

GRENADA
Address of Hon. Sen. Simon Stiehl
38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO
6 November 2015

Mr. President of the 38th Session of the General Conference,

Mr. Chair of the Executive Board,

Madam Director-General,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you upon your election as President of the 38th session of the General Conference and wish you every success during your presidency.

As a fellow OECS member I would like to start by welcoming the admission, by the General Conference, of Montserrat as an Associated Member of UNESCO on 3 November 2015.

Mr. President, today we are gathered here to consider how UNESCO's action could create, develop and promote the pathways to lasting peace and sustainable development.

We welcome the adoption of the "Education 2030 Framework for Action: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all".

Grenada recognizes the importance of education, not only as a human right, but also as a prerequisite and a driver for its long term sustainable development – in particular, to face the mountainous challenges faced by Climate Change Adaptation, **and** the need for Economic Transformation.

Grenada is committed to providing meaningful education and training opportunities for its people. This starts with ensuring access to school for all children and extends to the promotion of quality, lifelong learning opportunities **for all**, including quality Technical and Vocational Education Training, Higher Education, and Research to meet the demands of the 21st century.

===== PAUSE =====

In this era of globalization, the world cannot genuinely prosper with inequalities between regions.

Priority **should** continue to be given to Africa, **but** special attention should also be given to the needs of priority groups of countries, such as the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

This is absolutely necessary to allow **them** to address the unique conditions that render them disadvantaged.

Likewise, a global society cannot maximize its true potential with inequality among its members. Hence, attention must be paid to gender equality, as a fundamental pillar for social development.

Advocating for gender equality also requires that specific attention be given to the needs and contributions of young males in our Caribbean societies, where a disproportionate number of males are confronted by:

- Underachievement,
- Poverty,
- Violence,
- and Exclusion.

===== PAUSE=====

The global environmental and ecological crisis manifested in:

- Climate Change,
- Biodiversity loss,
- Oceanic over-exploitation and degradation,
- Desertification,
- Fresh water shortages
- and Rising sea levels.....

.....highlights the need for **new** approaches to the management of our resources.

As Island States, the role of the Oceans is of **strategic** importance to us. An integrated management approach of our Oceans, and a strengthened global ocean governance framework, are prerequisites for the sustainable use of these valuable resources.

Building on this, the continued support from UNESCO for the implementation of Early Warning Systems for Tsunamis and other marine hazards, is of **great importance** to small island states as those of the Caribbean.

The **completion** of this programme could mean the difference between our survival and the significant loss of life.

We therefore urge **greater** focus on the mobilization of the necessary funds to complete this important programme in **ALL** regions and in particular the Caribbean.

===== PAUSE=====

Culture can be a mainspring for the sustainable development of People, Communities and Nations.

We therefore applaud UNESCO for the importance it has placed on the protection, safeguard and the promotion of cultural tangible and intangible heritage. In particular, the Organisation's mandate through its normative action, and the implementation of all its Cultural Conventions.

===== PAUSE=====

Mr President, the extreme vulnerability and low resilience of Small Island Developing States are recognised by UNESCO - the SIDS Action Plan outlines many of the steps to build resilience capacity.

What is missing are the necessary resources to **implement** the plan.

Greater focus is therefore required to identify and allocate those resources in the UNESCO 38 C/5 Budget

for 2016-2017 and in the preparation of the 39 C/5 programme and Budget for 2018-2020.

To conclude..... As UNESCO celebrates its 70th anniversary, it gives both the Organization **and, us, its members**, the opportunity:

- To reflect on the past,
- To look at the present.....

.....and to take the **many** lessons learnt, as we chart the course for the future.

Together **we can** make that difference.

I thank you.