

ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Speech 9 October 2018

205th session of UNESCO's Executive Board

Mr Chairman of the Executive Board,
Madame President of the General Conference,
Madame Director-General,
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

During the UN General Assembly, our Director General said: "Multilateralism and UNESCO are more relevant than ever to address the main global challenges ahead".

St. Vincent and the Grenadines, deeply committed in achieving the SDGs, remains firm in its belief that UNESCO, as an intergovernmental Organization, is more than ever relevant and must fulfill its mandate in a multi-disciplinary way to address global challenges.

Under the umbrella of the 2030 agenda and in line with the Repositioning of the UN Development System, UNESCO is currently undertaking a reform process through 3 pillars. Hence, we encourage the thematic groups to explore this pathway for reform, aiming to establish medium- and long-term engagements as well as immediate actions.

We hope that the consultation with Member states will continue at all levels of the process, in order to work together to build a stronger programmatic approach with more impact on the field at country and regional levels.

In this regard, the Partners' Forum recently held in the framework of the structured financing dialogue, is a 1st step towards a positive communication to open UNESCO to develop regional strategies, partnerships and networks. We look forward to the tangible results of this Forum.

This "way forward" brings us to highlight the programmatic view of my country. As a Caribbean and a small island developing state, we raise a fundamental question: In the framework of the structured financing dialogue, how can Small Island developing states attract donors and partnerships?

The SIDS face difficulties in the pursuit of sustainable development. It is unfortunate that some of these vulnerable islands are classified among middle income countries. In the UN and recently at UNESCO, member states are starting to question whether the data on poverty indexes can be reviewed, to accurately reclassify the meaning of middle income, since this places us in a very precarious position, as we try to attract donors and forge strong partnership in this global village.

The continuing work with UIS and the dialogue must remain the order of the day : not only to find solutions to respond to the needs and to face the challenges, but also to benefit from opportunities of new technologies, of innovative education systems, development of science and research, and sustainable tourism.

Mr Chairman, Perfection is not attainable, but if we strive for perfection we can achieve excellence.

One of the themes of the UN High-level political forum for Sustainable Development focused on “transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”. This is our objective and we believe that the cross-cutting nature of this Organization gives it the unique advantage in helping to fight Climate Change, to ensure quality education, TVET and ICT’s, access to information, science for sustainability. Therefore, capacity building to assist in Policy development is continuously needed.

Reinforcing the structures of the field offices is crucial to establish better communication to identify the current needs as well as the future ones and should be part of the current reform process. Consequently, we will be delighted to welcome UNESCO’s program specialists in our islands to assess the real needs, the progress achieved and to identify focused and specific activities towards the transformation process.

We are currently participating in the mid-term evaluation of UNESCO's SIDS action plan, and thank IOS for this exercise. In the light of the evaluation, adjustments to the plan would be welcome with more focused and impactful actions.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is not represented yet in UNESCO. We request the Human Resources division to better highlight the vacant posts and to establish a mechanism involving dialogue and advice with non-represented on the opportunities for applications. We believe that this would help to ensure equitable geographical distribution and diversity.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its solidarity with the spirit of a culture of peace, cooperation and good governance. We are confident that the collective will of the Director General with Member states, will not let the UNESCO dream fade away and together we will overcome all challenges. Let us move together towards our shared goal.