



40th General Conference of UNESCO
Paris, France, 12 November – 27 November 2019
**Remarks by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Curaçao,
The Honourable Ms Marilyn Alcalá-Wallé**

President of the General Conference,
Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Director-General, Excellency's, distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Government of Curaçao congratulates you Mr President on being elected to preside over the 40th General Conference of UNESCO and wishes you continued success in the following proceedings.

Mr President we are here to share with you what our country has accomplished with the help and support of UNESCO and also to express our view(s) on how UNESCO can enhance the position of the SIDS.

During this General Conference the Draft Global Convention on the recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education will be adopted. Curaçao has its draft policy bill on Higher Education to be approved by the council of ministers.

All six regions had significant input in the drafting of the Global Convention, but Mr President we want to express a point of concern and attention. We ask that Associate Members be given the opportunity to have a more active input when drafting important and any other documents that can have an impact for their country.

After all the constitution permits this and I quote from the Resolution 41.2 adopted by the General Conference at its 6th session stating the: **“Rights and obligations of Associate Members:**

paragraph(ii) To participate equally with Members subject to the limitation on voting in paragraph (i) above, in matters pertaining to the conduct of business of meetings



of the Conference and such of its committees, commissions and other subsidiary organs of the General Conference may, from time to time, indicate in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference;”

Mr President **TIMES** are changing is it not time to implement this in all the actions of the UNESCO family and also give Associate Members the opportunity to vote in committees, at least in their own region?

We are therefore going to explore the possibility to work on a Draft Resolution with the support of other Associate Members to be submitted to the Executive Board (as the Constitution permits) so that this can be voted on during the 41st General Conference in 2021.

UNESCO is the leading coordinating agency for the UN and the SDGs are being implemented in our Caribbean countries, particularly SDG4 Quality Education.

We are proud to say that last January Curaçao was elected among the Latin America and Caribbean region to represent the Caribbean region in the Steering Committee E2030-SDG4 along with Cuba and Grenada for 2019-2020.

For an Associate Member this is a great accomplishment being the first Associate Member to form part of the Committee.

However, this could not have been accomplished without the support of our fellow Caribbean colleagues. Thank you for this and the confidence bestowed in us. You can rest assured that we will see to it that our Caribbean and Latin American countries' interests are well served during this period.

Mr President, Education is a fundamental human right and therefore we have the responsibility to ensure that our future generations continue to receive good Quality Education.



Our Caribbean reality is that the boys need more attention and guidance in a feminized education system in order to excel in their school career and not become dropouts.

Curaçao proudly announces that we signed the Antigua and Barbuda Declaration School Safety in the Caribbean last February in St. Vincent & The Grenadines. We have also just submitted a draft bill related to this topic.

Mr President there are major trends affecting Caribbean SIDS such as devastating effects of climate change and rise of the sea-level, which are the most direct threats to the sustainable development of SIDS in our region. Curaçao stands in solidarity with our sister island of the Bahamas which was affected by hurricane Dorian. Among other tendencies are also youth unemployment and the high dropout rate which has our attention.

How can UNESCO continue to support SIDS? By upgrading SIDS from only a priority group to making it the third **GLOBAL PRIORITY** next to Africa and Gender Equality.

Curaçao supports the proposal that the Cluster Office of the Caribbean explore the possibility to organise a meeting at HQ to complete the Consultation Process compared to the revised SIDS-Action Plan.

Our Ministries are working on a Curaçao Climate Change Policy Assessment from funds received through the Participation Programme, as it is important to have a policy in place.

The Secretary General of the UN, António Guterres, remarked during the High-level Mid-Term Review of the Small Island Developing States in September last: “It is time to make big decisions and big investments in Small Island Developing States. And that time is now.”



Curaçao is doing its part and recently launched, as second Caribbean island, the UNESCO project Bring Your Own Bag among various youth organisations. A social education initiative geared toward encouraging single-use plastic rejection among the population.

In closing we would like to say special importance is attached to initiatives in the following areas:

Promoting the use of the mother tongue by each year announcing the Curaçao UNESCO Prize for Papiamentu;

The start-up of two pilot programmes for English-language education and a national language educational policy is in place;

Hosting of the 2020 meeting of the Regional Anti-Doping Organization (RADO) in Curaçao;

The co-ratification of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage;

Training for journalists on recognizing fake news and the use and misuse of social media and coming with a media and social policy;

Selection of candidates for the Youth Forum should be responsibility of the countries.

Times are really changing. 2021 Associate Members will vote!

Masha danki, thank you, muchas gracias, dank u, merci beaucoup