



Paris, 30th October, 2017.

IYCS-JECI Statement at the Plenary of the 39th Session of UNESCO General Conference, 2017

President of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO
Director General,
Excellences,
Distinguish Ladies and Gentlemen

We would like to congratulate the new director general Madam Audrey on her election and Madam Irina Bokova for her outstanding service as DG UNESCO

The International Young Catholic Students is present in 86 countries around the world and has continued to act and advocate for a peaceful and just world, promoting the integral development of the human person especially the young people.

In 2015, several world leaders gathered at the UN to decide the fate of the planet and its people for peace and prosperity with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. Central to achieving this global agenda is the aspiration to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, by 2030.

Key claims for education are that it provides individuals with a route to a better life; better possibilities for fulfilment and prosperity; greater chances for social, political and economic participation. However, whilst many people are able to use education as springboard to a more economically and socially secure existence; this is by no means universal due to marginalisation of all forms and constructs. This is evident from the 2016 UNESCO Global Education Mentoring Report which indicated that about 750 million youth and adults cannot read or write and 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skills.

Quality education where they exist is an exclusive preserve of the elite, how can we achieve the vision of “leave no one behind” if the vast majority of people who need education, cannot afford or access it?

As a strong voice for students across the world since the 1920s, the International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) reiterate our call to governments across the world especially those of you here present, to create stronger formal and non-formal educational systems, that addresses all form of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. To meet current global educational needs, we call on all government leaders to embrace



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'Progressive Universalism'; an approach in pursuing quality education for all while prioritising education in the early years of a child's life and reaching out to the most disadvantaged populations, where the Social returns is the highest.

Quality education should also take into account the physical safety of the learning environment. As school where the students can really feel at home and where everyone's diversity is welcomed and made unique can enhance learning.

So today, I stand as a strong voice for millions of young people across the world to remind you all seated here that 'every child, in every country, in every neighbourhood, in every household, has the right not only to a seat in a classroom, but to a quality education. So, I implore you all to invest in Education, invest in quality, invest in equity and ensure that indeed, no one is left behind.

Thank you very much.

This statement is also supported by

