

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by the Honourable Olivia Grange, CD, MP

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport of Jamaica

to the General Policy Debate of the 40th Session of the

UNESCO General Conference, 15th November 2019

President of the General Conference

Chairman of the Executive Board

Director General

Last year, on November 29, the Reggae Music of Jamaica was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and we all celebrated by singing Bob Marley's "One Love". Previously, Kingston, our capital city, was declared a Creative City Of Music by UNESCO, and our Blue and John Crow Mountains were designated a world heritage site. Our country understands the value of UNESCO in recognising and protecting cultural heritage. *These achievements are also in keeping with Jamaica's recognition of its creative economy.* For this reason, Jamaica is taking concrete steps to establish a National Culture and Creative Industries Council "**Jamaica Creative**"

to realise the objectives of the 2005 Convention on the protection and promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In the field of Education, we are moving solidly to support the Global Convention on the Mobility of Higher Education and Qualification. Jamaica is committed to the promotion of equity, and has pursued the realisation of SDG 4, through the Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition, and other forward looking initiatives. We have prioritised TVET and STEM integration and are making important strides in reducing gender gaps in educational institutions and transforming the early childhood sector.

As we look to the future, the views of our young people are important, and Jamaica is pleased to have two vibrant representatives in attendance at the UNESCO Youth Forum.

In relation to Science, we have embraced the urgency which must be attached to the pursuit of Open Science, of women and girls in Science, and in managing the digital transformation. In February 2020, Jamaica and the UNESCO Caribbean Cluster Office will be hosting a Conference on Artificial Intelligence for the Caribbean, and will also explore its use to promote integrity in Sport

which we call 'physical culture'. We are convinced of the significant contribution which UNESCO can make to setting global standards in this area.

We also attach great significance to *media and information literacy*, as responsible media and technology play a vital role in promoting democratic values and fostering inclusive societies. Digital literacy is critical in preparing our people for the far-reaching disruptions, displacement and opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution. This is particularly related to SIDS, given our low levels of GDP and labour intensive economies, which are most susceptible to the negative consequences of automation in the short to medium term.

UNESCO's approval of the declaration of Oct 24 to 31, as Global Media and Information Literacy Week, would give these important issues the global attention which they need and deserve. **We look forward to the support of Member States.**

Mr. President,

Today, Jamaica re-affirms its commitment to pursue the Organisation's goals and aspirations at the country level.

Today, we are further challenging UNESCO to intensify the mutually reinforcing relationship with its membership, given the unique role assigned to it as a force for *good* - in national and global development. **UNESCO is an organisation which is best placed to demonstrate multilateralism at work.** Jamaica joins other Small Island Developing States in continuing to press for UNESCO to advance a global priority plan towards SIDS imperatives, of which climate change is a critical component.

My delegation acknowledges the many successes of the UNESCO family, including the Regional Offices and National Commissions. We commend the Director General for her vision and for the work underway in the implementation of the strategic transformation to strengthen UNESCO's capacity and effectiveness. ***While this is a work in progress, we declare that its success will only be assured, when all Member States are able to see themselves in the outcomes and impact.***

One Love, One Heart, One Destiny!