

**ANNEX XIII****Closing speech by Ms Martine Brunschwig Graf,  
State Counsellor, Head of the Swiss Delegation**

Mr President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,  
Mr Director-General of UNESCO,  
Madam Director of the IBE,  
Representatives of the teaching profession, parents, the scientific world and civil society as a whole,  
Dear friends and guests of the Conference,

The time has passed too quickly, paradoxical as it may be to say so when we are concerned with education. Indeed, what a contrast there is between the urgent need that brings us together, namely improving the quality of our education systems, introducing new technologies and developing citizenship education, and the time required to implement the necessary reforms and measures!

This 46th session of the International Conference on Education has shown once again that everything must be done to ensure that States are able to make available the resources necessary for reform and for the development of the school to which we aspire.

We have taken note, in the course of these days spent together, of so many projects and expectations existing alongside successful experiments, which nonetheless remain too few and isolated.

We have expressed and heard expressed so many hopes in the capacity of the school to make those who attend it free and responsible. We must therefore not let matters remain there. Adopting the conclusions and a plan of action commits us to working not only in our own countries but also to acting with a greater measure of solidarity to further the action of others.

In addition, there are topics that need to be explored in greater depth. It would appear, for example, that we have merely skimmed the surface of the measures that need to be taken to enable young girls to gain readier access to school and especially to pursue scientific subjects. And yet women represent for a world in search of motivated and well-trained teachers a huge potential, which can only be turned to account by a sound basic education.

We have spoken of citizenship education in school, but it remains for us to achieve the practical application of citizenship in society, since we cannot envisage assigning to the pupils we educate the sole responsibility for developing democratic practice and civic commitment in the society in which we live.

The children who have come to sing for you belong to our Geneva state school system. They are from very different backgrounds and living together represents for them, as for us, a challenge that they take up every day with the help of their teachers, their parents and the entire Geneva community.

They are here to bring us a moment of welcome relaxation through their songs and at the same time to remind us for whom we work, for whom we commit ourselves and for whom we speak, deliberate and negotiate. Let them also be witnesses of our resolve to act!

Shortly, the Council of the International Bureau of Education will carry out an assessment of this 46th session of the ICE. For the moment, I should like to offer my warm thanks to the IBE – particularly Cecilia Braslawsky and Pierre Luisoni but also to all those who have made a contribution to the successful organization of the Conference. I should also like to express our gratitude to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Matsuura, whose support is invaluable and vital for the cause that we defend.

Finally, dear colleagues and friends, members of delegations, experts, parents and teachers, I wish to say how much the people of Geneva have been happy over these last four days to have you among us in our city. I have only one wish to express by way of conclusion. Come back to Geneva to speak about education! You will be welcomed with open arms!