

Belize's Intervention at the 38th Session of the General Conference 6th November, 2015

Presented By: Rev. Dr. Rudolph Anthony

Mr. President of the General Conference, Mr. Chair of the Executive Board, Madame Director General, Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen. It is an honor and a privilege once more to stand before you today at this 38th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO and present Belize's position.

Mr. President, we at UNESCO represent the World, and so "We are the World." Belize stands firm and tall with UNESCO as we are proud to be a member of this extraordinary body of member states. Belize continues to embrace the ideals, principles, policies, strategies, mission, and constitution of UNESCO. And you know why Mr. President? Because "we are the world." I want to declare that Belize has benefitted handsomely from being a partner with UNESCO. We have benefitted from the PP program, from the young professional's program, from the youth forum, from the collaboration and synergies between Secretaries General and our Field office in the Caribbean, from collaboration and participation with Secretaries General from across the Universe through inter-regional National Commission meetings; and we continue to move forward and you know why Mr. President? Because, "We are the world." We continue to make strides in Education; Primary, Secondary, Higher, TVET Education, Early Childhood, education for those with different abilities, teacher training, literacy campaign by encouraging all to read at specific times, and developing quality child friendly school initiatives. We have approved projects for the Cancer Society, Belize Red Cross, The council of ageing, Restore Belize which is an organization to help young men and women to choose an alternative to crime, violence, and killings. We have made Belizeans to be more aware of UNESCO through trainings, workshops, and conferences in statics, TVET, higher education, Tsunami, Freedom of the Press, under water cultural heritage, Intangible cultural heritage, Nomination Dossiers, World Heritage awareness, Early Childhood training, Arts and craft, and training of young journalists. Thanks to UNESCO for all the assistance. Why? Because UNESCO knows that, "We are the World." We benefit from the IOC and the World Heritage Center knowledge and expert guidance for our World Heritage site in danger. Mr. president, we should not and cannot continue to try and be the big police of the world who wants to lock out other countries from becoming members of UNESCO. We must be inclusive and learn to share, care, love and live in peace, for "We are the World." Mr. president, let us team up together as one family and fight against violent extremism, fight against ISIS, ISIL, and against any hate and war mongers that try to destroy our way of life which should include peace, love, harmony, patience, compassion, cooperation, freedom and non violence one to the other. Mother Teresa once said, "Intense love does not measure, it just gives." She also said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." and Mother Teresa also said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." Mr. President, Remember, "We are the world."

Belize has benefitted from the Science, SHS, Culture, and the Information and Communication Programs. We have implemented Micro-Science Kits in some of our High schools and expect to expand the program.

We have Ratified the 2005 convention this year. We are also looking for key results to be achieved during 2016 -2017. We embrace the MDG'S, then now the SDG'S especially goal #4. We embrace Education for sustainable development, we embrace education 2030 framework, and the Incheon Declaration. We will work to increase more access to schools, and increase quality in educational teaching and learning. We will continue to secure healthy environment for our children to learn and will continue to address all violence and discrimination of all types. Why? Because "We are the world." We stand to respect diversity, practice fundamental human rights, provide safe space for our children to learn without fear and respect the dignity of every human being. Belize believes in Global Citizen education, education for girls, equality in education, education for all, lifelong learning, and leaving no one behind. We believe in public and private partnership, in Donors, fund raising, multi-country partnership so as to strengthen capacity and to help make our position more visible. We believe in good governance, integration, universality, and peaceful societies. Why do we believe in these Mr. President? I will tell you. "We are the world."

UNESCO is the World. Mr. president, we as a body and family has been transformed because of some difficulties we had. But it worked out for the good. We did more with less. Nelson Mandela once said, "difficulties break some men but make others." We have been made through difficulties so, "We are the world." He also said, "It always seems impossible until it is done." We just heard that the Sheik from UAE gave us a whole lot of extra budgetary funds. Thank you His Royal Highness. At the last executive board, we heard that extra budgetary fund had increased by 63.3% over a period. However, Mr. President, since 2013, the Caribbean Cluster Office, I was made to understand, has received 0% extra budgetary funding. Between 2008-2015, funds for education decreased by 16.4%, for SHS by 6.4%, for culture by 2.46%, for CI by 22.69% and just a slight increase for Science .29%. I want to make an appeal to Mr. Sheik, to Japan, Finland, Switzerland, U.K., South Korea, Germany, China, and to all the rich countries. When you give in your extra budgetary fund, can you please earmark some for Belize and the Caribbean? You know, I am not afraid to beg since we are family and "We are the world." We need a share of the pie. Let us continue to try new things as Albert Einstein once said, "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." The SIDS initiative is something we need to try and make it a Global Priority.

Mr. President, President Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life." And so if we will change for the better, let us not just utter words, but live by them. Maya Angelou said, "We may encounter many defeats, but we must never be defeated." UNESCO will never be defeated. I believe in UNESCO because "We are the world." And now to end my discourse with you, please join with me and sing the chorus of "We are the world."