put on the -- I would like to invite the reporters of the three groups to come up, please. So sir, madam, and the reporter for the second group.

We give the floor to a gentleman who will present himself.

>> Hello. Okay, my name is Christopher, and I'm representing an NGO and I'm working in the agriculture as a consultant. And I am more comfortable if I speak French. So I would like the translator to be ready.

Okay.

(Speaking French).

(Applause).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you.

>> SOPHIE: (Speaking French).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you very much. I give the floor to our second group.

>> Yeah, hi. Thank you for being here this late afternoon. My name is Ardiotti, I will present the education of the United Arab Emirates. This is very timely. We as a government has started to initiate a nationwide movement for establishing OER in the country. Most of the challenges in the mainstreams are put here, and some of the ones we have been discussing for the last few months. So this is quite timely.

The way we see OER, we see it as the open education

resources that are freely available for everyone to use and reuse. And this could be in different type of formats. They could be in audio, video, textbook, even application.

So we start looking at the challenges to the mainstreaming of OER. The first one, the capacity of users, which is true. When you want to start a nationwide movement of OER, you need to make sure that you provide enough guidance for the people working on it, especially volunteer based, that they have the minimum quality requirements. If you don't, you may turn up to have something -- well, I'm using that as an example, only not ruling out that this is the true for any academy! If you look at the academy, they find it varies in terms of the quality.

So in order to -- what the action could be taken to solve that problem, somebody needs to generate some type of toolkit, some type of toolkit that provides standards, guidelines, defines what minimum quality needs to be there and what sort of information and maybe sometimes pedagogy styles to be used. So that would be quite useful too, to increase the quality and increase the capacity of the users.

Now, who should be doing that? From our perspective, we think the Ministry of Education should be doing that. And also we believe that universities, they have a lot of capacity. They could actually support developing these standards for the end users.

So going to the second point, which is the language culture. Again, being an Arabic speaking wide nation, we do face that problem. The majority that we find there are in English and I believe that is the common problem in other countries also.

Last year, his highness has launched an initiative. He called it the translation challenge, where he -- maybe you can look it up in the newspaper, where he has put a challenge to translate math and science content to Arabic. And I think there is another language. I'm not sure which one we picked. He has made a challenge to translate 11 million words and 5,000 videos. To believe such actions in other countries could encourage the society towards translating content.

Who should be doing that? I think the government can play a big part in some similar movement like we did in the UAE. The private sector definitely could contribute to that and also the teachers. The teachers love to teach. And if they have the right platform, I'm sure they will be contributing to the translation of content.

The third point, be inclusive. The challenge with the inclusivity, the people we call them in the UAE, we don't call them people of challenges anymore. We call them people of

determination. The challenge there is there are different needs for them. There's different types. There are people who are suffering from dyslexia, people who are visually impaired, people who have hearing problems, and the action, I think, first you should look at the biggest category that suffer from that. Start with that. And then try to encourage production of each content in multiple formats.

Here you can utilize technology to support that. Now if you notice, there are certain artificial intelligence softness already in the market that do on the fly translation in any language, almost supports all the languages. You just run the video, and run it through this algorithm, and on the fly, it gives awe translation of the content. So technology is there to support that.

And I believe some of them are freely available if -- I think MIT mentioned that they have something like that.

And, again, who should be supporting that? I think volunteers. I think the centers of people with determination can support them doing that. Moving to the fourth point which is the sustainability. I totally agree that will be an issue because once you start the initiative, if it doesn't get nurtured and there's no mechanism to make it continue, it dies, quickly dies.

So what -- so for sustainability, I think we should a financial sustainability. They should be certain tools that encourage the continuous movement that provides channels for review and feedback. There's always someone who is reviewing and giving feedback. This keeps the momentum going and running. The funding, the society can fund. The private sector can fund. If you look at the population of our country, let's say a small country population would be like, what, 5 million, 8 million, if anybody does change and put it for a coffee, imagine the amount of money that can be collected for such things.

So I think as a society, collectively, if you were serious about it, we can really support such initiatives, fulfilling the idea why this is critical and why having free education that reaches everybody around the world is really critical.

The last one, we didn't have much time to do but we quickly covered it. Governance, and that's what we are looking at the UAE. We are trying to develop a governing framework that looks at all the OER movement in a nation. One of the major issues is how do you preserve the rights and the IP of the content creator?

They wouldn't mind sharing it but they always want everybody to acknowledge that they are the ones who created, it but the

good thing is created common, if you are familiar with, it they have created a legal framework that allows anybody to create any content and label it with the -- they have a specific way where you can label content. You can say it's free.

It's -- you are allowed to reuse it, but you cannot give it your own name or you could just even give it your own name or you can just use it for reading, but you cannot reuse it. This encourages recognition. What people want is to be recognized when they develop content.

This encourages the movement of content.

That's it from my side.

(Applause).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you very much. Thank you.

I think the two points have brought together very complimentary -- complimentary views on the same issues, which is done separately but together.

To summarize, I can't because you summarized yourselves very well. I would open the floor to any other comments. None?

Okay. I would just say a couple of words, perhaps Sophie has some words also.

In terms of what you said about the capacity of users to use, reuse, access, share, you mentioned the need to have guidelines to have some sort of means.

I think what you also touched on was the fact that many of these issues, they don't -- they are not silos. They are not -- they are not isolated. When you talk about standards, you are talking about quality. When you talk about language and cultural issues and the use of OER, they all mix up together. What we have done in this list is actually try to break down the different factors, but it's true when we actually get down to the actions, everything gets together.

I noticed that there is a -- even from the NGO representative, there is a very heavy idea about the importance of regulation, regulators and government. So no matter what happens while they the open movement, there is an important role for governments to play, because without them, as has been reiterated many times, there's nothing that's going to happen, and that has to be a very important point to keep in mind.

In terms of language, just to let you know, it's not just OER that's all in English on the Internet. It's a bigger problem than OER, but it is -- it's also a symptom.

But it's very fascinating. Thank you very much.

>> SOPHIE: (Speaking French).

>> ZEYNAP: Thank you very much, Sophie. Before we wrap up, I want to talk about what's next. UNESCO is working on a

recommendation, which is a standard setting instrument of UNESCO. In terms of standard setting, what that means is that it's -- that it's not a lock. UNESCO doesn't have the power to make anybody do anything, including even buy a pencil. We don't have that power and it's not part of the mandate of UNESCO. What UNESCO can do is say there are good practices in place and you should follow them. We have conventions. Some of you may know the conventions on higher education, recognition, for example, the Lisbon Convention or the Arab States Convention or there's a Convention also in the Mediterranean region, in Latin America, and that's for recognition of qualifications.

We also have recommendations. Recommendations are less binding and they are what they are, our recommendation, a suggestion. But they are still instruments which are voted on, and which are not necessarily voted but agreed upon through consensus, developed through consensus and it's about certain topics. There are not very many. In all of the areas of UNESCO, there are about five or ten.

Since the beginning of UNESCO, it's not a very common thing. But through this process of the OER Congress, the development of the Ljubljana plan, the discussions worldwide, which are presented at the beginning of the presentation, the UNESCO Member States agreed that a recommendation on this topic should be done and presented at the next general conference of UNESCO, which is in two years.

Well, actually, it's a year and a half now. It's in 2019. And so we are in the process now of drafting a text, which will be sent to the Member States and we also convene an intergovernmental meeting in which Member States will be asked to send their representatives to look at the text, and when the text is finalized through consensus process with the Member States it will be presented to the general conference. Just to let you know that these discussions that we are having, have been taken to a very high level, and the interest internationally in this, as our colleague from the UAE has stated, its become a national priority. In some countries it's part of the discussion in others. Rwanda is the head of the broadband commission. It's happening in all different parts of the world and it's becoming a large movement. A lot of issues we are discussing are in different fora all over. So it's for this reason that we -- we organize a session to share with you these developments and also share with you the upcoming things that are happening in the next two years.

I would like to thank you also from our personal point of view. This is fifth or sixth time I have organized a session at

WSIS and this is the most interesting because you have spoken and I felt like you felt more involved with the topic, rather than having to listen to somebody on the stage or a couple of people on the stage. And I would like to thank you very much for your involvement with the topic and your interaction. So thank you.

(Applause).

I think we worked very hard. We have 15 more minutes, but I think we said everything that is to be said, which we will close the session and thank you very much for everything.

(End of session)