

STATEMENT BY DR. JAMES G. NJOGU, HSC, HEAD OF CONVENTION AND RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION, KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE AND REPRESENTATIVE OF KENYA TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO DURING THE PLENARY DEBATE OF THE 204TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO

MONDAY, 9 APRIL 2018

**Mr. Chairman,
President of the General-Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Kenya welcomes the Director-General's commitment to reforming UNESCO. Sustainable reforms in UNESCO should however be grounded in strong collaboration between the Member States and the Secretariat to ensure that the Organization is fit-for-purpose and responds effectively to the needs of its Member States.

The need for the United Nations system to effectively support the 2030 Agenda cannot be over emphasized. UNESCO should therefore deepen strategic and innovative partnerships as well as enhance coordination with other UN agencies.

UNESCO needs to focus on its core competencies and rapidly respond to emerging issues within its areas of competence. This requires rethinking on how we can efficiently address the challenges of our time and strategically position UNESCO to seize new opportunities.

Reforms within UNESCO should go hand-in-hand with an effective advocacy and outreach strategy. We must communicate better on what UNESCO does and seek to show the impact of UNESCO's actions. The relevance and credibility of UNESCO hinges to a large extent on our ability to demonstrate how the Organization helps improve people's lives.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya welcomes the Director-General's commitment to the two Global priorities; Africa and Gender Equality. It is critical that Priority Africa reflects the aspirations of African Member States for a transformational sustainable development. This requires strengthening of partnerships, fostering of stakeholder ownership and pooling of resources.

Kenya is therefore pleased to convene together with UNESCO and the Africa Union, the 1st Pan African High-level Conference on Education since the adoption of Education 2030 agenda, from the 25th to 27th of April 2018 in Nairobi. The Conference will advance the alignment between the Education 2030 Agenda and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016 – 2025) drawn from the Africa Union's Agenda 2063.

Kenya will also host the 5th Interregional Meeting of National Commissions for UNESCO from 19th to 21st of June 2018. We expect that the meeting will contribute to strengthening National Commissions as well as to raise their visibility and contribution to UNESCO's mandate.

The significance and depth of UNESCO's action greatly depends on its field network and the skillset of its staff. A well-coordinated and coherent field network is therefore essential for effective programme delivery. Kenya has closely worked with the Regional Office in Eastern Africa and we highly encourage the strengthening of the Regional Offices in Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are all obliged to forge common cause to stem the rise of violent extremism and intolerance. Kenya expresses its condolences to victims and solidarity with UNESCO Member States confronting violent extremism. We support UNESCO's actions in the Prevention of Violent Extremisms (PVE) and the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

The youth represent a formidable resource that can provide solutions for sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies. Active engagement of youth as partners and key stakeholders of UNESCO should be fostered both in the design and delivery of UNESCO's programmes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future. Kenya therefore welcomes efforts to prepare a framework for further implementation of ESD beyond 2019.

Sport is a valuable tool for fostering social cohesion, respect and tolerance. Kenya supports UNESCO's role in supporting Member States harness the transformative power of sports especially through the development of relevant policies for quality physical education and sports. For the last three years Kenya and the UNESCO Regional Office in Nairobi has celebrated the International Day of Sports on 6th April with various Stakeholders.

Water is central to fulfilling the transformative agenda that is encompassed in the SDGs. Kenya appreciates the role of the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) in supporting Member States achieve SDG 6 on Water and Sanitation including through the International Water Action Decade 2018 – 2028.

Equally, Kenya highly appreciates the role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in supporting Member States achieve SDG 14 on the Ocean. We also welcome the contribution of the IOC to the Decade of Ocean Science 2021 - 2030.

We urge the Director-General to continue supporting Member States establish and manage World Heritage Sites, Biosphere reserves and Geoparks as sites for heritage conservation and sustainable development.

Finally, we wish to align ourselves with the Africa Group Statement delivered by Nigeria, Vice-President for Africa. We also wish to acknowledge and appreciate the invaluable contribution of Mr. Getachew Engida during his tenure as Deputy Director-General of UNESCO.

Thank you