



**STATEMENT BY PAPUA NEW GUINEA AT THE 38th UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
5 NOVEMBER 2015**

President of the General Conference
Madam Director General
Chairperson of the Executive Board
Head of States and Ministers
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President

Firstly, I would like to extend apology from the Minister for Education of my country, who could not be present.

On his behalf, let me express my delegation's sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President on your appointment to preside over the 38th General Conference. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing President, His Excellency, Mr HAO Ping, for his excellent and committed leadership in the past two years.

As UNESCO celebrates its 70th Anniversary this year, Papua New Guinea also celebrates its 40th Independence Anniversary. My delegation joins other distinguished delegations in reaffirming our commitment to the founding principles of UNESCO and its programs which are aimed at bringing peace, security and prosperity among the societies of the world.

Mr. President

Seventy (70) years of committed efforts and achieving desired outcomes is worth celebrating. I would like to therefore, congratulate all of us including past and present Director Generals and staff of UNESCO for our achievements in the past seventy years. The next 70 years are also vitally important, especially considering among others, the following challenges,

- we are transiting from the era of Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals.

- we are faced with negative impacts of climate change of which our smaller developing member states, including the SIDS are largely impacted because of their vulnerability
- Cultural and heritage sites have become targets of violent extremism
- Human dignity and prosperity is being impacted by violent extremism from players outside of normal sovereign control.
- we are faced with slowdown in the economic performance of major developed and developing economies which have the potential to adversely disrupt the economic viability and sustainable development ambitions of resource rich export dependent small nations, like mine

Mr. President

The recently approved UN Sustainable Development Goals provides the basis for member states to also take stock of national progress, renew efforts, realign strategies and move forward in our journey of development. Papua New Guinea has commenced this process, especially in the delivery of education services. The Education For All strategy under the Millennium Development Goals will be refined and re-aligned to Goal No.4 of the SDG where the current policy of free basic education is expected to be life -long learning as well.

In its 2016 Budget proposals, my Government has estimated to spend a total of 1.6 billion Kina in the education sector. This is about 7% of the total national budget. Since this policy was introduced three years ago, we have seen a dramatic increase in annual enrolments. The total population of children attending school in 2014 was 1.5 million, compared to 750,000 in 2012, of which a large number are girls.

Yesterday, UNESCO and co-convening agencies and Leaders of Member States launched the Education 2030 Framework for Action for the Implementation of SDG Goal 4. Papua New Guinea welcomes the new framework, as it will provide guidance to enhance our national efforts.

Mr. President,

My Delegation notes the progress on the SIDS Action Plan and thanks Madam Director General for including SIDS as a priority target group in UNESCOs mid-term strategy.

Papua New Guinea would like to see that the Action Plan also address the issue of effective mediums of delivery so that education is available to children and communities in the most remote and isolated parts of SIDS member states including e-learning.

I thank you sir.