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ELECTORAL GROUP V (A) STATEMENT

BY

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VICE-CHAIR GROUP V (A)**

Madam President of the General Conference,
Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

We thank the Director-General for the documents and her introduction to the Plenary Debate.

Group V (a) remembers the passing of His Excellency Dr. Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian diplomat who served as the 7th Secretary General of the United Nations, the first from sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Kofi Annan was a true global statesman who will be remembered for reforming the UN bureaucracy, for working to combat HIV/AIDS especially in Africa, and for launching the UN Global Compact.

We also mourn the passing away, last month, of two of our former colleagues, who made immense contributions to our work.

Late Ambassador Mbuzi was Zambia's Ambassador to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO as well as Chairperson of the UNESCO Southern Africa Sub-region in 2012 and Chairperson of the Africa Group in 2013.

Late Ambassador Godia, served as Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Kenya to UNESCO from October 2014 – June 2018, during which he was Chairperson of the Education Commission, 39th General Conference, Chairperson of the Headquarters' Committee (November 2017 – June 2018). He was also a member of the Education 2030 Steering Committee and the UNESCO Staff Pensions Committee.

As we mourn the souls of the departed, we cannot but celebrate the recent announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Dr. Denis Mukwenge of DRC and Nadia Murad "for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict".

Madam Director-General,
Group V(a) appreciates your efforts to reinforce UNESCO's presence in Africa.

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063 are opportunities for Africa in the context of "Africa's

emergence” and our collective ambition for diversification, institutional, human, social and infrastructural development.

In recent years, Africa has achieved remarkable economic growth, which has transformed the continent into a new and “emerging” investment destination. Efforts to transform the fruits of this “emergence” should therefore be supported by UNESCO in cooperation with the Africa Union, particularly in integrating the two Agendas (2030 and 2063) into national plans for a reinforced holistic approach.

On UNESCO’s Global Priority Africa, we are delighted to note in Document 205 EX/4.I.INF that the Africa Department ensured coordination with Programme Sectors which resulted in the inclusion of Agenda 2063 in the programme tool (SISTER) for the 39 C/5 workplans. We also commend the Director-General for launching the two major intersectoral initiatives related to Lake Chad and the Sahel. As restoration of peace is a concern to many countries in the region, we use this opportunity, Mr Chair, to remind distinguished colleagues that Angola would host the first edition of the Biennale on Culture of Peace in 2019. The event, to be organized in collaboration with the Africa Union, was endorsed by the 37th Session of the UNESCO General Conference.

In Education, the Group thanks the Secretariat, the Government of Kenya, the Africa Union and other partners for their role in the

organization of the Pan-African High-Level Conference on Education (PACE), held from 25th – 27th April 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Conference was aimed at aligning the Africa Union's (AU's) Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) (2016-2025) and the SDG4-Education 2030 Agenda.

We call upon the UNESCO Education Sector, in collaboration with the Africa Union and other relevant partners, to effectively follow up on the implementation of the "Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education", and notably, the establishment of a joint CESA – SDG4 Education 2030 mechanism to ensure coordinated implementation, monitoring and reporting of CESA and SDG4. The 2nd PACE conference will be held in 2020 in the Kingdom of Morocco.

Our Group appreciates the importance of the IBE and the immense role it has played in supporting Member States in designing and reshaping their curricula, especially from the perspective of quality assurance. It is for this reason that we view with great concern, the current financial difficulties facing the IBE, as we look towards a successful resolution of the issues.

In Science, we appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to revive the Basic Sciences programme for the promotion of STEM, which is essential for the enhancement of technological innovations for economic and social benefits.

Our Group has also deeply reflected on the conflictual relations between conservation and development needs in and around World Heritage properties in Africa. We therefore wish to see this theme fully integrated in the World Heritage Convention implementation agenda, especially the implementation of the World Heritage and Sustainable Development Policy.

On the Environment, we welcome the on-going efforts to promote the development and conservation of Biosphere reserves through the establishment of an African Biosphere Reserves Fund (AfriBioFund). The fund will support capacity building activities including the training of young scientists in Africa who clearly have an important role to play if we are to achieve sustainable development.

On Item 23, regarding the status of the remaining unspent Regular Budget funds under the 38 C/5 expenditure plan, Group V (a) supports option 2, in which provision was made for setting-aside of \$11 million, from the \$18.5 million balance of the unspent carry over funds, to supplement the regular budget of the 40 C/5. However, we urge the Culture Sector to use some of the funds earmarked for communication and partnerships to mobilize donor support for activities in Africa, including the organization of the Twenty-sixth edition of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), one of the largest festivals of African cinema, to be held in Burkina Faso, in February 2019.

Dear Colleagues,

We congratulate the Director-General for organizing the first Structured Financing Dialogue, planned to assist the Organization in filling the funding gap.

Although the Dialogue brought great visibility and partners to UNESCO, there was a glaring absence of donors and entrepreneurs from Africa, whereas Africa is the continent of greatest need and the region is rich in resources that are yet to be tapped. So going forward, we need to see more partners from the South being invited to contribute their quota to our development efforts.

Madam Director-General,

We appreciate the efforts you are making to ensure greater balance in representation, at D1 level and above. We urge you to also continue this effort at the lower level within the framework of the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy, especially in view of the Young Professionals Programme that was recently re-launched.

Group V(a) welcomes the Periodic Report on Internal Oversight Service (IOS) evaluations. We commend the IOS for the quality of work and their efforts in updating Member States on how programmes are effectively and efficiently delivered. The implementation of the recommendations of the evaluations will ensure that UNESCO programmes have a positive impact in the field.

Distinguished colleagues,

We support the proposed decisions on the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences and the UNESCO – Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize. These two prizes are symbols of Africa's commitment to the development of science and promotion of peace. We highly encourage the Director-General to give visibility to the prizes and the work of the associated International Commission for Peace Research, set up to promote the defense of world peace.

As we celebrate the Centenary of our great leader, late President Nelson Mandela, let us recall that he (Nelson Mandela) and President Frederick de Klerk, were the first winners of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize in 1991, for their contributions to international peace. Two years later, they were both awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime.

Finally Mr. Chair, we support the draft decisions on the International Day of Mathematics (Item 32) and on the Follow-up and implementation of Relevant Recommendations of the General Conference Resolution 39 C/87 – Governance, procedures and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO (Item 33).

Thank you for your attention.

I now turn to Nigeria's National Statement.