



## **Intervention at the 202<sup>nd</sup> Executive Board**

### **Permanent Delegation of St. Christopher (St. Kitts) and Nevis**

Mr. Chairman, Madam Director General, Esteemed Colleagues,

The essence of my message today is to reiterate my sentiment that - in the light of not only one, but two category 5 hurricanes, that ripped through the Caribbean small states a few weeks ago., causing unprecedented devastation - these occurrences should truly be a wake-up call to this Organization, and one that presents an opportunity to activate more timely and tangible interventions in these affected SIDS territories.

The passage of these monstrous storms, and their impact on these fragile economies, speak volumes about the vulnerability of Small Developing States like ours, that increasingly now face more frequent and violent natural disasters. Driven by climate change, this is a phenomenon that is real and unstoppable, and has

structural, ethical and social consequences that need to be addressed. Climate change poses an immediate threat to the very existence of persons living in SIDs, and risks tipping its citizens, already impoverished, further into the poverty cycle.

Mass migration and displaced persons are also becoming a reality, as residents are driven-out of their sanctuaries by these monstrous weather systems. This is the new normal that cannot be treated with redundant policies and practices.

UNESCO must therefore start to connect the dots, and articulate on our behalf, the required policies and mechanisms in building resilience and capacity in SIDs. This means developing policies for adaptation and mitigation, with an emphasis on addressing the vulnerabilities in our islands.

### ***Re-classification of SIDS***

It is for these same reasons, Mr. Chairman, we continue to urge UNESCO, through its **Institute for Statistics**, to apply a more disaggregated level of data for

development indicators, and a re-classification of the GDP criteria relating to Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Critically, we urge the Institute to address this misplaced per capita criteria used for funding, in working more closely with the World Bank who has initiated a SIDS project aimed at defining vulnerability and resilience factors.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, and especially in times of disasters and crisis, it is incumbent on UNESCO to protect our sacred learning educational institutions, and world class Heritage Sites, falling under UNESCO's direct watch. This must be part of the central thrust to assist SIDs in its transformation to develop more robust and sustainable developmental strategies in order to be more resilient to climate change.

### **Structured financing Dialogue**

#### **(JOINT)**

Mr. Chairman, it is becoming blatantly obvious, that the status quo with respect to financing UNESCO is no longer sustainable. The implementation and execution of its good work, including providing cutting edge policy advice to Members' States,

simply can no longer rely on some member states not paying their annual contributions, to the detriment of others, especially SIDS.

Delinquent Member States must be held more responsible, where some form of sanction should be considered, such as loss of voting rights, and non-access to certain meetings.

### ***Professionalizing the teaching profession***

Mr. Chairman, coming on the heels of the much lauded UNESCO review of our national Education policy and the resulting Strategic Sector plan, my Government remains relentless in its pursuit in achieving the SDG goal 4.

This puts a particular focus on professionalizing and developing our teaching staff in St. Kitts and Nevis. This noble profession must now be provided with the necessary cutting edge skills, if we are to achieve Education for ALL, as teachers are the ones who are entrusted with the development of the nation's most valuable assets. We continue to liaise with the UNESCO teacher's task force Sector here at Headquarters in taking forward this important initiative.

## **Leadership**

Mr. Chairman, In conclusion, and as we evolve towards new leadership at UNESCO, my Government wishes to put on record our sincere gratitude to the Director General and her great staff, for the success achieved, and the strong focus on reform, gender equity, and geographical distribution of staff, rendered over the past 8 years, in spite of the unforeseen circumstances, and political crisis that confronted the organization.

We believe that we need to look forward to welcoming a new management team who is fit for purpose, and well positioned to seize the opportunities and handle the challenges ahead.