REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

MINISTER'S OFFICE

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELENCY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE MR. AIRES BONIFACIO BAPTISTA ALY, AT THE UNESCO 34th GENERAL CONFERENCE

Paris, 18th October, 2007

His Excellency the President of the 34th General Conference of UNESCO,
His Excellency the Director General of UNESCO,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by congratulating Your Excellency, Mr. President on your election to Chair this Conference. Under your wise guidance, we are confident that this conference will be a success.

Allow me also to warmly salute UNESCO's Executive Council, its President and the Director General, for all the achievements in the last two years in different areas.

Mr. President,
Director General,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Mozambique is engaged in speeding up the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in all its dimensions. In the Education Sector, we are carrying out actions towards Universal Education of all children in order to guarantee their completion of primary education by 2015. In this context, we have approved the Education Sector Strategic Plan, establishing the main political options in each teaching level and tackling issues related to quality, HIV AIDS, gender and institutional development. The Strategic Plan defined the access, the quality of education and gender equality as the three major priorities.

In Mozambique, around 50% of the adult population is illiterate and their participation in national life is limited. Women are the most affected by illiteracy. To accelerate progress in

this area the Government launched a literacy program via radio. We are encouraged by the number of participants in this program.

The strategy for secondary education currently being designed aims at guaranteeing the training of young people for life and for the employment market.

We are reforming the Technical and Vocational Education to make this system more flexible, through the introduction of modular training focusing on competencies and skills for the employment.

We have opened Higher Education Institutions in all provinces of our country in order to reduce regional disparities.

Mr. President,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Mozambique has signed the Anti-Doping World Code and ratified the respective Convention. We've also hosted the first Meeting of the Anti-Doping Organization in Zone VI and have taken the Presidency of this organization for the biennium 2007-2009.

The Mozambican society enjoys a broad freedom of press, expression and opinion and the *media* play an important role in the mobilization of the society for its commitment towards the fulfilment of development plans in the country and the deepening of democracy.

At the time of Independency, in 1975, there were only few newspapers and radio stations in the main urban centres. Today, we have more than 300 public, private and community information institutions, radio and television

stations, daily and weekly newspapers and magazines.

With UNESCO support we've created multimedia communication resource centres that allow for the interaction between the most remote communities at district level with all the country and with the world through the internet, fax, newspaper, radio and television.

Our people felt honoured with the proclamation of Timbila Chopi and Nyau (Gule Wamkulu) as Masterpieces of the Oral and Immaterial Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in November 2005. Celebrations at national and regional level were chaired by the President of Mozambique, His Excellency Armando Emilio Guebuza. This distinction is being valued through actions towards the preservation and dissemination of these cultural expressions throughout the country and the world.

Our country has organised the International Seminar on Slavery in the Indian Ocean Countries and Islands at Mozambique Island, last August, in the context of the Slavery Route Project, under the auspice of UNESCO.

We will soon start the rehabilitation of S. Sebastião Fortress with the support of UNESCO, Japan, Portugal and ULCA as well as the launching of the Millennium Village Project in the continent. The allocation of a Specific Status to the Island, the creation of the Office for the Conservation of Mozambique Island (GACIM) express the willingness of our Government for improving life conditions and the conservation of that historic location's heritage.

It's a pleasure for me to let you know that we've recently ratified the "Conventions on the Safeguarding of Cultural and Immaterial Heritage and on the Protection, Promotion of Cultural Expression Diversities"

Mr. President,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Mozambique values UNESCO's role in all our achievements in Programmes in Education, Culture, Science, Information and Technology and considers its cooperation with UNESCO a fruitful one.

UNESCO has always been involved in the preparation of the Strategic Plan for the Sector, in the training of staff and mobilization of partnerships for its implementation.

We are happy with the support to the initiatives for the achievement of the goals in our Action Plan for Education for All in all its dimensions.

UNESCO's support in specific areas like the design of the local curriculum, vocational training programmes and the actions in the

context of HIV-AIDS fighting are crucial in preparing young people for healthier life and appropriate behaviour to prevent the expansion of the pandemic and to respect the infected.

We would like to thank UNESCO for the continuous support and reiterate our willingness to continue to benefit from the experience of this organization in its various domains.

Mr. President,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

The year 2008 will be a very important one for our country. In this regard, we will host the ADEA Biennale, we will organize the celebration of the Freedom of Press and we will associate ourselves with in celebration of the International Year of the Planet Earth.

At national level, the elections for the Provincial and Municipal Assemblies are an important

moment for all Mozambicans, and will serve to strengthen the culture of peace through the consolidation of democratic institutions. We want to enlarge the participation of the people in the exercise of power through these elections.

I'll finish by renewing our wish to continue cooperating with UNESCO and by reiterating our commitment and determination to carry on with the Programme of Education For All, a premise to increase our society's cultural level and consolidate Peace in our country.

Thank you very much!