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سفارة  
دولة إريتريا  
في فرنسا

*Ambassade de l'Etat d'Erythrée en France*

**Speech by H. E. Ambassador Hanna Simon,**  
**Permanent Delegate to UNESCO/ State of Eritrea,**  
**39<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of UNESCO's General Conference of Member-States**  
**(Paris, 30 October-14 November 2017)**

Excellencies,  
Honourable President of the General Conference,  
Honourable Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Honourable Director General of UNESCO,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, allow me to express Eritrea's appreciation of UNESCO's assistance and cooperation in various educational, cultural and scientific projects. Similarly, I would like to congratulate Mrs. Irina Bokova for her commitment in promoting UNESCO's noble principles and values during her double term as UNESCO's Director General. I wish her success in her future endeavors.

For Eritrea, year 2017 has been a landmark with the inscription of "Asmara: A Modernist City of Africa" onto the World Heritage List of UNESCO. This inscription of the first ever Eritrean site has been realized thanks to an unwavering support from UNESCO and its advisory bodies. Eritrea continues its dedication towards ensuring the registration of other Eritrean sites such as Qohaito Cultural Landscape and Adulis.

Heritage comes as a priority for Eritrea: 2016-2017 was the biennium of cultural workshops in and out of country, of media and community-based trainings to raise awareness on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the biennium of the preparation of oral tradition books in various Eritrean ethnic languages. Furthermore, Eritrea attended regional and international Ministerial meetings in Mauritius, Turkey, and China on strengthening synergies for cultural heritage protection in Eastern Africa and the Adjacent Indian Ocean Island States. Collection,

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scanning and preservation of archival documentation such as Islamic manuscripts and Italian documents is receiving due attention as well.

Eritrea's National Education Policy stipulates compulsory basic education, the use of mother tongue for instruction at elementary level, and the expansion of secondary and tertiary education opportunities. Education, in accordance with the "Education for All" principle, is universal and free at all levels, including a successful scheme for nomad children. The Government has incorporated UNESCO's educational plans in especially defining its strategies on Adult Education, TVET, Higher Education and Literacy. Its participation at annual policy forums in Mexico, Cambodia and Togo were of significant value. The 2016 Youth and Entrepreneurship Forum in East Africa and several other meetings related to the project titled "Enhancing equitable access to quality basic education for social justice" had no less contribution. Moreover, a workshop on the development of SDG Road map -with special focus on policy management and planning- and a training on SDG indicators were held in Eritrea. These activities are in line with the educational goals of the 2030 UN Agenda on Sustainable Development.

With regards to science, Eritrea's strategic objectives aim at strengthening technology and innovation, enhancing capacity building for research and education, promoting international cooperation for the protection and sustainable management of natural sciences. Accordingly, Eritrea held awareness raising workshops on the protection of environment and attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of IOC sub-Commission for Africa and the Adjacent Island States in Alexandria this year.

Eritrea gives high significance to UNESCO's PPP despite unexpected difficulties during Biennium 2016-2017. We are deeply engaged to remedying lost opportunities by working towards concrete results during the coming biennium.

Before closing, I would like to call for a strong solidarity among all UNESCO Member-States to confront the extremely challenging tasks ahead of us. I am fully confident that the 39<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of the General Conference of UNESCO will conclude its work successfully.



Thank you!