

**201<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO  
19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017**

**ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY, MRS MARIAM Y. KATAGUM,  
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT DELEGATE OF NIGERIA TO UNESCO**

Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
President of the General Conference,  
Madam Director General,  
Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

1. At this Session of the Board, where we seek a new leadership for our Organization and also plan our future activities, we all need a new resolve and a new commitment to our responsibilities.
2. Such resolve is not wanting in UNESCO, for in the past few years, the Organization has taken great steps to review and renew its governance and its functioning. It has sought to sharpen its focus, with the aim of making its actions and operations more efficient, especially in the context of its growing responsibilities, including those assigned to it by the international community.
3. We are heartened to see the concrete results and effects of these efforts at renewal and improvement in the new Programme and Budget, the draft of which is before us.
4. We welcome the retention in the draft C/5 of the two Global Priorities, Africa and Gender Equality and note that UNESCO's responsibilities under the 2030 Agenda have been taken on board, in

spite of the Organization's budgetary constraints but with the necessary respect for national ownership of the programmes and activities. Nevertheless, we call for further strengthening of education programmes in Africa, SIDS and in the E-9 countries to support the realisation of SDG 4.

5. We also welcome other new and innovative ideas for improvement such as the Result-Based Budgeting and Result-Based Management and particularly the Integrated Budget Framework, with improved transparency of the Organization's resources. There is also the Structured Financing Dialogue which will bring together, all stakeholders, in the quest for ensuring adequate funding for the Organization's work.
6. However, the challenge of limited funds still hangs over the Organization.
7. We therefore endorse the proposal for the reduction of the Lapse Factor from 5% to 2 or 3%. It is our hope that this reduction will contribute positively to improving programme delivery.
8. Finally, concerning the draft 39 C/5, we appreciate and welcome the DG's proposed solution for the funding of the 11 million dollars difference between the expenditure plan of \$507 million and \$518 million. We hope the Secretariat is proved right and that the existing

\$6 million will indeed attain the projected \$12 million by the end of the biennium.

9. At the national level, the SDGs have been mainstreamed into national policies and plans, with the recently elaborated Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (2017–2020), aligned with the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Plan also recognises the need to leverage Science, Technology and Innovation and to build a knowledge-based economy.
10. We thank the DG for the recent high-level multi-sectoral Mission to Abuja preparatory to the proposed International Conference on Lake Chad which should lead to the development of a comprehensive programme of action to save the Lake from extinction and bring back the means of livelihood of the people.
11. Let me also express Nigeria's appreciation to Norway, Germany and the UN OCHA for organising the "Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region" held in February where up to \$672 million was pledged to address the needs of the 14 million people in the region.
12. We thank the international community, yet again, for the support it has given to Nigeria in its fight against the Boko Haram insurgency, which is largely responsible for the humanitarian crises in this area. Three years

after the abduction of the Chibok girls, we are still strong in our resolve to get all the missing girls back to their families.

13. In Culture, we congratulate the Director General for the leadership role in cultural diplomacy that led to the adoption of the UNSC Resolution 2347. We also commend the Secretariat and the government of Azerbaijan for the English version of the Military Manual on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. This publication has been distributed to the relevant commands in Nigeria, with very positive feedback on its use.
14. Finally, Dear Colleagues, as we initiate the process of electing a new Director General for the Organization, it is Nigeria's hope that our deliberations will be guided by wisdom and by the best interest of the Organization.
15. I thank you for your kind attention.