



STATEMENT BY

**HONOURABLE OLIVIA GRANGE CD MP
MINISTER OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT**

**On the Occasion of the
204th Session of the Executive Board
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris**

**To be delivered by Her Excellency Mrs. Sheila Sealy Monteith
Ambassador of Jamaica**

April 9, 2018

Madame Audrey Azoulay, Director General
Mrs Zohour Alaoui, President of the General Conference
Mr LEE Byong-hyun, Chairman of the Executive Board,
Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

First let me take this opportunity to extend regrets for the absence of Jamaica's representative on the Executive Board, Honorable Olivia Grange, Minister of Culture Gender Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica. I express, on her behalf, wishes for the success of this session.

Mr. Chairman, as this is the first time that Jamaica is taking the floor as a member of the Executive Board, I wish to congratulate you for assuming chairmanship of this important body and to pledge Jamaica's support for the work to be undertaken under its remit.

Mr. Chairman,

Jamaica remains firmly committed to the ideals, goals and objectives of this noble organisation. It is this firm commitment that motivated us to seek election to the Executive Board for the period 2017 – 2021. We view the organisation's work as significant to societies across the globe, particularly with respect to upholding the human rights of citizens. We are guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to include the right to education, the right to benefit from scientific progress, the right to participate freely in cultural life and the right to information, including freedom of opinion and expression.

It is in part for this reason that Jamaica is so strongly dedicated to the responsibility given to us as Chair of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations over the next four years. In that regard, we noted with interest the Report of the Committee from its October 2017 sittings and were encouraged by the gains in each of UNESCO's core competencies based on the standard-setting instruments.

We are particularly heartened by the strides being made by the education sector in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Jamaica supports UNESCO's commitment to education and will continue to work closely with the Caribbean Cluster Office on major programmes defined in the UNESCO Programme and Budget 2017 – 2021, placing special emphasis on SDG4 which is compatible with the Government of Jamaica's policy of "Every child can learn, Every child must learn".

We fully support and endorse the ongoing initiatives by UNESCO as it relates to the promotion of Technical and Vocational training in Education. In April 2017 the Government of Jamaica took a strategic step to merge three of the island's training institutions, among them our leading technical and vocational training facility. This bold initiative allows for an expanded cohort of some 14,000 persons to access training and certification through a centralized system, and provides a suite of educational, remedial, technical and vocational programmes for learners 15 years and older.

Mr. Chairperson, we are also moving swiftly in other areas under the aegis of UNESCO. We are ensuring that the Conventions that we have ratified are

implemented for the benefit of our citizens, as well as fulfilling our responsibilities to the international community.

Through the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Jamaica received grant funding from the International Fund for Cultural Diversity to revise the country's Policy on Culture. We took the opportunity to not only revise but to broaden the scope of the policy. The end result is the "National Policy on Culture and Creative Economy 2017 – 2027: Towards the enhancement and promotion of Brand Jamaica".

This is in keeping with UNESCO's encouragement and lobbying of States Parties to create and implement culture policies which address fundamental issues such as the the mobility of artists and cultural professionals across borders, widening the economic viability of cultural and creative practitioners, gender equality and artistic freedom.

Mr. Chairman, we are encouraged by UNESCO's expanded focus on the sciences to include girls and women education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). As an example of our engagement in this area, Jamaica hosted the sub-regional UNESCO Man and the Biosphere meeting in March this year to encourage listings under the program. From this successful encounter we expect to see countries in the Caribbean put forward sites for possible inscription as Biosphere Reserves.

Excellences, last year we were elected to UNESCO's Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All programme. Jamaica takes its role seriously as a new member and wishes to emphasise its commitment to realize the objectives of the

Council. As acknowledged by IFAP, the last decade has witnessed technological development at a scale and speed unprecedented in the history of humankind. We believe the IFAP will need to take these developments into account in the way it structures its work.

Mr. Chairman, Jamaica fully supports UNESCO's SIDS programme, and looks forward to working collectively with all small island developing states in the Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean on critical areas of the SIDS Agenda, to include climate change, safeguarding our tangible and intangible assets and realizing the economic benefits of these resources for the sustainability of our local communities.

Like Jamaica's first long term development plan - Vision 2030, we are committed to the implementation of Agenda 2030. It bears repeating what was said in Jamaica's statement last year to the General Conference, and I quote "we believe that sustainable prosperity is only achievable when the average citizen, armed with his or her culture and creativity, is given full opportunity to develop their talents and abilities and create world class products that will astonish the world".

I thank you.