



GHANA'S POLICY STATEMENT
TO BE DELIVERED BY DR. MATTHEW OPOKU PREMPEH (MP),
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, REPUBLIC OF GHANA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 39TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF UNESCO
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UNESCO HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, FRANCE

President of the General Conference

Chairman of the Executive Board

Director- General of UNESCO

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Ghana delegation joins previous speakers to congratulate you Madam ALAOUI, on your election as President of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO.

We wish you a successful tenure of office and assure you of our support.

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Madam President, Ghana commends UNESCO for being at the forefront of multilateral efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular SDG 4 - Education 2030 agenda, which our Organization has been entrusted with, to lead and coordinate.

In Ghana, the Government of President NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO has rolled out its flagship Free Senior High School Policy within nine months of assuming office, in direct response to SDG 4.1. The ambitious policy includes:

- The removal of cost barriers
- The expansion of educational infrastructure
- Improvement in equity and quality

Additionally, we are embarking upon:

- Reform of teacher education and training
- Reform of the basic school curriculum to focus on the four Rs (Reading, Rithmetic, Writing and Creativity)
- The transformation and realignment of all TVET schools and institutions under the Ministry of Education to foster effective regulation, standardization and certification.
- Reform of Tertiary education to make it relevant to the world of work

These, we believe, will harness the transformative power of education to create a society of opportunities for the empowerment of all Ghanaian youth. We look forward to exchanging our experiences and practices in this area with the wider UNESCO community.



Madam President, Ghana salutes UNESCO for its comprehensive and interdisciplinary approaches to tackling Climate Change through the network of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites as well as the Geoscience/Geoparks programme. We endorse the Climate Change Strategy and efforts towards the development of ethical principles in relation to Climate Change, to guide human activities that impact the climate.

UNESCO's Climate Change Strategy is anchored in the fundamentals of the basic sciences and therefore if the strategy is to have the desired impact on Africa and Small Island Developing States, then we need to scale up and strengthen the basic sciences programme as we roll out the 39 C/5.

Ghana, having led the international celebration of Light-based science in 2015, supports the call for purposeful collaboration between the basic and applied sciences, in order to achieve the targets set in the UNESCO strategy on Climate Change.

Madam President, Ghana applauds UNESCO's advocacy role in promoting culture and diversity of cultural expressions through the Organization's normative instruments. UNESCO is widely credited with focusing international attention on the strong link between culture and development, and continues to promote actions including research in this area.

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A survey sponsored recently by UNESCO on the economic impact of indigenous Ghanaian industries concluded that, the cultural and creative sector is indeed a great asset with the potential to create enormous wealth and jobs in the Ghanaian economy. In consequence, the Parliament of Ghana has ratified seven UNESCO cultural conventions, thus paving the way for the country to fully engage with these instruments and leverage these linkages for socio - economic development.

Allow me Madam. President, to mention that Ghana's continuous exploration of oil has necessitated the urgent need for UNESCO's assistance in safeguarding and protecting our territorial underwater cultural heritage through the implementation of the 2001 Convention. Ghana therefore seeks UNESCO's expertise to help us build our institutional capacity in this important area.

Madam President, UNESCO and the Africa Union have made good progress at promoting the second phase of the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa. The Government of Ghana is fully committed to this project, which is in line with its objective of re-invigorating the teaching of History in our schools and Africa as a whole. By this, we will be promoting our common heritage and fostering mutual understanding, regional integration and peace on the Continent.

Madam President, Ghana endorses UNESCO's efforts at building free, independent and pluralistic media and in particular, the legal framework and

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the democratic institutions that support it at the country level. We have observed with admiration UNESCO's contribution over the years in the operationalization of the UN Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and the Fight against Impunity. The present Government of Ghana strongly believes in Development in Freedom. Without freedom of expression and particularly freedom of the press, we cannot achieve our collective resolve for peace and sustainable development.

It is in this light that the Government of Ghana is pleased to host the 2018 edition of the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day on the 3rd and 4th May, 2018 in Accra. We look forward to welcoming you all to enjoy the legendary Ghanaian hospitality.

Finally, Madam President, the Government of Ghana would like to thank Madam Irina Bokova for her great service to this Organization and to Africa in particular. We wish her well in her future endeavours.

To the incoming Director - General, Madam Audrey Azoulay, we welcome you and wish you success. We believe you will uphold the tenets of UNESCO by striving to bring back Member States that have withdrawn from the Organization, and you will work to promote the universality of UNESCO.

I thank you for your attention.