

SRI LANKA

:President of the General Conference

:Chairman of the Executive Board

:Madam Director General

:Excellencies

:Distinguished Guests

:Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UNESCO, I am pleased to represent Sri Lanka on behalf of Hon. Dinesh Gunewardena, Minister of Education of Sri Lanka at the forty first session of the UNESCO General Conference.

Sri Lanka also joins with the Member States in congratulating the Director General Audrey Azoulay on her re-election as the Director General of UNESCO.

Madam, 375 0 -7ph4

In collaboration with the WHO, Sri Lanka is establishing a Regional Knowledge Hub to facilitate exchange of lessons learnt from COVID19 and support countries to recover better.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I take this opportunity to thank all bilateral and multilateral donors who have generously provided financial and material support to manage the pandemic. The increased global cooperation has been visible during the ongoing crisis. The scientific advancements made through collaborative endeavours are greatly encouraging.

We are very thankful to the UNESCO for the support given to Sri Lanka, especially for Sri Lanka's South A7 (a)-207 (a)-207 (a)-2

Development Goal 4.7.c (By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states). We look forward to working with other South Asian countries to support teacher development and become a renowned regional hub for teacher development.

Sri Lanka welcomes the initiatives taken by the UNESCO in giving a platform for young people to hone their skills in leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship. Many Sri Lankan youth have benefited from such programmes organized by the UN agencies.

Sri Lanka looks forward to chairing the 16th session of the ICH Committee in December in Paris. Unfortunately due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation the meeting could not be held in Colombo. However, we reiterate our fullest support to the UNESCO and remain committed to its fruition.

The geographical distribution of the human resources of UNESCO secretariat remains a high priority concern for Sri Lanka, who is currently a non-represented Member State. Therefore, we urge the UNESCO to facilitate fair competition and balance in recruitments to ensure equal opportunities for applicants from around the world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Sri Lanka is grateful for UNESCO's support for education and science in Sri Lanka and for preservation of our cultural heritage. Sri Lanka values the work of UNESCO deeply; and, appreciates our partnership with UNESCO immensely.

On behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, I congratulate UNESCO for the successful last 75 years of its service and wish the 41stth

