

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. PHYLLIS KANDIE, EGH, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT DELEGATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO UNESCO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 209<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO, THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2020**

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Mr. Chair of the Executive Board,

President of the General-Conference,

Madam Director-General,

Excellencies, Colleagues,

Kenya appreciates the proactive measures by the Director-General to support Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges, there are opportunities to ensure UNESCO is agile and fit-for-purpose. UNESCO's 75th anniversary and the preparation of the medium term strategy can shape this future.

Kenya commends UNESCO's promotion of ethics, the building of inclusive societies, and the collaboration with the African Union to support vulnerable groups including people with albinism.

**Mr. Chair,**

Kenya is committed to UNESCO's mandate of promoting quality physical education and clean sports. We are delighted to host the Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VII) in Nairobi in 2021; the first in Africa.

We welcome fostering youth engagement as critical partners and the alignment of UNESCO's actions with the 2030 UN Strategy on Youth.

**Excellencies,**

Kenya applauds the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in supporting Member States achieve the Ocean related SDGs, including through the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. We see great opportunity for harnessing the Blue Economy and building synergies with the Decade of African Seas and Oceans.

**Mr. Chair,**

Given the relevance of SDG4-Education, UNESCO's leadership and coordination is critical to "leaving no one behind". We commend UNESCO's response to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on Education through the Global Covid-19 Coalition and look forward to support initiatives adapted to national contexts.

Kenya also welcomes the creation of a Global Coalition for Education Data by UIS, to align technical and financial resources on data to build capacities. This will contribute to the joint reporting of SDG4 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) in line with the Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education.

We however note, the coordination of SDG4 in Africa is still a challenge and support the establishment of an SDG4 Coordination Mechanism in Africa.

**Excellencies,**

Cultural heritage and preservation is the identity and living memory of all civilisations. Efforts for the restitution of illicitly trafficked African cultural heritage are ongoing. The African Union Agenda 2063 highlights the importance of "Africa's strong cultural identity, heritage, values and ethics" and for African "culture, heritage and artefacts to be fully repatriated and safeguarded".

Kenya welcomes UNESCO's support to Member States in implementing the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and calls for the launch of a flagship programme to support Africa's heritage repatriation.

**Mr. Chair,**

Emerging technologies pose global challenges to human rights and freedoms. Media and information literacy have therefore become essential. UNESCO has a key role in creating tools to support international standards on freedom of expression and isolating issues undermining this right. The offline and online safety of women journalists remains critical as they face gender specific risks that need to be addressed.

**Excellencies,**

UNESCO Natural Science sector has assisted Member States improve their environmental management capacities through research, environmental mitigation and Education for Sustainable Development. Kenya acknowledges the GO-SPIN and SAGA programmes in laying foundations to advance science. We thank UNESCO and call for funding and capacity building to accelerate applied science to enable production of basic goods such as generic medicines. Building resilience is only possible by having more and better qualified scientists to manage our increasingly complex world.

**Finally Mr Chair,**

Kenya concurs with the relevance of global priorities Africa and Gender Equality. We welcome the efforts by the Director-General for fresh impetus to both global priorities in the preparation of the new medium term strategy. We appreciate this early opportunity to dialogue and contribute to this endeavour, and towards innovative fundraising mechanisms. This is the spirit that informed Agenda Item 32 on Global Priority Africa which Kenya fully supports.

**I THANK YOU**