

**205TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
3RD – 17TH OCTOBER, 2018**

**STATEMENT BY HER EXCELLENCY,
MRS MARIAM Y. KATAGUM, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT
DELEGATE OF NIGERIA TO UNESCO**

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

Let me begin by expressing Nigeria's heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia, a sister E-9 country, for the devastating earthquake and tsunami, which caused huge loss of lives. Our condolences also go to Haiti for the recent earthquake. May the souls of the departed rest in perfect peace!

Madam Director-General,

We must congratulate you on the eve of your first year anniversary as Director-General!

We commend you for the Strategic Transformation efforts and the associated Newsletter, which we find very informative. My Delegation will continue to support the initiative because we are convinced that it is aimed at deepening the ongoing process of

reforming the Organisation, which commenced many years ago. We note that there has been progress in its implementation, as contained in the documents. In addition to restructuring to strengthen management culture, on-going and planned efforts are focused on: increasing operational efficiency, improving communication, strengthening strategic partnerships and deepening UNESCO's presence in the field and refocusing UNESCO priorities, among others.

In particular, we note that the Thematic Working Groups are in place and commend the review of the 450 recommendations from various audits and evaluations which have been open since 2010. However, we still think that information on the strategic transformation is dispersed in several documents. Additional effort is required in putting together a concise document which could serve as an advocacy tool for communication with stakeholders. Furthermore, we still need an overall vision statement. As the Strategic Transformation is not an end in itself, it should be an iterative process that carefully takes on board inputs from all stakeholders, alignment with UN Reforms, lessons learnt and greater attention to outcome and impact.

Dear colleagues,

The environmental and humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin is gaining more international attention, thanks to the advocacy of President Buhari, especially following the successful International Conference on Lake Chad held in Abuja, where the BIOPALT project was launched by UNESCO. Several high profile events, such as the

UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – Making the SDGs Work for the Lake Chad Basin; the Berlin Donors' Conference, organized by Nigeria, Germany, Norway and others, where the sum of US \$2.17 billion was pledged for assistance in the Basin; and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which has included the restoration of Lake Chad in its 3-year Action Plan.

Nigeria accords great importance to skills development, especially for the youth. Recently, the Vice-President launched the N-Power Initiative, to engage and train 500,000 unemployed Nigerian youths in areas such as agriculture, health, creativity, technology, etc.

Similarly, a Youth Mobile Project, which targeted four hundred youths within the Federal Capital Territory, with the aim of empowering them with capacity to develop mobile apps for sustainable development thereby creating employment and self-reliance, was successfully carried out as a partnership between UNESCO and the Federal Capital Territory Administration.

A Global Partnership in Education (GPE) initiative has also been launched to enhance the achievement of the SDG4 targets through interventions in girl-child education and addressing the phenomenon of out-of-school children, among others.

Chairperson,

We believe that UNESCO, as part of strengthening its function as a laboratory of ideas, should continue to provide leadership in the

field of “Futures Literacy”. This will help build the capacities of Member States to rethink development concepts and prepare for future challenges. In this regard, Nigeria hosted a workshop on “Transforming the Future: foresight in the 21st Century”, within the framework of the UNESCO project “Imagine the Future of Africa”.

The renewal of the Agreement with the Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management (RC-IRBM), Kaduna, Nigeria, as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO, is tabled before us at this Board. Following a positive evaluation, Nigeria looks forward to the full support of all Member States in this regard.

Dear Colleagues,

As a multilateral Organization, dialogue, transparency and accountability, as well as mutual trust, must underline our various actions. We applaud the efforts Member States have made to try and depoliticize the treatment of the Items before the Board and to place premium on dialogue and consensus. After all, an improved UNESCO can only be the joy and pride of all of us!

I thank you for your kind attention.