

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY THE BARBADOS DEPUTY HEAD OF  
DELEGATION IN THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL POLICY  
DEBATE AT THE 39TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO GENERAL  
CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 6, 2017**

Mme. President

Mme. Director General

Your Excellencies

Heads of Delegations

Distinguished Delegates

Madam President, on behalf of the Government of Barbados, I take this opportunity to offer warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of this conference. I also wish to thank your distinguished predecessor for his contribution to the success of the organization during the last biennium. We wish to commend Mrs. Irina Bokova for an excellent job during her two terms as Director General.

Barbados takes pleasure in welcoming La Nouvelle Calédonie, a sister island, as the newest Associate member of UNESCO.

Barbados recognizes the pivotal role that education has to play in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Barbados has been steadfastly increasing its efforts in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the establishment of a Special Unit to coordinate its implementation thus demonstrating national ownership and leadership in the process. The Special Unit will provide advice to the Office of Prime Minister on the positions that Barbados should adopt and promote

in the regional, hemispheric and international sustainable development fora.

Barbados, through its Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation is fully committed to SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda. Some of Barbados' main objectives in this regard are to increase access to early childhood education from 80% to 100%; increase access to tertiary level education from the current 28% to 35%, and to develop a workforce that is equipped to adapt to a rapidly-changing environment and is readily re-trainable.

Madam President, distinguished delegates, with respect to the environment, we continue to witness and observe the severe effects of global warming and climate change. The recent devastation experienced in the Caribbean after the passage of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, two of the strongest hurricanes in recorded history, makes us even more cognizant of the fact that there must be commitment and supporting systems in place at the global level to address all risk associated with climate change, particularly in response to the vulnerabilities of the Small Island Development States (SIDS). As agreed in the COP 21 in Paris not less than two years ago it is the hope of Small states like mine that the implementation of those decisions can still be realised. Our thoughts go to the delegations attending the COP 23 in Bonn which begins today.

Consequently, Barbados has established a National Climate Change Committee to oversee the development and implementation of specific programmes and activities to address mitigation and adaptation, through a series of management, monitoring and assessment programmes.

Barbados greatly appreciates that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain a priority for UNESCO and welcomes the UNESCO Action Plan for SIDS 2016 -2021.

Barbados pledges to continue its collaborative work with UNESCO in this area. The DG's initiatives in support of building the resilience of SIDS in the face of climate change have been critically important, and are commendable, particularly with respect to her team's work in concluding the preparation of a draft declaration on ethical principles in relation to climate change.

Barbados has made clear its intention to be actively involved in disaster risk management as witnessed through the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Barbados and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (UNESCO/IOC) concerning mutual interest in the Caribbean Tsunami Information Centre (CTIC), in February of this year.

With respect to Culture Barbados' national priorities align with UNESCO's Strategic Objectives 7 and 8 as it relates to the sustainable management and interpretation of Barbados' World Heritage city, Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison, thus supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

In an effort to broaden its economic base Barbados is seeking to foster dynamic cultural and creative industries, through the establishment of our Cultural Industries Development Authority (CIDA). Barbados is also actively engaged in the application of the 2015 Recommendation on the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, with particular emphasis on their social

and educational roles, as vectors for intercultural dialogue and sustainable development.

Finally with respect to Communication and Information, Barbados endorses UNESCO's initiatives to "foster universal access to information and knowledge resources ...through the use of ICTs, by means of new media and information literacy (MIL) initiatives" particularly where it can empower local communities to implement participatory Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and provide access to self-directed learning tools for open, flexible and online e-learning. At the same time Barbados has been actively involved in the growth of the Memory of the World Programme in the Caribbean, addressing the challenges of preservation of the documentary heritage, in order to truly reflect the contribution made by previously marginalised communities.

Madam President, I wish to reiterate Barbados' commitment to this highly important organization and looks forward to UNESCO continuing its indispensable work in the future.

Je vous remercie.