

NATIONAL STATEMENT
DELIVERED BY THE BARBADOS HEAD OF DELEGATION
IN THE PLENARY SESSION OF GENERAL POLICY DEBATE
AT THE 38TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
ON NOVEMBER 6, 2015

Mr. President

Your Excellencies

Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of Barbados, I take this opportunity to offer warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of this 38th session of the General Conference. I also wish to thank your distinguished predecessor for his contribution to the success of this organization during the last biennium.

I take special pleasure in congratulating Montserrat on being admitted an Associate Member of this organisation.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates

On behalf of the government and people of Barbados we are especially pleased to celebrate the 70th anniversary of this august organization. This is indeed a critical moment in the history of the organization and a perfect time to reaffirm Barbados' commitment to the founding principles of UNESCO, while pledging our continued support to the work of the organization.

Distinguished delegates

In 1945 thirty-seven countries decided to found UNESCO. Today, 70 years later, and on the eve of Barbados' own celebration of our 50th anniversary of independence in 2016, UNESCO's Constitution remains highly relevant to achieving the purpose articulated so long ago.

Mr. President

We recognize that an important crossroad has been reached for the international community. In May of this year, global leaders in education gathered in Incheon, at the World Education Forum to review progress made since 2000 with the Education for All Goals, and the related MDGs. The convening of the 2015 Forum

presented an opportunity for the global education community to reach consensus on a common vision for education in the post-2015 period.

The Incheon Declaration has articulated agreement on a new Education 2030 Agenda, inspired by a humanistic vision of education and underpinned by the principle that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. It is also essential for peace, human fulfilment and sustainable development. Barbados is deeply committed to all these ideals. We also recognize the important role of science, technology and innovation in sustaining development and therefore support UNESCO's promotional efforts in this area.

Mr. President

Barbados pledges its support for the implementation of the Education 2030 Framework For Action and looks forward to its approval and adoption during this session of the general conference. Indeed we commit to developing the programmes and activities necessary to ensure its success.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

We are heartened by the efforts and work of the Director General over this last biennium to lead and manage the organization in difficult circumstances. We generally support the reforms that have been initiated in light of the financial challenges in order to ensure the Organization's ability to deliver effectively in its fields of competence.

Mr. President

The recent disaster in our sister Caribbean island of Dominica, as a result of Tropical Storm Erika, reminds us of the vulnerabilities of SIDS and the need for a global response to climate change that is binding. We therefore look forward to strong and assertive action to address issues of climate change and disaster risk reduction being taken and a strong commitment to supporting the sustainability of SIDS.

Indeed, within this context, Barbados has demonstrated its strong commitment to the Tsunamis and Coastal Hazards Early Warning System through the hosting of the Caribbean Tsunami Information Center.

Mr. President

Preserving and accessing information and documentary heritage continue to be priorities for Barbados. In this regard, we have worked closely with the Secretariat and other Member States throughout the development of the new normative instrument to support the sustainability of UNESCO's action in this area. Such a standard-setting instrument can be an essential tool to strengthen international cooperation, and public awareness to address the challenges of safeguarding documentary heritage.

Barbados shares the conviction “that no development can be sustainable without a strong culture component”. Indeed only a human-centred approach to development based on mutual respect and open dialogue among cultures can lead to lasting, inclusive and equitable results.

We have closely engaged in the elaboration of the new Recommendation on Museums and Collections, and look forward to its initiation. Barbados remains committed to the implementation of the Culture Conventions to which we are signatory.

We further lend our support to the global efforts in the protection and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage, particularly in the context of UNESCO's initiatives for Disaster Risk Reduction, and our elaboration of plans for the creation

of a category 2 centre for World Heritage and SIDS, as a lasting legacy of the 21 year old Barbados Programme for Action and in keeping with the Samoa Pathway.

Mr. President, I thank you.