

## **Bismillahirrahmanirrahim**

- **Your Excellency, Ms Zahour Alaoui**, distinguished President of the General Conference;
- **Your Excellency, Ms Irina Bokova**, Director General of UNESCO.
- Excellencies the Ministers, Head of Delegations, Ladies and gentleman.

## **Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh**

1. First and foremost, Brunei Darussalam would like to congratulate **Your Excellency Ms Zahour Alaoui**, on being elected as the President of the UNESCO 39<sup>th</sup> General Conference.
2. I also wish to express our deep appreciation to the **Director-General Madame Irina Bokova** for her leadership and her outstanding work in the promotion and protection of culture, heritage and freedom of press during her tenancy.
3. We have seen how these work have directly and indirectly have impacted UNESCO's contribution in spearheading international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication; specifically, in the mobilisation of efforts in the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a relatively young member and despite our limited participation, Brunei believes in the massive potential we all could benefit from more international collaboration.

## **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

4. We have made pledges to support UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and as a strong advocate of quality education, we welcome the adoption of the Education 2030 agenda in SDG 4.
  
5. Since 2009, we have in place an education system, SPN21; that is geared to prepare its students for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, that strongly emphasises on quality education. This includes investing in early childhood and lifelong learning. This is very much in the same vein as the agenda we are discussing in this 39<sup>th</sup> Conference. Ultimately when all SDGs and related issues are viewed, the quality of education is aptly the antidote to many. We do not only believe that 'education transforms lives' but education builds nations and secures peace.
  
6. Perhaps one of our most notable achievements in our education system is the equal accessibility and opportunity to female students. This is reflected in Brunei Darussalam becoming the leading nation in the number of female science graduates in the Asia-Pacific region, with about 67 percent of our students in tertiary education, are female.

7. In addition, as we enjoy good relations with our regional and international counterparts, Brunei has also benefitted from the sharing of best practices with one another.
8. When SDG was adopted in September 2015, Brunei participated in the World's Largest Lesson launched by Global Goals campaign and UNICEF, to teach our children about the 17 SDGs. A total of 59 schools participated in this event. It is our hope that there will be more opportunities for further collaboration in the near future.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

9. In our effort to improve the quality of teachers, Brunei Darussalam has launched the "Brunei Teacher Standard" (BTS) to guide teachers' performance and evaluate their capacity using a standardized appraisal system. Using this measure, we target by 2035 at least 90% of our teachers to achieve minimum Level 3 (with 5 being the highest). However, this would not be possible without some degree of accountability as has been discussed during the High-Level Meeting on Wednesday. Many approaches to ensure accountability were shared but I believe we should not downplay the role of school leaders in monitoring and evaluating the teachers' performance in delivering quality teaching. Quality education can only be achieved through quality teaching.

10. Much have been and are continually being invested in the provision of adequate training and professional development. Nevertheless, there is more to be gained with some exposure to different environments. The implementation of the national education system includes the transformation of technical and vocational education and with it, a renewed focus on apprenticeship as an integral part of skills development. This is where we hope that UNESCO can be a platform for multilateral cooperation in possible teacher exchange and/or professional development programmes.
11. Besides education, Brunei is committed to the promotion and protection of culture and heritage. In August 2011, Brunei ratified the World Heritage Convention becoming the 188<sup>th</sup> state party to do so and following this, participated in the World Heritage Youth Forum.

**Madame President, Ladies and Gentleman,**

12. We are very honoured to be a part of this international community which has become itself a platform for numerous opportunities for collaboration and partnership.
13. With a network in place, collaborative research work is feasible and this is one major contribution we hope to partake, especially with the current advancement of the system. Challenges of change management warrants investigative as well as problem-solving

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research. The Ministry of Education acknowledges that more research and efforts, to ensure that these challenges are effectively and efficiently resolved, is crucial in achieving its aspirations of quality education. In this respect, the ministry will continually monitor and work towards ensuring a safe and conducive work environment but once again, learning from and with other counterparts can ensure better rates of success.

13. To conclude, I would like to reiterate Brunei Darussalam's full commitment to UNESCO's priorities towards achieving the SDG4. I would also like to convey our utmost appreciation and thanks to UNESCO for assisting Brunei Darussalam in educational, scientific and cultural development programmes. We are also hopeful further collaboration and partnership will be fostered with other member countries in the future.

Thank you.

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