The northwestern African country of Mali is landlocked, bordering Algeria, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Niger, and Senegal. This country of 17 million people practices a majority of Muslim Religion, and has French as their official language. Being among 25% poorest countries in the world, Mali requires immediate support. During this committee session, the delegation of Mali is committed to ensuring that global issues regarding education, and world heritage sites can be improved.

1. ***GOVERNANCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON EDUCATION***

Worldwide, the roots of government in education play a vital and expansive role, where knowledge is used to survive and thrive. Although, the reality is that not everyone has this privilege. Mali, on its own, in a country with the 3rd highest fertility rate in the world (6.3 births per women), and a growing population of 2.9% cannot sustain education for all. Since 1962 northern Mali has suffered unrest since the first Tuareg rebellion. Years of instability have followed the civil war in 2012 between the north and south. After the Tuareg rebels controlled the north, thousands of people were forced to flee their homes, pushing the country to chronic poverty. Since then, and with the political election in 2013, Mali has been trying to recover and stabilize. In order for there to be change, and to get out of this cycle of poverty, it is vital to put a focus on education. UNESCO representatives in Bamako report the situation as “no return to normal”, which simply cannot be accepted. This complex emergency disrupted education for over 800,000 children, adding to the 1.2 million children already out of school. The reopening of schools was slowed by the insecurity and invasion of armed groups, damage and destruction, absence of teachers, and limited access. School was no longer a safe place in Mali. Children and teachers harassed, attacked, parents and families did not want to send their children to school because they were worries about insecurity. While they implemented accelerated programs to speed up school years, that was only a short-term solution. Education can increase social and economic opportunities; foster a culture of mutual understanding in order to provide peace-building skills to break the cycle of violence. Literacy campaigns, and providing psychological support may push for the students and teachers to return to schools – this positive motivation should restore a sense of normality, helping overcome psychological distress, which is a key factor in the recovery process and intellectual development. Learning spaces provide a safe environment; supplies and materials are crucial factors in order to re-establish this community. Every child deserves a peaceful life without threat or violence, and the opportunities to educate themselves for a better future. As a part of this committee, Mali hopes to implement systems and policies to reach peace and equity through education.

1. ***PRESERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES***

Mali is gradually recovering from violence and political unrest, and humanitarian needs remain high. Timbuktu sacred gate that holds cultural traditions dating back to 15th century was reinstalled. UNESCO media services reports this was “a major step towards peace and reconciliation in Mali”. The decision of international criminal court, and reinstallation is a landmark in gaining recognition for importance of heritage; supporting UNESCO’s judgment that heritage has a major role in peace building. With the arrest of Al Faqi Al Mahndi (responsible for destruction of the site 2012, armed extremist who occupied city) it ensured that such crimes to not go unpunished - key element in response to violent extremism. In collaboration with MINUSMA (UN peacekeeping force) to preserve

cultural diversity and human rights, and they will continue to lead support and protection. Similar to the destruction of old city Dubrovnik and bridge Mostar, these were crimes strengthened legal basis that no crime should remain unpunished. Another religious heritage site in Mali is the traditional architectural is the Cliff of Bandiagara. Due to socio economic phenomena, human activities, and degradation of environment (climate change leading to droughts, etc.) the populations of the villages are being forced to leave. The integrity of cultural practices are being threatened (ancestral values), one of best preserved of sub Saharan Africa and we want to keep it that way. Examples such as these mark the importance of implement of plans for sustainable and effective management and conservation. Although those have been reestablished ones such as Old Towns of Djenne are in danger due to insecurity. Preventing implementation of protective measures, and creating an international board where revisiting and revising the listing of the site will allow UNESCO to put focus on being most efficient.

1. ***SUPPORTING AND ACCOMPLISHING EDUCATION 2030***

With this program UNESCO’s goal is to use education to eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development. This will require at least 12 years of publically funded primary and secondary education, equal opportunities for all, and effective learning outcomes. The WIDE database estimates Mali to be far from this goal, sitting near the bottom of the list where the poor are very far way from the target of at least 12 years of education. It is known that the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups by gender, poverty, and conflict are those whose primary education is being denied. Inequalities must addressed head on and government minsters should prioritize inclusion of education in their plans. The draft framework for Action Education 2030 proposes that government officials should be reporting monitored efforts.

Mali on its own has had multiple issues with violent extremists, and it is suggested that this can be improved through education. Nobody is born violent, but the aggressive behavior is made and fueled, and the decisions to be violent are a result of marginalization, inequality, and grievance. Education can give people a good experience since a young age, making them equip with values – and this idea can be projected universally. Given the cultural differences and teaching styles, countries interpretations of an appropriate education program can vary. As UNESCO, we must acknowledge how cultural differences will affect educational frameworks, so instead of following a consistent program – making a list of rules that must be followed with specific criteria can leave it open to interpretation, but still establish minimal requirements.

Aside from the political unrest within Mali, primary education stands at 77.19% (72.9% female vs. 81.2% male), while secondary drops to 43.51% (37.3% female and 49.4% male), and tertiary at a low of 7% - it is evident that this country has not yet established a solid educational system. We see an even bigger gap between the two genders with the literacy rate. 15 years and older only 33.07% are literate (45% of the males, but only 22% of females). In Mali, government expenditures on education are standing at 4.35% of GDP as of 2014, but is 18.22% of total expenditure. The guidelines education 2030 has set in place, pushing for 15-20% of GDP to be used for funding in education, will help Mali to put a focus on education. Additional 0.7% of support that will come from developed countries will greatly support these developing countries looking to get a start.

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