



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

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REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**AT THE
39TH SESSION OF UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
30 OCTOBER – 14 NOVEMBER 2017**

PARIS, FRANCE

Your Excellency Madam President

The Director General of UNESCO

Chairperson of UNESCO Executive Board

Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. My Delegation and I bring you warm greetings from His Excellency the President and the People of the Republic of Botswana. I assure you of our continued commitment to the ideals of UNESCO.
2. Your Excellency, I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 39th Session of UNESCO General Conference. I assure you of our cooperation as you direct the deliberations of this General Conference and the next biennium.
3. Allow me also, on behalf of Botswana, to congratulate Her Excellency Madam Audrey Azoulay in her appointment to the position of Director General of UNESCO. Her ascension to this position is a sign of UNESCO's confidence in her ability to deliver in its mandate.
4. May I further take this opportunity to offer my Government's heartfelt gratitude at the way and manner in which the outgoing Director-General, Madam Bokova has steered this critically important organization.

5. When one considers the state of the world today, one then appreciates the theme of this General Conference which is ***SDGs and the role of UNESCO in the Multilateral System.***
6. In an effort to promote public education and dialogue on bioethics education and research ethics, Botswana in collaboration with UNESCO Offices for Eastern and Southern Africa, hosted a Regional Ethics/Bioethics Conference from 17-18 October 2017 under the theme *SDGs and the role of Ethics in Southern Africa: promoting Bioethics, Ethics Education and Research.*
7. The Conference outcome document recommended mainstreaming of bioethics and research ethics in the curriculum for institutions of higher learning and the establishment of regional networks with a view to promoting bioethics cooperation.
8. Botswana underscores the role of culture in shaping efforts towards the 2030 Development Agenda. We are aware that lack of appreciation of cultural diversity can defeat global efforts towards the promotion of peace and security amongst nations. In this regard, strengthening capacities of Member States in the implementation of UNESCO cultural protocols still remains a priority.

Madam President

9. We are gathered here today, under these flags and the uniting flag of the United Nations to recall and pledge to the citizens of the world and renew our path to attaining this pledge.

10. We have promised the citizens of the world that we can and that we will end poverty and we know that this is possible. We have undertaken to end world hunger and we know that this is possible, because as a matter of fact, there is or should be enough food to feed us all.
11. We have undertaken to promote good health and well-being and we are aware that very few enjoy amazingly good health while many die from preventable diseases.
12. We have promised quality education and this is not just for a few wealthy but for all.
13. We all agree that education equality is non-negotiable, it is an imperative.
14. We have promised the world equal access to water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth.
15. We agree that the opportunities for innovation and creativity that are found in the West must be available to the rest of the world.
16. We are aware that we can rid Africa from the comfort of jumbo jets and still perish in the seas as we flee from Africa.
17. We are aware that homes, neighbourhoods, villages, streets and cities are not safe and we the people of the world are responsible for that insecurity.

18. We are aware that we are gobbling up resources faster than we can replace them, that we are poisoning the seas, the air and the earth.
19. And because we could not keep our heads in the sand anymore, we made the 17 promises that comprise the SDGs.
20. Botswana acknowledges the role that UNESCO plays in the promotion of democracy, peace, justice and strong institutions. Amongst these institutions are independent judiciary, human rights commissions, elections commissions, labour organisations and independent press.
21. We look to UNESCO with its projects and programmes, with ethos, with its ability to negotiate, create alliances, build bridges to employ its soft power to facilitate the realization of these promises.
22. The 17th goal is the promise that we will all work in partnership to attain the SDGs.

Madam President

23. It is for this reason that I conclude my remarks once again confirming Botswana's eagerness to be a proud member of UNESCO.
24. Botswana particularly has benefitted from this membership and hopes that it has contributed for the benefit of others.
