

UGANDA

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SPORTS, HON. MAJ. (RTD) ALUPO JESSICA ROSE EPEL (MP) AT THE 38TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE, ON 4TH NOVEMBER 2015 PRESENTED BY H. E. AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT DELEGATE, NIMISHA MADHVANI.

The President of the General Conference,
The Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Madam Director General of UNESCO,
Excellencies, Ministers and Ambassadors;
Distinguished Delegates;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my pleasure Mr. President on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you upon your election as chair of the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference. I trust that guided by the African spirit of Ubuntu, you will steer this session to achieve amicably, as is the tradition of UNESCO, consensus on matters before it.

We salute the Director General for her very detailed outline of the achievements and challenges of our Organisation since our last meeting. We also thank the team she worked with at the Secretariat, the Executive Board and indeed the Member States for supporting her in moving UNESCO forward. Uganda further extends her congratulations to the President of the Executive Board for his leadership to the Board. The challenges of our organization have been with us for some years now. In spite of them we still expect the Director General to deliver more and better services. We must in this session support the efforts of the Director General by providing adequate finances to enable her implement the programme we agreed in 37C4. If this is not done, we risk the continuation of millions of children worldwide being unable to access quality education and, many adults, particularly women remaining illiterate. Furthermore, we risk lagging behind in science and innovation and also missing out on delivering on the conventions on culture as well as promoting freedom of expression and access to information. The greatest loser in this will be the priority areas of Africa, gender equality and youth as well as the bigger family of LDCs and SIDs.

We heard the voices of the youth in their recommendations urging UNESCO to do more in its fields of competence to ensure peace and sustainable development become a reality for many people now and not in some distant future. If we don't provide the requisite resources, we will have shot ourselves on the foot and made a false start in the journey towards attaining the sustainable development goals.

The Uganda delegation, Mr. President, would like to appreciate the support from UNESCO over the past biennium in all the programmes. This support has enabled us address the issues of teachers in the delivery of appropriate quality education. The support has enabled us address issues of science, technology and innovation, climate change as well as promote cultural heritage and freedom of expression. We believe more can be done and, we look forward to this in the next biennium.

Mr. President, the challenges that led to the establishment of UNESCO are still with us today. The world needs peace today as it did seventy years ago. This peace is built in the minds of people through their education, the sciences, culture and communication and through the intellectual cooperation of humanity. Uganda further requests the Director-General for a special showing of Pascal Plisson's film "Le Grand Jour" to all members of UNESCO, which encapsulates most of the principles of UNESCO - Youth Education, Preservation of Cultural heritage and Skills Development illustrated through 4 young people from Uganda, Mongolia, Cuba and India.

Uganda would like to congratulate UNESCO on its seventieth anniversary. In Uganda, we celebrated UNESCO@70 at the end of September 2015. We used the occasion to sensitise Ugandans, particularly the youth on the values of UNESCO, what it stands for and its mandate and programmes. As the final celebrations come around the corner it is not too late to reflect on the extent to which the values and aspirations of the founding fathers have been and are being addressed so as to chart strategies for the next seventy years.

Mr. President, I wish the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference fruitful dialogue that will reaffirm UNESCO's status as a beacon of hope and an agent of sustainable development and peace.

Thank you.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

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Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports, Embassy House,

KAMPALA.

28 October, 2015