Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Mr. President of the General Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. Chairperson, and the Secretariat, for all the efforts made to allow this session to be held in presence in this specific context and to commend the Director-General for the measures taken to allow UNESCO to continue to function in order to fulfill its role in these difficult circumstances.

COVID-19 is not only a severe health crisis but it has socio-economic consequences especially for Small Island Developing States with small economies that are predominately dependent on tourism. During this difficult period, in Grenada, we have had to rethink what is important to us and how we can protect our people while preparing to face the challenges of the future.

Our experience has shown that the resilience of the education and tourism sectors is largely dependent on innovation, digital transformation and the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in all domains.
The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how much important is UNESCO’s mandate for inclusive quality education, notably through teacher training and the use of ICTs in education to leave no student behind. The pandemic has equally demonstrated the importance of the unique and needed mandate of the Organization in building Knowledge Societies, including through the Information for All Programme whose work has been welcomed by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution (A/RES/74/197).

The crisis reminded us as well UNESCO’s mandate in promoting solidarity and international cooperation, as anchored in its Constitution.

Mr. Chairperson,

Even so, we note the lack of implementation of the recommendations of the mid-term review of the SIDS Action Plan. Support to SIDS should become visible and concrete, responding to their specific needs. In this regard, we would like to concur with what was said by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines concerning IPDC projects and Participation Programme.

UNESCO should actively contribute to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and respond to the political declaration and Call for action of the United Nations Resolution (A/RES/74/3) through the effective implementation of the UNESCO SIDS Action Plan covering priority areas in Education, Sciences and Oceans, Culture, Communication and Information. Funds from Regular Budget should be allocated and extrabudgetary funds should be mobilized for its implementation. We also consider useful to design and implement an operational budget tracking tool for SIDS. In addition, financial assistance should be accessible to
SIDS middle-income countries taking into consideration that they are facing specific economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

Concerning the Director-General Consultations on the preparation of the Draft Medium-Term Strategy 41 C/4 and the Draft Programme and Budget 41 C/5, we note with concerns that SIDS are not mentioned at all in the Part B of the Questionnaire related to the preparation of the 41 C/5, and it is time to consider SIDS as a Global Priority, to give them the required attention and support.

Concerning the field network, we believe necessary to take into account the specificities of the regions and the sub-regions during the review process. Multi-sectoral Cluster offices should have adequate human and financial resources to be able to respond to the needs of the concerned Member States particularly in policy advice, capacity building and technical assistance.

We also deem that it is time for UNESCO’s Intergovernmental and International Bodies to reconvene and reschedule their canceled or postponed meetings to allow the Organization to fully play its standard setting and policy advice mandates.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, Grenada associates itself with the sentiments expressed by Saint Lucia on behalf of GRULAC.

Thank you