

**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE PERMENAET DELEGATE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE TO UNESCO, H.E. AMBASSADOR  
RUDO M. CHITIGA DURING THE 204<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE  
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO, 10 APRIL 2018**

Chairperson of the Executive Board, Mr Lee Byong-Hyun

President of the General Conference, Mrs Zohar Alaoui

Director-General of UNESCO, Mdme Audrey Auzolay and

Dear Colleagues,

Chairperson

Zimbabwe joins other delegations in welcoming the Executive Director of UNESCO, Mdme Auzolay to the 204<sup>th</sup> Session, her first substantive meeting of the Executive Board (EB). We remain highly expectant to profit from her input in addressing the myriad challenges affecting and afflicting our organisation.

Let me, at the onset, associate my delegation with the statement made by the Vice President of our electoral group.

Chairperson

As most of us gathered here may be aware, Zimbabwe, in November 2017, went through a metamorphosis which ushered in a new political and economic dispensation in the country whose main thrust is socio-economic transformation to improve the well-being of its population. Our target is rapid economic innovations and inventions and modernisation of industry, with the support of, among others, our development partners, including UNESCO, in order to create opportunities and employment. It is against such a background that

My Delegation, expects, perhaps reasonably so, that our organisation's future projections be firmly predicated on a developmental trajectory.

Chairperson

Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of my country's expectations, as well as the good work of UNESCO in that regard. Our focus is on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the quest to create employment. Zimbabwe is also keen to invest more in Science, Technology for industrialisation and modernisation in order to meet the needs of the country. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) are also key as they help in building resilient economies and addressing the critical issues of our time, such as climate change, poverty, food, energy and water security, environmental resources and disease, to advance the country's socio-economic transformation. Our universities and tertiary institutions are seized with reforming their operations in order to produce skills that are relevant to a technologically driven economy. Zimbabwe appreciates UNESCO's initiatives including training of TVET leaders which took place in 2017 and will continue to work closely with UNESCO in those aspects.

Chairperson

My Delegation has studied with interest the reform proposals by the Director General. We look forward to hearing concrete propositions on programme implementation that will not address UNESCO's current challenges, but also enhance the organisation's developmental trajectory. While we generally welcome the contents in item 31 of the document, **The Stages of UNESCO's Strategic Transformation**, we await further details on the proposals. While there can be little doubt that new oil lubricates the engine to greater efficiency, it is, however,

our view that there is need to bear in mind and take into consideration the reality of as-yet-unfinished process of the Governance Working Group which is yet to be finalised. My Delegation joins others in calling for more time and dialogue to reflect on the proposals.

Chairperson

My Delegation welcomes the Analytical Programme Implementation Report (APIR). Despite financial challenges, of 40 of the 51 UIS major programmes were implemented. We would welcome updated information on the real impact on the ground of UNESCO projects in Member States.

Chairperson,

My Delegation laments the late availability of crucial documents prior to important meetings such as this one. For example the External Auditor's Report contains sensitive proposals on Field Offices, indicating those in Africa are under-performing due to weaknesses related to quality, knowledge production and innovation. There are even proposals to close two Field Offices in Africa.

My Delegation supports the delay of the adoption of recommendation to close two of the Field Offices. We have underscored the critical role played by Field Offices in Africa in supporting UNESCO programmes on the ground. We, however, have to stress the need for adequate support to fully equip them.

In that regard, we are concerned to note that there were unspent funds amounting to \$27,5 million, yet some projects were suspended and the

field offices failed to deliver due to lack of funding. We hope that in future such funds will be made available for use in areas where they are needed.

Chairperson,

As host to the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA), allow me, to reaffirm my Government's commitment to support it to deliver on its mandate.

As I indicated earlier in my statement, the new dispensation in Zimbabwe requires the full support of development partners, and the ROSA is one such. It has and is still playing a critical role in developing my country's capacity to mitigate water challenges and climate change through joint programmes with the International Hydrology Programme (IHP). Let me hasten to add that despite the financial challenges facing UNESCO, the ROSA has a robust portfolio well positioned to facilitate regional integration.

Chairperson,

My Delegation's statement would be incomplete without the mention of the oft-underplayed issue of the under-representation of Africans in the top management of UNESCO. That the region still has the highest number of under-represented countries remains a cause for concern. We accordingly call for corrective measures to address that anomaly.

I thank you.