

Madam Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last month, the UNESCO Executive Board approved the renewal of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations' associate status with UNESCO until 2029. WFEO is grateful for this new milestone in its more than 50-year history of cooperation with UNESCO. Today WFEO represents some than 30 million engineers in more than 100 countries and works fully with UNESCO to achieve a common vision and goals.

Two years ago, following a proposal from WFEO and with the invaluable support of some 50 Member States, the General Conference approved the declaration of a UNESCO international day - World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development (WED), to be celebrated each year on 4th March.

In spite of the pandemic situation, in 2020 and 2021, WFEO's members and partners held hundreds of events worldwide and reached more than 30 million to celebrate the contribution of engineers to sustainable development.

In 2022, World Engineering Day will include the broadcast of events from around the world, live and continuously for 24 hours. All Member States are invited to support such celebrations from their own engineering associations, industries or universities, which must join forces for the achievement of the SDGs.

An important collaborative project with UNESCO was the second UNESCO Engineering Report, launched on 4th March 2021, World Engineering Day.

A key recommendation of the report was to review the international benchmarks for engineering education to ensure engineers have the right skills to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. A big step in this direction was achieved last September, with the publication of the revised GAPC framework, the foundation for engineering education around the world, by the International Engineering Alliance, with the support of WFEO and UNESCO.

Today we call on UNESCO and its Member States to further support capacity building for engineering education systems, especially in Africa, with the support of nations that have already achieved international standards. It is an approach similar in spirit to the open science model proposed by UNESCO and which we support.

WFEO will continue to build capacity through virtual and in-person training for engineering educators, accreditation bodies and professional engineering institutions. We are also determined to reinforce capacity building in school teachers to address climate change education in Small Islands Developing States.

Science and engineering are more than ever crucial for resilient societies.

Thank you.