

The National Statement of the Republic of South Sudan Delivered by Hon. Deng Deng Hoc Yai at the 39th General Conference of UNESCO, Paris, France

Check against delivery!

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to deliver this statement on behalf of my country, the Republic of South Sudan.

First, I would like to convey a message of congratulations to the new Director General of UNESCO. We wish you success in your new assignment. We also commend the outgoing DG, Irena Bokova, for her leadership and many successes.

UNESCO is needed now more than in 1945. UNESCO is expected to build on the successes of the last 72 years or so and tackle the emerging global threats to international peace and global security. Therefore, UNESCO should double its efforts to construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women to prevent eruption of more conflicts and wars. In the same vein, UNESCO should do more to promote the common welfare of the human race.

On our part, the Republic of South Sudan is committed to peace at home, in Africa and throughout the whole world. Since August 2015, our President, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, signed the Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and we have achieved significant progress in implementation of the Agreement so far. Our President has also launched the National Dialogue Initiative, which complements the Peace Agreement, and consultation meetings are being held in various parts of our country to enable our citizens reach a consensus on local, state and national issues under discussion.

The Republic of South Sudan is also strengthening its bilateral relations, especially with its neighbours, to strengthen peace and security. In addition, South Sudan has joined the East Africa Community (EAC) and is working together with the Partner States of the EAC to widen and deepen co-operation in political, economic, social and cultural fields, defence, security and legal and judicial affairs.

In order to achieve SDG 4, the Republic of South Sudan has developed the National General Education Policy, 2017-2027 and The General Education Strategic Plan, 2017-2022. These roadmaps will enable us to reform the education system of the Republic of South Sudan to provide equitable access to quality education for all children, youth and adults free of charge. However, our biggest challenge is lack of enough finances for general education due to the civil war in my country and financing is key to success. With funding from the UK, we are able to provide cash transfers to over 120,000 girls in schools last year and over 200,000 girls this year and we will build on these successes and achieve gender equality in general education by 2030. We take this opportunity to urge UNESCO to play a bigger role in implementation of SDG 4 and the rest of the SDGs in order to transform our world.

Climate change is the biggest threat to Planet Earth and the human race. The Paris Agreement, 2015, has the potential to tackle climate change. And the Republic of South Sudan is implementing

it. However, lack of finances for mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, training and development and loss and damage is bound to undermine it if the developed countries continue to be reluctant to give money to the developing countries. The Paris Agreement is the way forward and must be implemented by all the Member States. The Member States must demonstrate strong leadership and iron determination to protect the planet and save the human race.

We must also tackle poverty and achieve prosperity for all the people of the world. My country, South Sudan, and many AU Member States have developed the AU Agenda 2063, which aspires, among others, to achieve prosperity. This is not a far-fetched dream. With support from the developed countries and through South-South cooperation, my country and many other African countries can utilize and add value to its vast natural resources; educate and empower millions of youth; achieve economic development and rise. Africa can become the continent of the future. This is by no means a mission impossible. We can achieve prosperity for all human beings if we are determined to do so.

In conclusion, partnership working amongst all the Member States will continue to be key to our success. UNESCO Member States need to work together to create a conducive atmosphere in Africa for youth to access jobs and income generation opportunities in Africa, instead of migrating to Europe and in the process lose their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Let us do our best and pray that God will do the rest.

Thank you.