

**National Statement delivered by Mr. Shanta Bahadur Shrestha, Representative of
Nepal, in the 201st Session of the Executive Board
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, Tuesday, April 26, 2017**

Mr. Chairperson,

Madam Director General,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude on behalf of the Government of Nepal and on my own to UNESCO for convening this board meeting. I also wish to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all member states for strengthening the networking, collaboration and harmony among us, through UNESCO's platform.
2. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, UNESCO's programs have been supporting the articulation of the sustainable development agenda through education, communication, science, culture, social sciences and mass communication. A focus on inclusion and equity is a key feature of the Sustainable Development Goals. As enshrined in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 the Government of Nepal has initiated the implementation of federalism to ensure the integration of equity and inclusion, as featured in the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. To support the equity goals, the Government of Nepal has also formed a Language Commission, as guaranteed by the Constitution which is particularly important in our country where 123 languages are spoken. The Language Commission has been mandated to support the government in language related research and recommend the government on official languages at federal, provincial and local levels. I believe this will set an enabling condition to promote instruction in the mother tongue as a means of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education by 2030. I would also like to underline the importance of local languages, as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development.

4. In line with global education agenda (Education 2030), the focus of the joint endeavor of the Government of Nepal and UNESCO would be to further refine our education system. The technical and financial support of UNESCO would be crucial to successfully implement this process. I wish to thank UNESCO for the valuable contribution to Nepal's education system.
5. This board meeting has an important task to ensure that UNESCO leverages its resources and strengths and aligns its programmes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in its remit.

Mr. Chairperson,

6. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 25 April 2015, the recovery process still continues in Nepal. UNESCO's efforts and its support to the Government of Nepal is highly commendable in safeguarding measures and the preparation of plans for the long term recovery and reconstruction of our rich cultural heritage. It is felt that the provision of an expert in culture in the UNESCO Kathmandu Office would go a long way in effectively implementing plans and programs to preserve cultural heritage in Nepal.
7. Without cultural heritage, humankind will lose main source of self-expression and self-realization. In recent years there has been worrying trend worldwide of destruction of cultural heritage, either due to the occurrence of natural disasters or deliberately through barbaric attacks in the form of violent extremism. All the heritages spread throughout the world, as well as the intangible heritage and associated cultural industries need to be protected with renewed vigour.
8. UNESCO as a common platform of education, science, culture, social science, and mass communication has a pivotal role in ensuring quality education and lifelong learning for all. It also needs to mobilize further resources in Nepal, also for the promotion of science knowledge and policy for sustainable development, promoting freedom of expression and media development. Moreover, it needs to foster cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace; and finally building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication.
9. I hope the 201st Session of the Executive Board will be successful in addressing the ongoing and emerging issues and challenges within its remit. My delegation wishes all success.

Thank you!