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Absence Of U.S. Financial Contribution To Unesco Not A Major Stumbling Block

by Barbara Khol

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On April 23 in Quito (Ecuador), Federico Mayor, chief administrator of the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), said that the withdrawal of US financial support has not resulted in major "limitations" to its programs around the world. Washington's action translates to a 31% cutback in the UNESCO budget, and thus, dismissal of personnel. In an exclusive interview with the daily newspaper Hoy (Quito), Mayor said that "when one has a good project, one has financing." He cited as an example a \$34 million program in Ecuador that has received financial support from the Inter- American Development Bank and human resource support from Ecuador. Mayor added that UNESCO is not interested in who develops plans for education outreach and classroom innovations, but only in "liberation" through education. In time, he said, UNESCO seeks to become "an organization in which bureaucratic expenditures have practically ceased to exist." UNESCO, said Mayor, can provide assistance in formulation, followup, consultation, evaluation and assessment of "new educational projects." Regarding "new" projects, the UNESCO chief mentioned focus on women and girls. In addition, he said, "We must leave behind this history of wars and dates relative to winning and losing. Instead, we must be able to incorporate a history that refers to civilization, or creators, writers, scientists, painters, journalists..., the chroniclers of our times."

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