President of the Conference
Madame Director General of UNESCO
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies & Gentlemen

My delegation and I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of the 40th session of the General Conference and express our deep appreciation to the outgoing President, Her Excellency Mrs Zohour Alaaoui, for her outstanding work.

On behalf of the Seychelles Government, I also wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, for her leadership of the organization including her strong support for Africa and Small Island Developing States like Seychelles.

Mr President
Seychelles has today attained the enviable status of a country with a high Human Development Index thanks to the infallible support of strategic development partners. While our very success and its attendant ineligibility for concessional development assistance, has led some of these partners to abandon us, UNESCO remains loyally by our side in the
scale-up of our efforts to attain still higher grounds in the human
development trajectory.

Seychelles is convinced that no serious development can be sustainable
without a strong culture component. In this sense Seychelles highly
appreciates UNESCO’s continued support in the protection and
preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. Our country is currently
investing in national capacity development in various aspects of culture.
To this end, Seychelles organised two workshops this year in
collaboration with UNESCO Regional Office for the Eastern Region on
the role of media in promoting cultural diversity and on the fight against
illicit trafficking of cultural objects in Seychelles.

Our culture Sector is also focussing on Methodology and Process in
carrying out an inventory of Seychelles’ Intangible Cultural Heritage
(ICH). Seychelles submitted a nomination dossier for the moutia dance,
originally associated with slaves and their direct descendants, to be
inscribed on the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of
Humanity for consideration at the ICH Intergovernmental Committee in
December 2019 in Columbia. This traditional dance has evolved into one
of the main symbols of our shared culture as a nation and our national
identity. Seychelles is seeking the invaluable support of all in this
nomination.
In the field of communication and information, Seychelles recently set up a National Committee to establish a national register for the Memory of the World Programme. This new structure will bring greater visibility to our documentary heritage for peace, access to information and sustainable development through cultural tourism. The first activity of the Committee was a *Capacity Building workshop for Managers of Memory Institutions of documentary heritage* held this September.

In education, Seychelles is committed to implementing Agenda 2030 to provide quality education for all, thus ‘leaving no one behind’. This Agenda has been integrated in the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development *Medium Term Strategy for 2018-2022*. Like other countries, Seychelles has been facing a shortage of qualified teachers at all levels of education. Strategies used to curb this problem include the continuous training of teachers with the assistance of international partners, including SEED Institute of Singapore and the Commonwealth of Learning. An *Aspiring Teacher Programme*, aimed at encouraging and mentoring secondary students to join the profession, has been developed and is being implemented. In this context, Seychelles is very grateful for the support provided by the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), in the development of new policies, frameworks and relevant training to enhance the quality of education.
TVET is indeed a top education priority, considering the country’s increasing dependence on foreign labour and high unemployment rate among the youth. As part of its strategic plan, in collaboration with the World Bank and other partners, MEHRD is setting up a National Technical School for Upper Secondary students, which will open its doors in January 2022.

Seychelles demonstrated its commitment to the development of higher education on the African continent on the 16th October 2019 when it ratified the *UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Qualifications in African States* (2014). I will be happy to hand over this instrument of acceptance during this conference to the Director General of UNESCO.

Over the years, MEHRD has received considerable technical assistance from the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in curriculum development, assessment, ICCE, STEM and teacher education and continuous professional development.

Mr. President,

This year, Seychelles is particularly grateful to the Executive Board for considering its proposal for the establishment of the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD) as a UNESCO Category II Centre. Our
country has, over the years, fully committed itself to the provision of quality early childhood care and education. The final endorsement by the General Conference will allow IECD, on one hand, to proceed with its work in enhancing and ensuring the quality of Early Childhood Development in Seychelles. On the other hand, our country will be in a better position to advocate and promote best practices in the Eastern Region and internationally. IECD is already hosting an International Biennial ECCE Conference, to promote and share best practices in ECCE, the last one being in February this year.

A ce point, nous voudrions exprimer notre profonde appréciation à tous les états-membres qui nous ont apporté leur soutien. Un grand merci à tous.

Nous sommes également reconnaissants à la directrice du bureau régional de l’Afrique de l’Est de l’Unesco et de son équipe, pour son soutien dynamique, son engagement et son sens de professionnalisme continu, dans l’organisation de nombreux ateliers de formation nationaux et régionaux, dans notre pays et dans la région. Seychelles apprécie fortement l’action et les interventions de l’Unesco dans ses différents domaines de compétence et renouvelle son appui à l’Organisation, dans la perspective d’aider les pays membres à atteindre les ODD.

Je vous remercie pour votre aimable attention.