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**Statement by H.E. Reggy Nelson**

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Suriname  
to the French Republic

Paris, 02 November 2017

Please check against delivery!

Madam President of the General Conference,

President of the Executive Board,

Madam Director-General of UNESCO

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Suriname, and on my own behalf, I would like to add my voice to those who have congratulated you on your election as President of the General Conference. Given your track record, we cannot but express our confidence in your leadership of the organization for the period ahead.

We would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing director-general, Irina Bokova, for her sterling efforts in leading the UNESCO during the past 8 years. We wish her success in her future endeavours.

Similarly, the Republic of Suriname would like to pledge her full support and cooperation to the election process of the Director-General of the Organization.

Madam. President,

I am privileged to convey the best regards and best wishes from the Minister of Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Robert Peneux. I have the honor to deliver the Statement of Suriname on his behalf and I quote:

With reference to SDG 4 (quality education), Suriname undertakes several activities to achieve the goal of quality education.

The Ministry of Education is currently in the process of updating the sectoral Educational plan 2017 -2030 and has recently drafted a strategic plan 2017-2021. Both plans are brought in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and the SDGs.

Policy interventions targeting parents, teachers, education officers, schools and communities are also part of this restructuring, as well as the organizational structure of schools and the Ministry of Education itself.

The establishment of the Suriname National Training Authority (SNTA) will guarantee that vocational education is further developed and that vocational standards are being observed and improved. The reform of all educational institutes is currently in progress and must ensure the delivery of better qualified teachers for primary school education

Madam President,

Suriname acknowledges the use of information and communication technology to enhance the access to and the quality of education. We have therefore started the ICT teachers training at bachelor level at the teachers training institute in Suriname.

With regard to science, we would like to inform that the “Man And Biosphere programme” (MAB) is carried out by a study group, coordinated by the Institute of Graduate Studies of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname and aims to identify at least 1 biosphere reserve in Suriname in the district of Coronie. With the assistance of UNESCO, an assessment was made of which area could be qualified as MAB reserve.

Madam President,

Referring to the field of culture, we are very pleased to announce that Suriname recently has ratified the Convention on Intangible Heritage.

Consultation meetings and capacity building trainings for stakeholders and major culture communities were organized in cooperation with the cluster office in Jamaica, regarding the implementation of the Convention.

We can assure you that, based on the strategic plan of the Surinamese Government and in line with the priority areas of the Directorate of Culture, Suriname will continue this process to contribute to the international dialogue on the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

With regard to our world heritage site: “the historic inner-city of Paramaribo’, we would like to inform you that the Government of Suriname has started the implementation of the Paramaribo urban rehabilitation program, which aims to contribute to the socio-economic revitalization of Paramaribo historic center and the preservation of its cultural heritage.

Madam President,

We thank the Director-General and her staff for the draft program and budget, which testifies to our continuous effort to achieve the ideals of our organization. Time and time again these ideals are overtaken by global events that pose a threat to their achievement.

The eradication of poverty and the reduction of inequalities are central issues calling for innovative approaches to their solutions.

Madam President,

With regard to education and within the context of SDG 4, our most immediate actions for the years ahead will be increasing the quality of teachers and of basic education from early childhood till grade 8, through curriculum development, the construction of new schools and strengthening the capacity of the staff members of the ministry, through the basic education improvement project.

Suriname recognizes the fast development in today’s world and is adjusting its system of basic education to be able to cope with the new developments. Nevertheless, Suriname will not lose the connection to its own culture. We will keep our feet on the Surinamese ground, respect all the languages we speak and all the cultural practices that bind us together, to sustain the stability and peace we so much need for real development.

We further emphasize our commitment to equity. Equality is not enough. One size does not fit all. In its Basic Education Improvement (BEIP) Program, my country will pay special attention to the specific needs of children living in the crowded city, far districts and in the isolated hinterlands, all with their own languages and cultures.

Within this program a lower secondary education reform strategy shall be developed, which shall assess how to establish a stronger connection between the renewed education system, the labor market demands and entrepreneurship to create jobs.

Special emphasis will be placed on improving women's participation in the labor market and entrepreneurship. This shall also entail that the legislation regarding education will be adapted accordingly.

With the aforementioned, my country aims at increasing the learning outcomes of all primary school students and improving the internal efficiency of the education system in Suriname.

In conclusion, Madam President, Suriname would like to express its hope that UNESCO will continue to make its presence felt, in the face of the current global challenges. Furthermore, we would also like to encourage each and every one of us to strive in unity and harmony for achieving the goals of this conference. Unquote.

Madam. President,

Once I want to state that it was a great honor to deliver the message of the Minister of Education, Science, and Culture to this august gathering.

I thank you very much!!!