

Speech by the Minister of Education Malaysia

The Honorable

Dato' Seri di-Raja Mahdzir Khalid

At the

39th Session of the UNESCO General Conference – November

2017

Madam President of the General Conference,

Mr. Chair of the Executive Board,

Madam Director-General,

Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Malaysia, I am deeply honoured to appear before you in succession following the 38th General Conference. I am also obliged to convey best wishes in the spirit of unity of both the Government and the people of Malaysia for the success of this General Conference.

Madam President,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Her Excellency Mrs. Audrey AZOULAY, candidacy of France who has been nominated by the 202nd session of the Executive Board of UNESCO to the post of the Director General.

I also wish to pay a special tribute to the out-going Director General of UNESCO, Her Excellency Madam Irina Bokova. She has ably guided this Organization during the period of financial turbulence and yet able to optimize the limited resources to implement the Programmes during her term.

Current State of MUCP-MFIT

With the establishment of the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme (MUCP) in 2011, and the signing of the Malaysia Funds-In-Trust (MFIT) Agreement in 2013, the Government of Malaysia has provided financial support to 26 projects and programmes. In ensuring the sustainability of these projects, Malaysia has positively agreed for this cooperation to be further continued until June 2019, under a new Supplementary Agreement on Cooperation in Education, Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information.

It is with pleasure that I announce, under the MUCP-MFIT Programme, the Government of Malaysia in partnership with UNESCO and ASEAN Secretariat, will be hosting ASEAN's first symposium and consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of, and Access to, Documentary Heritage Including in Digital Form. The symposium, which will be held May 2018, is expected to produce the action plans for its implementation by the UNESCO-ASEAN member states.

ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth

Madam President,

Malaysia is currently the Chair of the ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting with the theme of 'Fostering ASEAN Community of Learners: Empowering Lives through Education'. Under the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020, we strongly support the joint commitment between UNESCO and ASEAN countries to address, among others, the issue of out-of-school children through the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth (OOSCY).

Malaysia is also assisting the provision of education for Rohingya's Displaced Persons as well as other marginalized groups.

Malaysia in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Madam President,

As reported in previous sessions, the Malaysia's Education Blueprint 2013-2025 continues to produce commendable results in our pathway to transform our education system. We also continue to emphasize on the Higher Education quality and TVET as the game changer of Malaysia's economy. With our Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11th MP) spearheaded by the Economy Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia has mapped the 17 SDGs within the 11th MP. The economic plan is people centric with the ultimate aim to create high-income society and inclusive nation by 2020.

Asia-Pacific Regional Forum of Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme

Madam President,

In 2015 to 2016, Malaysia and UNESCO has actively partnered and hosted the Asia-Pacific Conferences on TVET and Early Childhood Care and Education. In 2017, Malaysia has achieved another milestone, by hosting the 1st MOST Regional Forum of Ministers of Social Development for the Asia-Pacific Countries in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The forum was chaired by Her Excellency Dato' Sri Rohani Abdul Karim, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development serving as President of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Programme. Malaysia also simultaneously hosted the 13th Ordinary Session MOST Intergovernmental Council. These are solid testimonies of our serious commitment to the cause of UNESCO, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Actively profiling our commitment, Malaysia and the city of Kuala Lumpur, intend to bid for the title of UNESCO World Book Capital in 2020. Kuala Lumpur is currently working with the Ministry of Education to boost the reading culture among the communities, and nationwide.

Malaysia also would like to commend the Working Group on Governance for having proposed a draft for the General Conferences' deliberations. We hope the debates at the General Conference will result in meaningful discussions and that the results would help in making UNESCO more inclusive and transparent.

Madam President,

I wish to conclude that despite efforts made to secure all dues from Member States, the financial position is critical. Therefore, our organization needs to seek ways to encourage Member States to pay their membership dues in time as well as to find a better way of getting Member States to participate in contributing to the extra budgetary programme.

Thank you Madam President.