

Mr. President of the Executive Board,
Mr. President of the General Conference,
Madam Director General,
Excellencies

Saint Lucia would like to thank the DG for her preliminary proposal on the Medium Term Strategy.

We would however like to reiterate our wish to see the SIDS as a global Priority in UNESCO

No one is more vulnerable than small islands developing states in facing today's global challenges, namely climate change.

For SIDS it is not just a question of economic growth or of development, It is a question of life and death.

Mr. President,

Before adopting a new strategy for our Organization, we might want to look carefully at the current one. It is important to recognize the achievements and successes and indulge in congratulations but it is also necessary to identify the failures and discuss them.

Kofi Annan said, "education is quite simply peace building by another name. it is the most effective form of defense spending there is".

And yet, today's world is to a great extent the product of our educational systems that have proved not to be fit for building peaceful societies.

A UNESCO publication stated that 23 years after the publishing of the **DELORS REPORT** there is still limited evidence of the impact it had on actual learning and subsequent behavioral changes.

We have to make sure that what is going to be proposed for the future of education will be more efficient and more impactful.

In her speech, the Director General said: "we need more science".

Well we can't agree more. Lets start by applying this in-house.

All our programs should be science and evidence based.

Moreover the reform of education systems has to benefit from a robust scientific and evidenced based assessment to inform policy making at all levels and scales. Saint Lucia had requested this assessment during the executive board a year ago and the DG had agreed to do it. We are looking forward to the results that should complement and inform the Futures of Education Report.

Each country will need a vision and a strategy involving a re-haul of the curriculum framework. From this perspective the role of UNESCO is going to be crucial. Educational

content and curricula are highly **political therefore the discussion cannot be limited to a technical aspect.**

Any decision-making related to educational content and curricula has to take place in an independent, multilateral, and inter governmental setting where all Member-states have an equal stake and equal access.

Multi-source funding is a **requirement** when curricula are concerned in order to guarantee absolute neutrality and transparency.

Mr. President,

We all recognize the role of UNESCO in dealing with Intercultural and Inter Religious Dialogue. However here again, it is time to recognize that our successes in these fields have been limited.

Culture and heritage are always mentioned as enablers for peace. And indeed they are. However, we have to recognize that culture can also be a major source of tensions, to say the least. Haga Sofia is only one of many example.

Mr. President, Dear Colleagues,

There can be no censorship within our walls. We cannot claim that we are the intellectual Organization of the UN system, a laboratory of ideas, and at the same time shy away from debating difficult issues that are within our mandate, with the pretext that they are too politically sensitive or divisive.

If we apply these criteria to decide what to debate or not, we will quickly become irrelevant because lets face it, everything is political. If we cannot, at our level, in this organization, have civilized discussions on sensitive issues, I don't see how we can be part of any solution to any problem and contribute to global peace.