



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Permanent Delegation of
the Federal Republic
of Nigeria to UNESCO

204th Session of the Executive Board
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**TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR (DR.) YAHAYA ALIYU, LATE
PERMANENT DELEGATE OF NIGERIA TO UNESCO AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO FROM
1989 – 1991**

BY

**H.E. MRS. MARIAM Y. KATAGUM, AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT DELEGATE OF NIGERIA TO UNESCO ON
MONDAY, 9TH APRIL, 2018**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

It is often at moments like this, when we rise with one voice, to mark the passing of one of us, who has contributed meaningfully to the work of our Organization that the essence, the logic and the importance of our solidarity, stares us in the face and impels us to greater efforts in ensuring the survival, the progress and the continuity of our Organization, UNESCO. Nigeria's hope is that it will be so on this occasion.

Madam President of the General Conference,
Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,

Excellencies, Dear colleagues,

First of all, let me express to you all, on behalf of Nigeria, and particularly on behalf of the family of the late Ambassador Yahaya Aliyu, our deepest appreciation of this generous gesture of remembrance in honour of Ambassador Aliyu, Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO from 1986 to 1993, Nigeria's Representative on the Executive Board from 1987 – 1991 and Chairman of the Executive Board from 1989 – 1991.

My Delegation would like to thank all those Member States who through phone calls, emails, letters, and Notes Verbale offered their condolences. Let me assure you that these messages have been transmitted to the appropriate Quarters.

Ambassador Yahaya Aliyu was indeed a UNESCO man in every sense of the expression.

Born in 1938, Yahaya Aliyu spent all of his adult life in Education, working for its promotion and its development.

Beyond his studies at the foremost tertiary education institution in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan, Aliyu's education and professional training took him to several other institutions of learning far from his home country; among them to Moray House College of Education in Scotland, to the University of Durham in England and to Wisconsin University in the United States of

America where he devoted his time, among others, to the study of the administration and operation of Universities.

As a teacher, teacher-trainer, University Lecturer, and as a University Administrator, Yahaya Aliyu served his country Nigeria with devotion and commitment in various positions of responsibility.

In 1975, he was appointed State Commissioner for Education in the Kaduna State government. From 1976 to 1981, Yahaya Aliyu served as the Registrar of one of the oldest Universities in Nigeria – The Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Northern Nigeria.

He was later appointed Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission in 1981. In this role and in line with the mandate of the Commission, Yahaya Aliyu contributed to the development and the nurturing of tertiary education institutions in the country.

It was from the Universities Commission that Yahaya Aliyu was appointed in 1986, by the Head of State, as the country's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

Already imbued, through his lifelong calling and experience, with the demands and concerns of the Organization, Yahaya Aliyu was on familiar grounds in UNESCO. And he was soon totally immersed in the work and deliberations of the Organization. As a member of the Executive Board, representing his country, he soon

established himself as a serious and important contributor to the work of the Executive Board. It was therefore no surprise when in 1989 his colleagues decided to elect him as their Chairperson, a position he accepted with humility and an acute sense of responsibility which was exemplified by his performance as the Chairperson – as a fair-minded gentleman, builder of consensus, a man of inexhaustible patience and wisdom.

At the closing of the 137th Session which was his last session as Chairman of the Board, the President of the General Conference, Mr. Ogot (Kenya), said and I quote “The Chairman had always said that he was but a simple teacher; it could rightly be said, however, that good teachers were always simple teachers”.

On his part, the Director-General, UNESCO, Mr. Federico Mayor, said Yahaya Aliyu’s “knowledge of UNESCO had enabled him to exercise his high office with the wisdom, serenity, patience and impartiality which were the hallmarks of the ‘Aliyu style’ ”.

Ambassador Yahaya Aliyu was the Chairman of the Executive Board during the Jomtien World Conference on Education and particularly during its preparation by UNESCO. In that position he was able to make important contributions to UNESCO’s success and its cohesive performance at the Conference.

Yahaya Aliyu had several publications, all in the field of education, to his credit.

At the end of his term as Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Dr. Yahaya Aliyu returned to Nigeria where he continued his contributions to the development of education and its institutions at every level.

In recognition of his contributions to the development of education in Nigeria, he was awarded the Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) by the University of Jos, in 1997 and was also awarded one of the highest honours in Nigeria in 2004 when he was made an Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic.

With his work and action for the progress and development of education and learning in Nigeria, and with his leadership and contribution to the work and ideals of UNESCO, Ambassador Yahaya Aliyu has left behind him a precious and enduring memory which we are happy to honour and emulate.

Once again, thank you all for this gracious offering of appreciation for the contributions of Ambassador Aliyu, to the great work of UNESCO.

May his soul Rest in perfect Peace. Amen.