



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address by the Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, on behalf of the President, at the UNESCO Global M&I Education Week, Hosted by South Africa

25 October 2021

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ms Director-General of UNESCO,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Media and information literate citizens,

Fellow Africans,

Citizens of the world,

I rise on behalf of the President of Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Mr Cyril Ramaphosa to thank UNESCO for allowing our country to host the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2021, Feature Conference.

As part of the international community, we are proud of the media and information literacy progress made in recent years.

Yet, we are now confronted by a new threat of global misinformation via social networking platforms.

It is an insidious threat that requires ingenuity in law-making, public awareness and transatlantic efforts to reverse the emerging trends of the misinformation entrepreneurs gaining the upper hand.

This global threat of misinformation is more pronounced today as the world battles the anti-vax lobby in the face of the devastation occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thus, this conference must respond thoughtfully to the anti-vax lobby and the misinformation entrepreneurs.

We must consider new media and information literacy programmes to help people understand the consequences of creating and sharing false and misleading content.

To achieve and sustain the goal of media and information literacy for all, international cooperation is most urgent.

South Africa acknowledges and hails the African Union (AU) and all the rest of the international community represented in this Feature Conference of Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2021.

Together, we must respond to the call of the United Nations (UN) Resolution A/RES/75/267 for media and information literacy to be an urgent and imperative public matter.

The theme for Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2021, *Media and Information Literacy for Public Good*, couldn't be more appropriate.

This year marks the 10th edition of the Global Media and Information Literacy Week.

South Africa is proud to celebrate this historic moment as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to host the Global Media and Information Literacy Week.

Here is an important milestone for promoting the culture of media and information literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa, in general.

We must change the trend of low take-up of media and information literacy in education in African countries.

Media and information literacy can support the strategic approach of building an inclusive and resilient African society and connecting the African continent with the rest of the world.

In this regard, South Africa stands alongside the global community not only to strengthen the foundations of media and information literacy but also to contribute to the achievement of:

1. Sustainable Development Goals beyond the global 2030 agenda
2. The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) and
3. The Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Media and information literacy and digital skills should be incorporated in the actions connected to the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) as a driver for human capability and self-empowerment.

It is fitting that the Nairobi Declaration and Call to Action on Bridging Continental and Global Education Frameworks for Africa recognizes the importance of media and information literacy.

Indeed, media and information literacy can provide the necessary skills, competencies, and attitudes that support digital skills, digital hygiene, critical thinking, and intercultural competencies.

We must build the competencies of African citizenry as agents of change by strengthening media and information literacy in lifelong learning, online, and offline spaces at all levels.

I wish you well in your deliberations.

I thank you.