

**Speech by**  
**H.E.M. Shiferaw Shigutie**  
**Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,**  
**Ministry of Education**  
**at**  
**the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of UNESCO**

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**Paris**

**Mr. President of the General Conference,  
Mr. President of the Executive Board,  
Madam Director General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Mr. President, on behalf of the Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and myself let me first congratulate you, upon your election as the Chairperson of the General Conference. My delegation is confident that under your leadership, we will have successful deliberations. I would also like to assure you and members of the Bureau the full support of my delegation.

As you may know Ethiopia is one of the fast growing economies in the World, which is politically stable, and determined to become a middle income economy by 2025. To this effect, we set ambitious but achievable targets. As it is stipulated in the Ethiopian growth and transformation plan two (GTP II) the major pillars of our strategies are: Sustaining faster and equitable economic growth; maintaining agriculture as a major source of economic growth; creating favorable conditions for the industry to play key role in the economy; enhancing expansion and quality of infrastructure development; enhancing expansion and quality of social development; building capacity and deepen good governance; and promoting women and youth empowerment and equitable benefit sharing.

As it is clearly stated in the Oslo high level education summit and endorsed as part of the SDG 2030 ‘investing in teachers is investing in

learning'. We also believe in the crucial role of teachers in peace building and societal development. As it is stipulated in its teachers' development strategy, Ethiopia is strongly committed to ensure the availability of qualified teachers in adequate number.

However, one can argue that investing in education and investing in teachers alone cannot make a difference without having children and young people in schools. To this effect, early childhood care and education up to tertiary level including lifelong learning are inescapable.

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The inclusion of Migration in the SDGs is a huge milestone: correcting its absence from the MDGs. Migration and human mobility are included in four SDGs. UNESCO's mandate to place humanity at the centre of our concern should be reflected more than ever. UNESCO's mandate to achieve sustainable development and to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels should be met.

Together with the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda** adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, we have a global vision and framework up to 2030 that enables us to move from commitment to action to deliver our development promise.

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Empowering women and girls, ensuring their sexual and reproductive health and human rights is essential to an inclusive society where they are able to complete their education and pursue jobs. Many programmes targeting girls have been sensitizing more people, including education and community leaders, about the benefits of girls' education, delayed marriage, family planning and elimination of harmful traditional practices. This is a pledge and shared repetition of our government, which has a huge public support.

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ethiopia is a culturally diverse country which has a federal government that strongly believes in diversity, tolerance and unity. This has been witnessed when we demonstrated the world tolerance day with a motto "Through our tolerance culture, we will be a model to the world." In Ethiopia 83 indigenous languages are spoken with some 200 dialects. Due to this variety of Languages and dialects, it is a rich cultural mosaic or Museum of various Nations and Nationalities.

That is why our delegation has been proactively working with the World Heritage Center (WHC) and the culture sector to enforce our legal framework by building capacity in the sites management and all conservations issues. Notwithstanding the achievements in having registered a few heritage sites, intangible heritages and biosphere reserves, Ethiopia commends UNESCO to encourage African countries to file more quality nominations.

**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Ethiopia's contribution to the global warming is almost nothing. However, in Africa, Ethiopia is advocating for the environmental issues per the Copenhagen agreement on climate change

Ethiopia is implementing a Climate-Resilient Green Economy Strategy that engages our country on sustainable land management, prevention of land degradation as well as desertification and deforestation, expanding the use of renewable energy and unitizing modern energy efficient technologies. Minimizing the negative consequences of climate change such as drought and flood is our priority and we are very confident that the international community will seize the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment in implementing SDG13 at the Conference of Paris (COP21) meeting in a few weeks.

Finally, on behalf of my government and myself, I would like to express our sincere thanks to those partners who contributed to the rapid development of Ethiopia in all its forms.

**I thank you for your attention,**