

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
PROF. FANUEL TAGWIRA DURING THE 207th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF
UNESCO

Chairperson of the Executive Board, Mr Lee Byong-Hyun
President of the General Conference, Mrs Zohar Alaoui
Director-General of UNESCO, Madam Audrey Auzolay
Excellencies

Dear Colleagues,

Chairperson,

Let me, at the outset; associate my delegation with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of Group V(a).

I also wish to join others in congratulating the Prime Minister of Ethiopia on winning the Nobel Peace Prize,

The Zimbabwe delegation would like thank the Director General for her report of progress on the implementation of the current programme. We appreciate the Director General's efforts in mobilizing resources that have gone a long way in addressing the funding gap emanating from limited inflows from assessed contributions. However, we note with concern the increasing share of voluntary contributions as opposed to assessed contributions to the overall budget.

This brings us to the proposals made with regards to the 40 C/5 budget. My delegation would like to see a resourced UNESCO delivering on its commitments, especially Agenda 2030. As we discuss during this 207th session we hope that consensus will be reached and the budget scenario that will drive the Organization towards attainment of the SDGs will be recommended to the 40th session of the General Conference.

Chairperson

The Government of Zimbabwe's vision is to become a middle income economy by 2030. To this end we have given priority to education, the sciences and skills development that

respond to the country's economic developmental challenges while also coming up with technologies that benefit present and future generations. We have harnessed our universities and other tertiary institutions to be the driving force behind the march towards our goal. We are currently seized with setting up innovation hubs and industrial parks to ensure that science and technology drive the economy and improve the livelihood of the people. This can only be achieved by sharing expertise within the UNESCO family. We therefore welcome the proposal for the International Year for Basic sciences for development. We urge UNESCO to consider providing adequate resources to Basic Science and STEAM Programmes.

Zimbabwe welcomes initiatives in the water sector and the proposal to strengthen the role of the IHP as coordinator of global water issues. Due to climate change our region now suffers from chronic water challenges. UNESCO's convening strength on Water would be appreciated in the region.

Chairperson

On ICT in education it is accepted that this is a globally fast growing area that offers many strategic opportunities that can be cascaded to the remotest of places provided the necessary infrastructure is put in place. That way we ensure that 'noone is left behind'. This calls for the need to harness various forms of renewable energy that will ensure that the ICT infrastructure works wherever it is installed. Zimbabwe is grateful for the assistance that was rendered under the UNESCO/Korea Funds in Trust project on ICTs in Education. Through that project the country was able to equip the pilot schools that included two special needs schools. The project also saw the launch of a model e-college that offers pre-service teacher training. This is an attempt to ensure that the new teachers are IT savvy as they join the school system. It is anticipated that the concept of this e-college will in time be cascaded to all the teacher education colleges and universities in the country.

We note the diverse and innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI) activities that are taking place to support programmes and SDGs across the globe. We also note UNESCO's role in bringing a multidisciplinary approach to AI, through its specific focus on education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information, as well as its global ethical

implications for peace, cultural diversity, gender equality, and sustainable development. We anticipate that the Director General will continue to take into consideration the AI activities of other intergovernmental organizations and conventions, as relevant to the development of a global standard-setting instrument on the ethics of AI.

Chairperson,

My Delegation welcomes the renewal of the UNESCO-L’Oreal Prize for Women in Science. The initiative has seen the recognition of not only African women scientists and researchers but also women scientists from all parts of the world. We anticipate that more women scientists from our region will be laureates of this prize in future and that their research will help spearhead Africa’s development.

We also welcome the renewal of the UNESCO/Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development. The Prize has created awareness on sustainable development initiatives particularly in schools and communities in Zimbabwe.

Chairperson; Excellencies

My delegation recognizes the relevance of UNESCO’s work in curriculum and recommends maintaining a specialized category 1 institute as a lead entity on curriculum development. It is our submission that curriculum issues are pertinent to member states, especially those in Africa and a Category I Institute focusing on curriculum development should be maintained taking into account the recent discussions on this matter.

Chairperson,

On reform of the Organisation, my delegation would like to echo the statement by the Vice-President of our electoral group. My delegation would like to congratulate the Director General for the progress made in the organisation’s Strategic Transformation process and expect that Member States will be appraised and consulted on developments as they unfold thereby ensuring co-ownership of the process.

Chairperson,

Zimbabwe honoured to host the Multi-Sectoral Regional Office for Southern Africa. We appreciate the Regional Office’s initiatives and joint programmes with Member States and the SADC Secretariat.

Chairperson,

Let me conclude by expressing gratitude to cooperating partners for their assistance in the realization of various programmes, including MAB and World Heritage activities in Zimbabwe. We also hope that these and other effects will contribute to the strengthening of Priority Africa.

I thank you.