



39<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO  
Paris, France, 30 October – 14 November 2017  
**Remarks by the Minister of Education, Science,  
Culture and Sport of Curaçao, the Honourable Ms.  
Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé**

Madam President of the General Conference,  
Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam Director-General,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Curaçao congratulates you Mr President on being elected to preside over this General Conference. We also congratulate New Caledonia in becoming the 11th Associate Member to join UNESCO.

Madam President, The Government of Curaçao stands in solidarity with the Caribbean countries affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria. Rest assured that we are confident as strong Caribbean people. Where possible, Curacao will extend a helping hand to support our brothers and sisters, like we did in Sint Maarten.

Madam President, we are proud to share with you that next month December 4<sup>th</sup> marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Curaçao on the World Heritage List. In response the 3rd Caribbean Conference of National Trusts and Preservation Societies will be held on November 16 to November 19 in the World Heritage City Willemstad, our island's capital of

Curaçao.

Other good news to share is that last week during the regional meeting of the Memory of the World for Latin America and Caribbean Committee in Curaçao, a joint nomination by Curaçao, St. Maarten and Suriname was approved: The Documentary Heritage of the Enslaved people in the Dutch Caribbean and their descendents (1831-1969).

Madam President, as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) we are quite aware of the importance AND PRIORITY of the implementation of the SDGs and specifically SDG 4 Quality Education.

We have made great strides with free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to more effective learning outcomes but this needs to be revised. Much is taking place and the challenges are many but nevertheless the will to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda in the Caribbean region has our fullest attention.

We are therefore pleased that due to the partnership between the Caribbean Development Bank, UNESCO and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) a Caribbean Centre Educational Planning has been established within the University of the West Indies designed to give support to educational institutions and countries across the Caribbean.

We count on this continued support for education.

Remaining on education matter, it gives me pleasure to let you know that we recently established a UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Technology and Management at the University of Curaçao.

Madam President, another very important matter is climate change. We have seen its effects recently with the

hurricanes that have affected our sister islands and their Education programmes and their tangible heritage mercilessly. Therefore it is imperative to make it a global priority.

Madam. President, in the field of culture I am pleased to inform that Curaçao has co-ratified the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage last year, thus making the ratification within the Kingdom of the Netherlands complete! Through educational materials we are promoting awareness, respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Furthermore Madam President, our Government has given priority to the international and local dates regarding the Slave history in a more sustainable way by also incorporating this in activities held to commemorate the Slave Trade and the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean.

Madam President additionally, youth and youth participation in our community is very essential and opportunities that arise for their participation in global forums. It is therefore that we ask you to reconsider the direction the Youth Forum has taken in which it has become quite impossible for very qualified youth to participate this year. Selection of candidates should be placed back in hands of the countries.

Madam President, I am also delighted to inform that last year on the eve of our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Associate Member, we concluded and published the report on the investigation of the Media Landscape for the Cluster region and it was officially launched in Curaçao in the presence of the Director and Representative of UNESCO for the Caribbean. We are grateful that UNESCO approached us to be the pilot for the Caribbean Region for the assessment of Media Development in Curaçao for which we are grateful.

Finally, Madam President, we continue to count on UNESCO's support in realizing its mandate to work towards a Culture of Peace through the implementation of its programmes and capacity building.

*Masha danki, thank you, muchas gracias, dank u, merci beaucoup.*