



Jeunesse Étudiante Catholique Internationale  
International Young Catholic Students  
Juventud Estudiantil Católica Internacional  
Internationale Katholische Studierende Jugend

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## **An Address of International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) at the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of UNESCO**

**Presented by Richard Francis, APEH, IYCS Outgoing Secretary General**

### **Preamble**

The President of the General Conference of UNESCO  
Madam Director General of UNESCO  
Excellences  
Distinguish Ladies and Gentlemen

We would like to thank the President of the General Conference for the opportunity to address this 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

### **Who we are**

The International Young Catholic Student (IYCS) is a Catholic action movement present in 86 countries around the world and made up of over 5 million students in high schools and universities. We educate and train students to work for solidarity, freedom, justice and peace in the world. Through our methodology of the Review of Life; the See-Judge-Act, the IYCS provide formation and raises youth engagement in their local realities. It is an engagement that translates into mobilization and action against poverty, exclusion and injustice in the World, A commitment to Climate and Environmental Action as well as a strong commitment to be at the service of the poorest of the poor.

### **Our Call**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its well defined goals provides a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. However, the way in which respective institutions or governments translate the Agenda into concrete action ensuring that no one is left behind remains a big challenge.

We call on UNESCO member states to put more effort in promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), in order to empower learners to take informed decisions and to act responsibly.

The theme of the 2019 International Youth Day “Transforming education” highlights efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible for all youth, including efforts by young people themselves. We must continue to collaborate to transform education so that it becomes a powerful tool to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This means reviewing and aligning school curricula with the needs of our society, thus avoiding the fabrication of qualified students who are most of the time, not necessarily useful to address the current challenges. This will help to reduce the increasing rate of youth unemployment.



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Ladies and gentlemen, at the current 1°C of warming, children and young people already bear a disproportionate share of the burden of climate change impacts. The most disadvantaged children and youth face the greatest risks of all, as climate-related impacts threaten to overwhelm our limited coping capacity and further compound socio-economic inequality.

We as young people are worried about the damage that climate change is doing, especially to the most vulnerable among us. You all seated here, represent institutions which have the power to **“right the wrong”** through the right economic and developmental policies, we ask you to use those powers to stop the continuous destruction of our planet and our future.

Despite this and many other challenges that children and young people face, we are consistently overlooked in the design and content of development policies and related processes, undermining our rights to meaningful participation.

We commend UNESCO for putting the spotlight on youth at this General Conference. However, this is only the beginning and still far from being enough. For the dialogue between public decision makers and young people to have a lasting impact, young people must become an integral part of your team. We want to see young people as part of the Member states' official delegations to UNESCO General Conference, so we can equally contribute with our creativity, expertise and innovations in enhancing our shared humanity.

We don't only want to be a point on your agenda; we want to sit at the table when decisions regarding our world today and the future we will inherit are being taken.

We have spoken and we hope you hear us

Thank you