

SPECIAL SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO

8TH – 9TH MAY, 2020

Intervention of Ghana's Representative on Impact of COVID-19 on UNESCO's

Programs and Activities

Chairman of the Executive Board,

President of the General Conference,

Madam Director-General,

Distinguished Representatives,

Ladies and gentlemen.

We are today experiencing one of the world's most defining moments, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unprecedented global health crisis has and continues to affect almost every country on the planet. Infections, loss of lives and lockdowns have affected us all socially, economically, and even politically in ways that we could not have imagined previously.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana was quick to develop remote learning programmes for all grades as part of its response strategy which it continues to roll out. We appreciate UNESCO's support in this undertaking.

Ghana congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, for your good leadership in ensuring that the work of the Executive Board is not hindered. This virtual Special Session of the Board is a clear demonstration of your unwavering commitment to this endeavour.

We are for the first time experiencing a new mode of meeting which we all know has its challenges. How will we now negotiate when we cannot sit over coffee to reach a consensus? Yet, we are not in normal times. Ghana, therefore, supports the Africa group's proposal for the application of the Rules of Procedure governing our meetings to virtual meetings without amending them.

Mr. Chairman, given the preventive and restrictive measures currently in place in most countries, Ghana appeals to members to consider holding an online 209th Session of the Board as the Secretariat strives to enable us work in all our adopted six languages.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, UNESCO, as the intellectual and moral conscience of the United Nations, has the duty, now more than ever, to lead an effective response to this pandemic across its areas of competence. We commend the report submitted by the Secretariat on the impact of COVID-19 on UNESCO programmes. The Government of Ghana stands ready to support UNESCO to harness its

distinctive competencies towards the long-term recovery efforts and calls on Member States to support the Organization to maintain this momentum.

I thank you for your attention.