



STATEMENT BY

**HONOURABLE OLIVIA GRANGE CD MP
MINISTER OF CULTURE, GENDER, ENTERTAINMENT AND
SPORT**

**On the Occasion of the
39TH SESSION OF UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris**

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Greetings and Salutations...

Madame President of the 39th Session of the General Conference, Her Excellency Mrs. Zohour Alaoui;

Madam Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO;

Chairperson of UNESCO Executive Board, Mr Michael Worbs,

Ministers responsible for UNESCO Affairs; Representatives of other United Nations Organizations; Distinguished Representatives from Capitals across the World; Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish at the outset to specifically recognize my Colleague Ministers and other delegates from the Caribbean, some of whom have suffered immensely from the unfortunate onslaught of extreme weather conditions in recent months which have caused widespread devastation and destruction including to cultural heritage sites. We wish for you nothing but a speedy recovery. These incidents demonstrate that climate change is a real and present threat to Small Island Developing States.

It is for this reason that we wish to express our deepest appreciation to the Director General under whose tenure greater prominence has been given in the work of UNESCO to the impact of climate change. In this regard, we reiterate our appreciation to you, Madam Bokova, for your support of initiatives aimed at promoting the importance of mitigation and building the resilience of SIDS to the impact of climate change.

Madame President, Jamaica remains firmly committed to the ideals, goals and objectives of this noble organization. It is this firm commitment that has motivated us to present our

candidature for membership on the UNESCO Executive Board for the period 2017 – 2021.

We invite your support for our candidature.

I address you as a proud daughter from the land of:

- Internationally renowned Human Rights Activist, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, visionary for the restoration of dignity and integrity of the people of African Descent, at home and across the Diaspora.
- Iconic Reggae Artiste Robert Nesta “Bob” Marley, whose anthems of resistance and resilience, of universal peace and solidarity, have gained worldwide acclaim, and provided the wings on which many freedom fighters soared to liberation.
- The Legend Usain Bolt, the fastest man to have walked planet earth, and the poster boy of fair play in sports for over a decade.

As a Small Island Developing State, we are in constant confrontation with the impact of climate change and the inequities of global economic systems that often result in serious social and psychological damage to our people. Add to that the residue of slavery and colonialism, and you get a prescription for disaster of one kind or another which we must constantly strive to mitigate.

It is against this background that we have intensified our focus on our young people by deepening their involvement and participation in national affairs and promoting youth employment in the cultural and creative industries sector. Of particular note:

1. November is celebrated as Youth Month each year in Jamaica. Our Youth Parliament goes into action at this time every year, providing a platform for young people to

engage the political process, adding their voices to policy and programme development concerning youth.

2. Junior Mayors of Parish Municipalities are now being inducted to impact the political process at the community level
3. Incubation and talent development targeting young persons are being increased in the cultural and creative industries
4. Great strides have been made in establishing UNESCO Clubs in schools, in a programme which encompasses Culture Clubs and Heritage Clubs, which have existed for some time. This is creating a more formidable and impactful cultural experience for our young people.

Jamaica will continue to work closely with the Caribbean Cluster office in implementing the major programmes defined in the UNESCO Programme and Budget 2017 – 2021, placing special emphasis on SDG4, which is compatible with Government of Jamaica’s mantra of **“Every child can learn, Every child must learn”**. Guided by deliberations in UNESCO, we continue to create new strategies and programmes reflecting lifelong learning, education for all, and quality education for success.

Since my appointment as Jamaica’s first Minister of Gender, a lot has been achieved. This includes:

1. Establishing the National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-based Violence (July 2017).
2. Laying the groundwork for the establishment of Centres to house female victims of domestic abuse.

3. Establishment of a Programme for the Re-admission of teenaged mother's into the formal school system.

Colleagues, our work in Jamaica has gone on unabated. In the last two years alone we have partnered with UNESCO on a series of initiatives, including:

1. Revision of the National Culture Policy, now titled the National Policy on Culture and Creative Economy.
2. Successfully hosted the first Caribbean Symposium on Climate Change and World Heritage in Kingston in May 2017.
3. Successfully co-hosted with UNESCO, the Sub-Regional Conference on CONFINTEA VI.
4. Following the inscription of the Blue and John Crow Mountains to the World Heritage List, the first mixed site in the Caribbean, we have had two economic development fora for the communities situated around the Heritage Site. This has enhanced our capacity to offer sustainable benefits to residents in the protected area. in order to enhance their capacity to sustainably benefit from the designation

Madam President, we have embarked on extensive activities in support of our creative economy, including Sport, to promote the creative sector as a catalyst for national development. For example:

1. We are working closely with our legend Usain Bolt to establish the Caribbean Sports Medicine Centre at the University of the West Indies to facilitate better medical response to our elite and junior athletes in the Caribbean and Latin America.

2. We have established the Jamaican Athletes Insurance Plan, a non-contributory group life and health plan paid for by the Government as part of our commitment to secure the well-being and development of our national sports representatives.
3. Plans are also advanced for the creation of a world class training base for athletes from across the world, in our quest to share our expertise in developing young ambitious athletes into world beaters. UNESCO signalled its support by funding the pre-prefeasibility study of Jamaica's sport programme. The next step is to develop a business plan and to make it happen on a grand scale.

Finally, the mandate of the Executive Board, under the authority of the General Conference, is focused on the development of policies and programmes to direct UNESCO's activities. Jamaica stands ready as a member of the Board to assiduously to fulfil this mandate and contribute to strengthening the work of UNESCO particularly in the area of sustainable development. It is our view that UNESCO carries a heavy burden of responsibility to assist in tackling the various global economic and political crises and in finding solutions that will promote sustainable development for all.

We believe that sustainable prosperity is only achievable when the average citizen, armed with his or her culture and creativity, is given full opportunity to develop their talents and abilities and create world class products that will astonish the world.

This has been the Jamaican experience in Brand Jamaica and we thank UNESCO for its support. We anticipate continued and exciting collaboration and a future of sustainable prosperity for all our members.

I thank you all.