

GHANA

**POLICY STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION PROFESSOR
NAANA JANE OPOKU-AGYEMANG ON THE OCCASION OF THE
OPENING OF THE UNESCO 37TH GENERAL CONFERENCE, PARIS,
FRANCE, 5-20 NOVEMBER 2013**

President of the General Conference,

Madame President of the Executive Board,

Madame Director General of UNESCO,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel honored to address the 37th General Conference and bring you all greetings from His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama and the good people of Ghana.

My Delegation joins others in applauding you, Madam Director General, for the display of excellent stewardship in the face of great odds and on

the renewal of your mandate to lead this important organization. We also congratulate you, Mr. Hao Ping, on the occasion of your election to the high office of president of the 37th General Conference. We pledge our support to you both.

Mr. Chairman, my Delegation notes with satisfaction, progress made by the Education Sector in delivering on all the 13 expected results of the previous Program and Budget (36 C/5) despite a very challenging financial situation.

Ghana's strategy for education is built on the assumption that everyone, regardless, must access quality education, a true pathway to social and economic justice and lasting peace. Education in Ghana angles on notions of quality, equity, access, equality, with special attention to persons who are differently abled, girls and women, the marginalized.

National intervention measures include provision of the capitation grant, school meals, uniforms, exercise books and the reduction of opportunity costs to education.

Many innovative approaches to delivery, including the introduction of the Complementary Basic Education and National Language Acceleration programs have aided children out of school, those in hard to reach or underserved areas, and other marginalized groups to access education. Net enrolment rate for primary schools has significantly improved, with gender parity reaching targeted limits at both pre-school (1.03) and primary levels (0.99).

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues, expansion of education at all levels continues, with a sharp focus on quality delivery, more efficient management systems, better value for investment and as well, usable learning outcomes in social and economic terms. The government plans to build 200 additional secondary schools, ten new colleges of education, a new national university within the next four years. The private sector has played a critical role in education delivery at all levels and is very much encouraged to continue its partnership with central government.

Ghana recognizes that STI are levers to job creation especially for the youth; for economic stimulation, mitigation of sustainable development challenges, and satisfaction of basic needs. Our response is to increase the number of learners, especially girls and women, and raise the quality of mathematics and science education, through workshops for teachers and a review of the curricula and existing methodologies. The aim is to strengthen the foundations of development generally, and of engineering, vocational technical education in particular.

Mr. Chairman, at the heels of our most recent elections in 2012, UNESCO's Youth Strategy in Africa collaborated with us in promoting civic engagement and political participation of Ghana's youth in democratic process. The positive result was the commitment of the leadership of the Ghanaian youth to sustaining peace and participating without incident in the 2012 elections. Ghana remains grateful for this.

Distinguished Audience, Ghana supports the call for the centrality of culture in the Post -2015 Development Agenda. This is the right focus

for true development. Mr. Chairman, Ghana has just successfully hosted the Conference on the Pedagogical Use of the General History of Africa in African Institutions of Higher Education, a project of UNESCO-Africa Union. We had some 83 participants comprising experts, academics, researchers, university administrators, NGOs, and others who together, reflected on the transmutation of the eight volumes into curricular materials for delivery at various levels of education. We acknowledge the support of UNESCO headquarters, our Cluster Office and National Commission for the success of the conference. We urge continued support by everyone for this important project.

Mr. Chairman, my Delegation urges particular attention to the gap in access to and uses of ICT in developing countries, and suggests its employment in curriculum delivery, knowledge creation and sharing and its movement beyond knowledge consumption. We note with gratification UNESCO's continued commitment to Africa and Gender Equality and as well, the organization's envisaged training for young

people in developing countries. It pleases us to note the application of the ecological and earth sciences to sustainability through the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program, whose general assembly Ghana hosted last September and to which program Ghana requests continued support.

In closing, my Delegation reiterates Ghana's unwavering commitment to UNESCO's ideals that are even more crucial now than ever.

I thank you all for your kind attention