



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

**POLICY STATEMENT DURING THE GENERAL POLICY DEBATE
DELIVERED BY THE
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION,
HON. DR. ENG. BRIAN C. MUSHIMBA, MP
DURING THE
40TH SESSION OF GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO.
HELD ON 14th NOVEMBER, 2019
PARIS, FRANCE**

The President of the General Conference

The Chairperson of the Executive Board

The Director General

Distinguished delegates

Zambia wishes to join UNESCO Member States in congratulating you, Mr. President, for being elected as the President of the 40th session of the General Conference.

Zambia also wishes to thank the outgoing President of the General Conference, Her Excellency Mrs. Zohour Alaoui, for her unwavering efforts in advancing the agenda of UNESCO.

We also thank all the Member States for supporting Zambia's candidatures as one of the Vice Presidents of the General Conference, and also President of the Natural Sciences Commission.

Mr. President, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The aspiration of Zambia is to realize the tenets articulated in the Education 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, we have continued implementing interventions outlined in various national development plans and international conventions and protocols that we have accented to.

Mr. President,

To enhance pupil attendance and nutrition among pre and primary school learners, my Government has continued funding the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.

At secondary school level, increasing access and participation of girl is being realized through the **Keeping Girls in School** initiative which is part of the **Girls Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihood project**.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Zambia continues to benefit from the UNESCO/SIDA support in the implementation of **Comprehensive Sexuality Education** targeted at young people (between the ages of 10 - 24) through the project titled: ***Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future (O3 Zambia)***.

The O3 Zambia is improving sexual and reproductive health, gender, and education outcomes for adolescents and young people through sustained reductions in early and unintended pregnancy, and Gender-Based Violence.

The O3 Zambia is an important intervention for Zambia and is aligned with SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 16.

In order to reduce the cost of providing teaching and learning materials, my Government is developing Open Educational Resources (OERs) for the Secondary School Curriculum with the support of UNESCO through the formulation of an OER Strategy.

In efforts to enhance provision of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in schools, we have transformed the National Science Centre and also established a Research and Innovation Section responsible for conducting and promoting research and innovation in STEM.

Recognising the significant role qualified teachers play in the provision of quality education, Zambia with support from UNESCO has developed teacher Professional Standards and has also customized the UNESCO ICT Teacher Competence Framework.

In view of this, we commend UNESCO for the role the organization keeps playing in the implementation of SDG 4.

Mr. President, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Quality assurance in higher education has gained significant momentum in the recent years due to rising public demand for better performance of higher education institutions.

In responding to this need, the *“UNESCO-Shenzhen Municipality Government Funds-in-Trust” project on “Strengthening Quality Assurance and Recognition Tools and Mechanisms in Higher Education in Africa”* is being implemented in Zambia.

Mr. President,

My country, working with stakeholders such as the UNHCR, has provided a safe haven and a home to over 82, 000 refugees and displaced persons from neighboring countries.

In this light, it was important, and rightly so, that Zambia is the first country globally to pilot the UNESCO **Qualifications Passport** and started awarding this UNESCO qualifications passport to refugees and vulnerable migrants.

Mr. President,

Zambia wants to pay tribute to UNESCO for financing an intervention to mitigate child marriages, pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and enhance living a positive quality lifestyle for netballers and this has provided them with information on how to handle varying issues they come into contact with as they participate in this sport.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the implementation of the village television project reported during the 39th Session of the General Conference has contributed greatly to the widening of access to information in Zambia.

This is because in areas that are not serviced by transmitters of the **Digital Terrestrial Transmission system**, the government has provided **Direct to Home transmission system**, a platform that uses satellite transmission.

Mr President, as I conclude, this session of the General Conference will examine very important matters and some issues will have great bearing on the future of UNESCO.

The programme and budget of UNESCO and the future of the International Bureau of Education are among the items that will require serious reflection before taking decisions

I would therefore like to urge Member States to reach consensus so that UNESCO can implement its programmes. I further wish to urge UNESCO to continue being transparent and consultative especially during this strategic transformation process which will impact all the member states and come up with an agenda that speaks to the desires of all member states.

I thank you.