

Policy Statement
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General Policy Debate of the 38th General Conference of UNESCO

President of the General Conference

President of the Executive Board

Madam Director General of UNESCO

Distinguished delegates

Ladies & Gentlemen

Greetings from the People and Government of the Republic of Mauritius.

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr President, on your election as President of the General Conference. I have no doubt that you will successfully guide the proceedings of our Assembly despite the vast complexity of the issues to be tackled.

Mr President,

I believe recent milestones make for some legitimate congratulations as Our Organization has very efficaciously positioned our cherished priorities—Quality education, women empowerment and climate change-- in the new Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO's actions during the different Regional Consultations, the World Education Forum and elsewhere on different international platforms, have resulted in the world today unanimously saluting the emergence of the Global Goals.

Indeed, building peace in the minds of men can only effectively take place when people do not suffer from hunger, when their self-worth is not trampled upon and when they feel empowered to fight against the indignity of extreme poverty.

The Post 2015 Development Agenda universally endorsed by the global community-- including Organizations like the African Union, the Commonwealth, the CONFEMEN-- takes the world in the right direction.

Mauritius commits itself to support the implementation of the Global Goals.

But we should also learn from the telling lessons resulting from the unfinished business of the implementation in many countries of the now defunct EFA / MDGs.

We today have a new opportunity for redress. We should give ourselves the means—financial, technical, and technological—to help all countries attain the new Goals set.

The Preamble of the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” does emphasise the need for genuine global partnership as well as exchange of experiences and improved coordination.

Mr President,

My delegation notes with satisfaction that, in keeping with the enunciation to ascribe priority status to SIDS in the Medium Term Strategy for the period 2014 to 2021, efforts will be made for the coming Biennium to expand the coverage of the SIDS-related actions in line with both the Global Goals and the Samoa Pathway.

Mr President,

SIDS cannot be made to pay the price for the excesses of Highly Developed Countries. Rather, they have to be equipped and supported to fully implement the necessary mitigation measures. Highly Developed Countries have to pitch in both financially and technologically, keeping in view the SIDS' varied pace of development.

We also realise that SIDS cannot be left on their own, with each individually fighting a common threat: the future lies in regional and collective action for improved resilience.

In this context, I would wish to put on record our appreciation for the support of UNESCO in facilitating the setting up of a Category 2 Centre for Ocean Studies and Innovation in Mauritius.

Monsieur le Président ,

Il est évident que notre région démontre une capacité certaine pour les pays de l'océan indien de mettre en exergue les possibilités qu'offre l'économie bleue. Le potentiel de ressources marines, la riche biodiversité, qui caractérisent ce potentiel nous mèneraient vers un développement durable basé sur la sécurité alimentaire à travers la mer, l'accroissement du commerce, l'investissement ainsi que la connectivité maritime.

La coopération régionale et sous régionale reste de mise et, dans ce contexte, les Bureaux Régionaux de l'UNESCO se doivent d'être des facilitateurs et des catalyseurs probants.

Mr President,

There is universal recognition today of the centrality of education to national growth and development. We must go beyond words and move to action and make sure our youth do have the skills, competencies, aptitudes and attitudes to cope with the demands of a fast changing world.

WE have today several far-reaching reforms that are being spearheaded right from the pre-primary through to the tertiary and the TVET sectors in Mauritius.

The ground has being cleared for the introduction of Nine Years of Continuous Basic Education as from 2017; Curriculum and assessment frameworks are being reviewed as are teacher education and capacity building programmes . New Polytechnics are also being set up to promote technical education . As for Higher Education, we are already attracting brand institutions that will help build our intellectual capital and help towards the development of Mauritius as a Regional Knowledge Hub.

We are also working towards the setting up of a major School of Arts

We are also in a modest manner contributing to the African Renaissance as well by hosting and driving the Inter Country Quality Node for Early Childhood Development at the behest of ADEA.

Mr President,

Let me end by extending sincere words of appreciation to UNESCO and the UN system for always being by our side as we upscale our move towards fostering a more just, equitable and inclusive society.

Thank you