

Nigeria



**207<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
9<sup>TH</sup> – 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2019**

**STATEMENT BY MR. IMOH S. EGBO, CHARGE D’AFFAIRES (a.i.),  
DEPUTY PERMANENT DELEGATE OF NIGERIA TO UNESCO**

Madam President of the General Conference,  
Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam Director-General,  
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is indeed an honour for me to address this Board Plenary for the first time as Nigeria’s representative.

2. As we approach the end of this biennium, two important duties impel us to action. First, to take a critical look at this Session, on our performance during the period that is about to end, and secondly, to plan for the Organization’s future activities. Central to these are the preparation of the work of the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference.

3. It is in this context that we thank the Director-General, not only for her rich and comprehensive introduction to the General Debate, but also for the presentation of the Draft Programme and Budget for the coming biennium (40 C/5). In spite of the recognized importance of the contribution of UNESCO, we are constrained to note the vast inadequacy that exist between the

responsibilities – even growing – of the Organization and the means at its disposals. Without enough staff and adequate funds, the efficiency of UNESCO may be threatened and its capability to serve its Member States eroded. This we must avoid at all costs. Therefore, Nigeria supports the budget ceiling of 534.6 million dollars.

4. In addition, we call attention to the generosity of those Member States that have, through Extrabudgetary Funds, helped to sustain the work of the Organization, during successive biennia of critical financial difficulties. We can never thank them enough. This is indeed golden demonstration of commitment to the course of International cooperation.

5. Nobody can question the reality and the seriousness of UNESCO's continuing efforts to improving its performance as a viable and responsible Organization of the United Nations System.

6. Conscious of the importance of its responsibilities and more than ready to face them, we are happy to note the growing cohesion in the action of the three main constitutional bodies of the Organization – The General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat with the Director-General at its head. We appreciate and welcome efforts that have been made to ensure a continuing dialogue among Member States, between Members States and the Secretariat, both during and outside formal Session of the constituted bodies of the Organization. This has contributed to a greater feeling of belonging and ownership of the Organization among Member States and also to the achievement of universality which we all crave for in UNESCO.

7. Please allow me to acknowledge the usefulness of the Preparatory Group of the Board, participation is extended beyond members of the Board.

8. We congratulate the Group's Chairperson, Ambassador of Cote d'Ivoire and the Vice-Chairperson, the Deputy Permanent Delegate of Philippines, who have been responsible for the Group's Work.

9. UNESCO is still not quite out of the woods, but it marches on.

10. This is why we, along with other Member States, express our appreciation for the measures implemented so far as part of the Strategic Transformation Process of the Organization. It is our fervent hope that the Strategic Transformation process in line with all the plans and decisions already in place will lead to the strengthening of UNESCO's overall mandate and more strategically and more firmly position UNESCO within the United Nation System.

11. In the Meantime, Nigeria will like to remind Member States, once more, of the importance of taking fully into consideration the ever growing and increasing responsibility of UNESCO and the most urgent need to take this into consideration when the budget of the organization is being established.

12. We look forward to further discussions of these vital questions, both during this session of the board and also at the forthcoming 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference of the Organization.

13. Excellencies, before I close, I would like to state that this Session marks the end of Nigeria's term as a member of the UNESCO Executive Board, after two consecutive mandates. Let me take this opportunity to appreciate you for the support Nigeria has received as a member of the Board during this period. We are appreciative of the collective collaboration with other Member States, in addressing the most pressing policy, governance and management issues that have affected UNESCO and the effective delivery of its mandate over the years.

14. In particular, we appreciate the support received by H.E. Mrs. Mariam Y. Katagum, former Ambassador Permanent Delegate of Nigeria to UNESCO, who had represented Nigeria on the Board, and as Vice-Chairperson of Group V(a) since 2017.

15. Nigeria reiterates its commitment to continue to take an active part and interest in the work of the Board as a non-member from other ends, and will remain firmly behind every progressive action and initiative that contributes to effectively meeting the ever growing responsibility conferred on UNESCO, despite the challenge of dwindling financial resources.

16. I thank you for your attention. And we now move on to Group V(a) statement.