

199TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD

STATEMENT BY PROF. NAANA JANE OPOKU-AGYEMANG, REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD IN RESPONSE TO ITEM 4 AND 5 PLENARY DEBATE

Chairman of the Executive Board,
President of the General Conference,
Director-General of UNESCO,
Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ghana delegation adds her voice to those of previous speakers in congratulating the Director-General for her insightful remarks that have indeed set the grounds for this important debate. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to also convey warm greetings from H. E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana on the occasion of the 199th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board and wish the meeting Success.

Ghana associates with the statement made on behalf of Group Va.

Education and SDG 4 related Programmes:

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my delegation joins previous distinguished speakers to commend the Director-General and her Staff for the efforts so far in executing the recommendations adopted at the 38th General Conference,

despite challenges and as it faces up to the responsibilities of our organisation in the wake of the SDGs, especially Goal 4.

Mr. Chairman, following the 38th General Conference of UNESCO, Ghana has been engaged in a process to strategically position Ghana's post-2015 Education, within the broad strategic objectives of SDG 4 and as well, taking cognisance of her 40-year development plan and the continental vision of the '*Africa We Want*' - Vision 2063 of the Africa Union. These processes, which have sought to localise the broad objectives of SDG 4, will in the next few months result in a National Action Plan document for Education 2030 agenda for the Republic of Ghana.

Ghana's quest to rebrand TVET remains on course. My country has put in place systems and structures to enhance the capacity of the responsible agency, COTVET, to efficiently regulate the sector. They include management and information systems for the agency, a TVET sector monitoring framework; development of manuals to operationalize the national TVET Qualification Framework among other interventions.

In practical terms, the country is effecting improvements through the skills and technology innovations and capacity enhancement of businesses, trade associations, and farmer based groups and as well, science, technology and research institutions.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana supports the Director-General's drive to scale-up the competencies of the Field Office staff in the implementation of the SDGs to gather greater impact in ~~the~~ delivering UNESCO's programmes in the field.

With respect to the UNESCO field reforms in Africa, we commend the Director-General for her rolled-out strategy. We continue to urge the Director-General to ensure the full complement of professional staff particularly at the Multi-Sectoral Regional Offices, taking into account critical issues relating to gender balance and geographical representation.

Specialized Programme in the Sciences:

Ghana commends the Director-General for the achievements in the Natural Sciences sector especially in the areas of sustainable development and climate change mitigation. The lead role played by the organisation in crafting Agenda 2030 particularly the SDGs on water and biodiversity conservation is highly commendable. Furthermore, UNESCO's contribution towards Conference of Parties meeting (COP.21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has received global approval.

UNESCO's leadership role through the International Year of Crystallography (IYCr) and the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL) have succeeded in drawing broader global attention to sciences.

Ghana is proud to play a lead role in Africa in the celebration of the IYL in 2015 and expresses thanks UNESCO, the International Coordinating Committee of

the IYL, the Governments of Mexico and the Russia Federation as well as the Africa Union for their contribution to making this celebration a great success.

Mr. Chairman, biodiversity conservation and the work of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme contribute effectively in protecting our planet. We urge the Director-General to continue to pursue global actions in this regard. Ghana is happy to announce the enlistment of Lake Bosomtwe, one of the six meteoritic lakes in the world, with a combination of forest, wetlands and mountain ecosystems, onto the World Network of Biosphere Reserves during the 28th International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the Man and Biosphere meeting last month in Lima. Ghana continues to further strengthen research in biodiversity, climate change and environmental education in the new biosphere reserve.

Culture and Development:

Mr. Chairman, UNESCO has over the years rightfully emphasise the indispensable linkages between culture and development Ghana notes with satisfaction the broad inclusion of culture as a cross-cutting discipline in the SDGs. given its potential effect as catalyst for fundamental transformation.

In this direction, Ghana is happy to have ratified seven (7) UNESCO cultural conventions to fully harness culture for socio-economic progress.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Ghana expresses condolences to victims of terrorist attacks. My delegation wishes to state, that the continued terror

attacks on our world suggests quite clearly that the time has come to rethink our strategies of deepening dialogue, guaranteeing political, social and economic justice, demonstrating tolerance and ensuring that every voice is heard, regardless. I thank you for your attention.