

## 209TH SESSION OF THE UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD

### POLICY STATEMENT READ ON BEHALF OF DR MATTHEW OPOKU PREMPEH, GHANA'S REPRESENTATIVE TO UNESCO'S EXECUTIVE BOARD, BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNA BOSSMAN, GHANA'S PERMANENT DELEGATE TO UNESCO AND LEADER OF DELEGATION TO THE 209th SESSION.

President of the Executive Board,  
President of the General Conference,  
Director - General of UNESCO,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Permanent Delegation of Ghana salutes the Executive Board, the Director - General and the Secretariat for the organization and holding of this session of the Executive Board.

We salute you Mr. President of the Executive Board for your tenacity and flexibility in achieving consensus in its organization, relying on the hard work of the Secretariat, especially in these turbulent times.

Madam Azoulay, we salute you for your continued support, your understanding, your courage and commitment in leading this cherished institution.

To all the Permanent Delegations, thank you for comprehension, your patience and for recognizing that the interests and unity of this institution are primordial for our resilience and for our relevance.

This is not a perfect situation, but imperfection is the hallmark of the world and if one waited for perfection, we would never do anything.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in this era of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO and her partners need to make renewed and concerted efforts to maintain the momentum towards achieving the targets of the SDGs, especially the Education 2030 Agenda. In the last couple of months, through its vigorous response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO has demonstrated clear leadership in the areas of its competence. In particular, through international coordination of partnerships, UNESCO has supported Member States in various ways, including support for policy preparation and implementation, capacity development in COVID-19 resilience as well as the monitoring and reporting on progress within the Organization's fields of specialization.

Mr. President, Ghana endorses the statement of the Africa Group. We are happy to see UNESCO's efforts towards reconceptualizing Priority Africa to make it responsive to the internationally agreed development goals and in particular, the African Union's Agenda 2063. We note that this global priority is also aligned with the present 40 C/5 of UNESCO.

Mr. President, while we congratulate UNESCO and partners on this broad mechanism to support Africa's development, there is the dire need for

UNESCO to reflect and to act on the necessity for sustainable funding for the priority's implementation and its flagship programmes. The upcoming evaluation of the Operational Strategy of Priority Africa affords UNESCO the opportunity to engage even more closely with partners towards a more coherent approach in addressing the funding gaps that will enable the programme to impact the Continent.

With regard to areas pertaining to the environment, Ghana welcomes the inclusion of the Bia Biosphere Reserve in the Great Apes Protection Project. This inter-regional initiative to promote the use of biosphere reserves and geoparks to enhance knowledge on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience in and among countries, is innovative and highly commendable.

Mr. President, since 2018, UNESCO's World Heritage Centre has supported Ghana in the preservation and management of the Forts and Castles through capacity building and the preparation of management plans for these international properties. We expect that this support to Ghana, in addition to the revitalized Slave Route and the Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa projects, will contribute to UNESCO's overall endeavor to preserve Africa's cultural identity and heritage.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana believes that UNESCO's global leadership in promoting freedom of expression, media development and access to information and knowledge must be fully harnessed for the benefit of countries. Whiles commending UNESCO for its efforts at addressing the disinformation and misinformation on the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly,

within the West African media space, we urge the Communication and Information sector of UNESCO to continue to serve as a catalyst for capacity building in Member States to deploy the requisite media content.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, as we grapple with the “new normal”, ICTs offer a sustainable pathway for navigating the challenges created by the restrictions on movement of people. Ghana has had to make major changes to ensure the continuity of work and education. We have employed virtual tools and traditional media for teaching and learning while schools remain partially opened. UNESCO must continue to assist Member States to build capacities for the development of new technologies including access to the internet particularly for underserved communities in Africa.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, no doubt, UNESCO has made significant gains since the outbreak of this pandemic through decisive actions, international cooperation and solidarity among Member States. There is the need to maintain this momentum and do even more to defeat the pandemic. The Government of Ghana stands ready to support UNESCO to harness its distinctive competencies towards the long term recovery from this crisis. We call on all Member States to support the Organization.

I thank you for your attention.