

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
210th session of UNESCO's Executive Board
3rd December, 2020

Mr Chairman of the Executive Board,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Madam Director General,
Dear Colleagues,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines fully supports the statement of GRULAC.

Mr Chairman, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to cause shock waves around the world. Notwithstanding, we all witnessed increased international cooperation. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes UNESCO's efforts in forging cooperation through its field offices and its networks. It has mobilized its capacities and partnerships to identify the needs of Member States and to ensure appropriate responses to their needs. The lessons learned from this first response, sometimes limited, would serve to improve the Organization's action to the challenges to come.

Mr Chairman, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the preliminary proposals concerning the Draft 41C/4 and thanks the Director General and her team for this transformative document, taking into account Resolution 102 adopted at the 40th session of the General Conference. The fundamentals presented show the commitment within the Organization to fulfill its mandate, through a thematic and cross-cutting approach and in intersectoral manner, where appropriate. Nevertheless, we recall that it is crucial that each sector of a field of competence should keep its specificity.

We expect that this innovative approach might lead the Organization to make its functions more balanced between its normative and its operational role, to use its expertise and its budget efficiently and to ensure greater impact in the delivery.

My country, like 81% of Member States, considers that the mandate set out in the 37 C/4 is still relevant and should not be changed. The addition of reduction of inequalities in the proposed mandate by linking it to SDG 10 is not appropriate. SDG 10 was not recommended by Member States when discussing the Organization's focus. However, the eradication of poverty, clearly stated in the mission statement, includes reduction of inequalities and all UNESCO's work aims to it. The reduction of inequalities must be strengthened in a transversal manner through the strategic objectives and all UNESCO's programs.

We welcome the 5 functions, the 4 cross-cutting strategic objectives instead of 9 and their outcomes. These are subject to some adjustments in light of the debate at the Joint Commission. We take note with interest of the enabling strategic objective in

reinforcing partnerships and in pursuing the reform. Enhancing accountability and efficiency and creating an agile environment are essential to ensure an effective management for a better delivery of the Organization's mandate.

Although COVID 19 has diverted much of the Organization's attention and resources, the pressing challenges of Climate Change, Youth, access to quality education, the digital divide, still have tangible impacts on Member states, particularly the Small Island Developing States. These challenges were highlighted within the consultations in our region and in the Pacific region where the National Commissions called on UNESCO to consider the SIDS as a Global priority. Therefore, we reiterate this call and we hope to see a section in the Secretariat dedicated exclusively to the SIDS with sufficient human and financial resources, taking into account the implementation of the Decision 209 EX/5.I.D.

Regarding the 41 C/5, we have not seen proposals on the budget ceilings and the linkages with the Draft C/4. We hope to have more information in this session and to receive at the next session more detailed analysis and mapping of UNESCO's contributions at all levels, in order to clarify the nature of the Organization's contributions and the priority areas for action.

Mr Chairman, as we near the 2030 deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are aware that COVID 19 pandemic and other future challenges will continue to change the world. We underline, today more than ever, the importance of the multilateralism and the Intergovernmental character of our Organization in fostering a collective response to attain the agreed targets across the entire UN body.

I thank you