

GRENADA

41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO

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Hon. Emmalin Pierre

**Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, Religious
Affairs and Information**

Mr. President of the General Conference,
Mr. Chair of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

I am pleased to congratulate you on your election as President of the 41st session of the General Conference and I assure you that Grenada is committed to working with you. I wish you every success during your presidency.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Audrey Azoulay for her reelection as Director General and commend her for the progress achieved by the Organisation during the last biennium despite the difficult circumstances faced due to the Covid 19 pandemic

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc across the world, however as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) we are affected even more because of our

vulnerabilities, such as the impact of climate change, and small economies.

Education being one of our main sectors has been deeply impacted by school closure and limited access to learning opportunities. We recognize that this crisis requires collective action by all stakeholders to develop long term strategies to address the needs of education and continue our journey in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Grenada continues to push forward with the integration of technology in Education. Government has provided tablets and computers to students and teachers in primary and Secondary schools. Work continues in training of teachers and parents, development of content to support online learning and teaching and the upgrade of internet connectivity in every school. Government is working aggressively to support vulnerable families with internet connection to support students at home.

The social and economic security of our citizens is dependent on our collective action. We therefore call on UNESCO as the lead organization for education to strengthen its support to Member States in the area of Education.

We continue to support the work of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), of which Grenada has the honour to chair the Governing Board. We recognize the importance of higher education and lifelong learning in our region and is pleased to have been the first country to ratify the new Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. President,

I would like to convey Grenada's sympathy to all the victims across the world and in our Caribbean region, who have suffered from natural disasters. We saw recently in our neighboring Island Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Haiti and The Bahamas the devastating effects of natural hazards.

We see once again the vulnerability of a Small Island Developing State and how much UNESCO's action and international solidarity are necessary in support of SIDS, especially taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic.

We express our satisfaction for the creation of the SIDS Section, and while reiterating our commitment to the two global priorities Africa and Gender Equality, we believe that SIDS must be given further priority and we look forward to the setting up of an operational strategy to guide UNESCO's action and increased support to SIDS.

We call for the strengthening of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission with adequate human and financial resources to allow it to fulfil its vital role in Ocean governance, early warning systems, tsunami preparedness and the coordination of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development tasked to it by the United Nation's General Assembly.

Grenada appreciates the efforts made to have an open and efficient consultation process for the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy (41 C/4) and the Programme and Budget (41 C/5). We look forward to seeing issues of high importance strengthened in the framework of their

implementation such as access to science and innovation, ethical principles related to climate change, youth programme, the fight against doping in sport, the diversity of cultural expressions and the preservation and promotion of natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has also demonstrated the importance of the communication and information mandate of the Organisation, access to information, the use of technology to meet, teach and learn, freedom of expression, the fight against misinformation and hate speech, building inclusive knowledge societies and the need to strengthen the CI Sector including its two intergovernmental programmes IPDC and IFAP.

We welcome the Draft recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence and the Draft recommendation on open science and support their adoption at this session of the General Conference.

Grenada also looks forward to the setting up of concrete measures to reach a more balanced and equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat in full respect of the Rules and Regulations of the Organisation.

Finally Mr. President, by presenting its candidature this year for election to the Executive Board, Grenada aspires to continue working with all Member States of UNESCO to strengthen the Organization's role in the attainment of peace and sustainable development. We count on your support.

I thank you.