Republic of Malawi

Policy Statement

Made at the
40th UNESCO General Conference
Malawi Policy Statement

by
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Distinguished Delegates

Mr. President

Allow me to add my delegation’s sincere congratulations on your accession to the Presidency of this 40th Session of UNESCO General Conference. I have the trust that the general conference will benefit a lot from your wisdom and able leadership.

I bring fraternal greetings from His Excellency Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi. He wishes all delegates to this conference fruitful deliberations.

Mr. President

This 40th session of the General Conference is taking place at a crucial time when UNESCO is closing the cycle of its Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021. This offers us an opportunity to reflect on the achievements that UNESCO has made and it gives us an opportunity to start thinking about the next Medium Term Strategy 2022-2029. Malawi appreciates the results of the reform process that UNESCO has gone through since the work on the reform process began. We have witnessed acceleration of extra-budgetary resource activities. I am pretty sure that the set target of increasing extra-budgetary resources by 30% as stated in the draft 40C/5 document will be met. It is through establishment of strong partnerships that such a target can be met. I would like to acknowledge the role of the field office in our region, the Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) in this drive. We have seen partners such as the European Union collaborating with UNESCO in
supporting our programmes. I would also like to acknowledge and thank in
a very special way the role played by National Commissions for UNESCO and
their respective Governments in Germany and South Korea. These UNESCO
Commissions have collaborated with their sister National Commissions of our
region in promoting UNESCO’s mandate and added value. Such
collaboration has demonstrated that within the architecture of UNESCO,
National Commissions constitute one of the most capable actors that would
appropriately position UNESCO to respond to the challenges of today’s
world. The work of these National Commissions in the region has responded
very well to UNESCO’s mandate and to the global priorities set out in the
Medium-Term Strategy, i.e. Africa and gender equality. Malawi looks
forward to continuation and creation of more of such partnerships, and calls
upon UNESCO to continue with the good work and facilitate creation of
more of such partnerships.

Mr. President

Malawi continues to place emphasis on the areas of focus of UNESCO’s
mandate in education, culture, the sciences, communication and information.
Malawi prioritises its budget spending towards education. Since 2017/18 fiscal
year, the Government has allocated not less than 26% of its voted recurrent
budget towards the education sector. Thus the largest allocation per sector
amongst all sectors.

In science, I wish to thank the German Commission of UNESCO for the work
done in the Science sector in the region on Man and Biosphere (MAB) and
work done to support the review of Science, Technology and Innovation
(STI).

Mr President

Culture defines people. Culture has lasting effects on how people approach
and address life’s challenges. It is gratifying to note that the importance that
UNESCO has always placed on culture in development is now widely acknowledged. I wish to congratulate the Director General and UNESCO on this. Malawi commends countries and organisations that are financially supporting UNESCO to strengthen the implementation of various cultural Conventions.

Mr. President

Malawi, under the current leadership of Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika fully subscribes to the tenets of Freedom of Expression and Free Access to information as of major importance to functioning democracies. It is in view of this that Malawi now has an Access to Information (ATI) Law which is a product of very wide consultations. Malawi fully supports the suggested lines of action under the Communication and Information Programme in the 40C/5 document and would like to appeal for more extra-budgetary support to ensure inclusive societies where the importance of freedom of expression and universal access for information are to be considered as central to peaceful co-existence of humanity.

Mr. President

On behalf of the people of Malawi I would like to thank the Director General and UNESCO for providing Emergency Assistance towards supply of teaching and learning materials to schools and learners affected by Cyclone Idai. We also thank all Member States, development partners and all well-wishers that came to our rescue during the disaster. Cyclone Idai caused devastating damage in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe in March this year. More than 800,000 people were affected with 59 recorded deaths in Malawi.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you very much for your attention.