

***Delegation from
The Republic of Iceland***

***Represented by
École d'éducation international de Laval***

Position Paper for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The Republic of Iceland is honoured to be a part of this year's session and would like to thank the committee for addressing three central topics, which are Governance and its Effects on Education, Preservation of World Heritage Sites, and Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030. We believe that addressing these issues will help improve the overall quality of education worldwide and will raise awareness on the importance of preserving world heritage sites. Iceland invites all Member States to join us in a common effort to solve these issues.

I. Governance and its Effects on Education

As a one of the State Parties who are in favor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR), Iceland vowed to ensure people's rights to education. The Republic of Iceland firmly believes that in order to promote quality education, one of the United Nation's Sustainable Development, the relationship between governance and education should be reviewed. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), since 2013, 124 million children and adolescents are out of school and this number keeps going up (Background Guide 2016). This alarming statistic proves that this is a relevant issue that needs to be addressed. As a matter of fact, Iceland has undertaken countless efforts in order to solve the main problem between governments and education, which is corruption, by, for example, accessing the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), one of the measures created by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to promote the fight against corruption. Corrupt governments often invest in projects for personal gains instead of investing funds in projects considered urgent such as the building of educational institutions (Transparency International, 2016). Therefore, more than 6 billion people live in countries with a serious corruption problem (Transparency International, 2016). To fight this corruption, The Republic of Iceland established the Iceland's General Penal Code (GPC), which forbids all acts of giving or receiving a bribe, trading in influence, abuse of office or fraud. Another action that Iceland has taken is to be a signatory of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which is an international organization that includes goals such as securing financial stability and reducing poverty around the world. The IMF promotes good governance and so being a part of this organization could help every country that faces corruption review and improve the proper distribution of the funds. A way to improve good governance is to promote honesty and open-mindedness in governments, with the creation of transparent funds, because it lowers its occasions to adopt a corrupted behavior (UNESCO, 2016). As an example of the efficiency of this solution, New-Zealand established transparent funding processes in their 1994 Fiscal Responsibility Act and today, it is one of the top countries with the lowest of corruption in this world. Indeed, inefficient distribution of funds has an impact on education. Funds are used to build schools and are used to repair and modernize them. Without a good education, it is hard to get a well-paying job and without money and knowledge, it is really difficult to make a living, which then leads to poverty. Another possible solution to the corruption happening in all these countries is to increase the wages of civil domestic workers. If their work is well recognized and compensated, they will be less likely to turn to bribes and therefore, they will not in corruption acts (Background Guide, 2016).

II. Preservation of World Heritage Sites

Iceland believes that we should work on the preservation and protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage, so that we can all remember the places and infrastructures that forged today's world. Recently a report was released in which UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) collaborated and stated that climate change causes extensive damage to World Heritage Sites (UNESCO, 2016). Iceland ratified the World Heritage Convention and therefore, it is our duty to protect World Heritage Sites. The two main obstacles to the preservation of World Heritage Sites are climate change and war (Background Guide, 2016). The Republic of Iceland has put a considerable amount of efforts in encouraging people to take action on the matter. As an example of these efforts, Iceland signed up as an active member of the Geneva Convention which states in article 53, Protection of Cultural Objects and Places of Worship, that committing offensive actions towards

monuments, places of worship or works of art considered historic is strictly prohibited (ICRC, 1977). As a matter of fact, the point VII of UNESCO's Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage declares that States should take appropriate measures to provide criminal sanctions to those who commit or order to be committed acts of destruction towards World Heritage Sites that constitute a great importance for humanity (UNESCO, 2003). Therefore, protection of World Heritage Sites is considered a very relevant subject for the international community. In order to preserve our World Heritage Sites from climate change, we must reach a consensus on possible resolutions concerning the protection of these sites in unstable regions and to find a way to protect them from climate change, which would also help to achieve one of the Sustainable Development Goals which is climate action, or the world highly risks to lose many of its most important World Heritage Sites (Background Guide, 2016). The Republic of Iceland also believes that working together to improve the preservation, protection and identification of World Heritage sites promotes awareness that will make the world realize how important these sites truly are and to ensure the accomplishment of the goal concerning climate action, which was established to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

III. Supporting and Accomplishing Education 2030

Iceland believes that the support and the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, such as quality education could improve the overall quality and accessibility to education. According to United Nation's Institute of Statistics, nearly 17% of the world's adult population is illiterate (UNESCO, 2016). This statistic shows that there is still work to be done to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goal associated to education. Iceland gives a great deal of importance to education. As a matter of fact, one of the fundamental principles of the Icelandic educational system is that everyone should have equal access to a quality education no matter the individual's background or set of beliefs. Iceland is also a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which promotes equality for education for disabled people. In accordance with its implementation, the Icelandic Government created the Icelandic Network on Disability research that promotes knowledge on issues regarding disabled people and whose main purpose is the creation of a discussion and research platform on disabilities. Iceland also opened a Center for Disability Studies at the University of Iceland, a site that was created for purpose of researching in the sector of disability studies (ANED, 2016). Another reason why Iceland think it is important to support and accomplish education by 2030 is because in low income countries, people are more likely to get a brief education or no education and women have less access to it than men. Educating people saves lives because there is an important link between education and life expectancy. Indeed, according to statistics from The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in which Iceland is an active member, there is in average, among 14 OECD countries in which data is available, a difference of 6 years in life expectancy between people with the highest and the lowest level of education (OECD, 2013). In order to create a quality international educational system, a solution is to develop an educational structure that puts the emphasis on some features, but also allows changes in the educational systems between nations so that every country can build a strong and efficient educational system.

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