

STATEMENT BY H.E. PHYLLIS KANDIE, EGH, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT DELEGATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO UNESCO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 210TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO, WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2020

Mr. Chairman,
President of the General-Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

UNESCO was founded 75 years ago in the aftermath of one of the most challenging times for humanity. Today, the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening to reverse many gains achieved in UNESCO's fields of competence. Building back better therefore requires that we strengthen multilateralism and foster international cooperation.

Kenya highly appreciates the Director-General's preliminary proposals and intends to positively contribute to the shaping of the next C/4 and C/5. We support the two global priorities: Africa and Gender equality, as well as the priority given to SIDS and Youth. Kenya applauds the Director-General's commitment to intensify youth empowerment and engagement in the design and implementation of UNESCO's programmes.

Kenya concurs on the importance of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. We welcome the efforts to give fresh impetus to Priority Africa and appreciate the follow-up to the Priority Africa decision adopted at the last session of the Executive Board. As stated before, we call for a big push for Priority Africa including through reinforced human and financial capacities.

Mr. Chairman,

Kenya welcomes the increased interdisciplinary approach in the DG's proposals. We appreciate the establishment of crisis preparedness and response as a cross-cutting theme. Adequate attention should equally be given to building peaceful and inclusive societies by supporting recovery after crisis.

Effectively positioning UNESCO for the next decade requires focus on the comparative advantage and acquired experience of the Organization. UNESCO should also continue to foster capacity-development and galvanize partnerships. The Futures Literacy Laboratories (FLL) is an opportunity for strengthening foresight in UNESCO's programmes.

Kenya appreciates the organization of the extraordinary Global Education Meeting (GEM). His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta contributed in the High-Level Session and shared Kenya's education response to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We welcome the GEM Declaration including the UNESCO-led consultation aimed at strengthening the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee for an improved global and regional education coordination mechanism for the post-Covid-19 context.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We urge for greater intersectoral collaboration in support of the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa. We must also redouble efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities including through the MOST Programme.

Kenya welcomes UNESCO's contribution to the promotion of quality physical education and clean sports. We will continue to play our part including as host of the Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sports (MINEPS VII) in June 2021.

Kenya strongly calls for increased support to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in order to effectively support Member States harness the Blue Economy as well as achieve the Ocean related SDGs including through the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

Kenya further calls on UNESCO to support Member States to strengthen institutional and human capacities which will contribute to the empowerment of local communities around the world to be capable stewards for environmental conservation including through Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks.

We laud UNESCO for embarking on the Recommendation on Open Science which will furnish humanity with urgently needed norms and standards in this critical field. We also appreciate the ongoing elaboration of Recommendations on the Ethical Principles of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Mr. Chairman,

Culture plays a pivotal role in fostering resilience in societies and boosting creativity. We need to ensure that training and capacity development for World Heritage and intangible heritage inscriptions are reinforced. Novel approaches are also needed to reach a balance in the preservation and protection of heritage whilst ensuring socio-economic development.

Kenya welcomes the strengthened focus on freedom of expression, safety of journalists, media development, documentary heritage, access to information and knowledge as well as enhanced media contribution to diversity, gender equality and youth empowerment.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

Kenya highly appreciates your efficient steering of the Executive Board and the efforts to organize the present session of the Executive Board. Kenya further supports the Africa Group Statement delivered by Ethiopia on behalf of the Africa Group.

Thank you for your attention