



**Republic of Namibia**

**NATIONAL STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY ALBERTUS AOCHAMUB,  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT DELEGATE TO UNESCO**

**AT THE  
210<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Paris, France**

**02 December 2020**

***(Check Against Delivery)***

**Chairperson of the Executive Board**

**President of the General Conference**

**Madam Director-General**

**Colleagues, Members of the Executive Board**

1. At a time like the present, when it seems that the world seems to be swimming against a strong current, UNESCO has managed to hold yet another session of its Executive Board.
2. Namibia commends the efforts of our Chairperson, the Director General, the Secretariat and the members of the Board for keeping the UNESCO torch burning during these trying times.
3. We note, with satisfaction, the innovative ways in which our DG and her team continue to steer the UNESCO ship as we deliver on our mandate to member states.

Madame Azoulay, with the announcement of your candidacy for another term of office as our Director General, we wish you continued good health and look forward to have you around for a few more years at UNESCO.

4. Board Members, Colleagues. The 210<sup>th</sup> session is particularly important since we are setting the scene for the next 10 years and beyond, as articulated in the Draft Medium-Term Strategy and the proposed Programme Budget.

## **Science**

5. On Science, we wish to underscore the fact that Namibia places great importance on the Open Science initiatives. To that end, we appreciate the excellent progress made thus far in the ongoing consultations related to Open Science and related STI policies. It is our hope that this will result in the avoidance of policy fragmentation and duplication.
6. Namibia also appreciates UNESCO's focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and look forward to welcoming our sister countries to Windhoek for the Southern African Regional Conference on AI in Mid-2021. The conference will be aimed at consolidating global debates and clarifying national policy options on AI for developing economies such as ours.

## **Culture**

7. On the Cultural Front, we have recently seen the amplification of the problem of illicit trafficking of cultural properties. In our context it means that UNESCO needs to tighten its normative instruments, especially the 1970 Convention and its effective implementation, through appropriate capacity building and awareness raising.
8. Namibia also appreciates the intrinsic link between Cultural Heritage and Tourism, which brings the objectives of sustainable development within the remit of Culture and Tourism. We are happy to report good progress on '*the National Strategy on Heritage Tourism Development and Employment opportunities at community level*' with the financial and technical inputs of UNESCO. We will as a country accelerate our work on this Strategy as the world begins to travel in 2021 again.

## **Communications and Information**

9. In the field of Communications, Namibia remains worried about the ongoing threats to the safety and security of journalists and media practitioners worldwide. This state of affairs not only implies losses of precious lives but equally threatens the very foundation of press freedom.
10. We, therefore, urge UNESCO to scale up all efforts under the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.
11. As the hosts of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark 1991 Windhoek Declaration for the Development of Free, Independent and Pluralistic Press in Africa and the celebrations of the subsequent UN Declaration on Press Freedom, Namibia wishes to inform this august gathering that all the preparations are in full swing. It is our hope that we shall be welcoming you warmly to Windhoek in person, come May 2021.

## **Priority Africa**

12. Finally, Namibia is happy to note the renewed focus and importance given to Priority Africa in the formulation of the next Medium-Term Strategy. The ongoing consultations are especially welcomed and are encouraging. However, we want to appeal that the proposed projects will not be left to the mercy of extra-budgetary funding but that a substantial part of the programme should be provided for under the Regular Programme Budget. Only at that point can we truly talk of Africa as a true priority of UNESCO.

I thank you.

**End/**