

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Madam Director-General,

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

First, Japan would like to reiterate, as a responsible Member State and a major contributor, its firm commitment to actively participate in discussions of this very important session of the Executive Board, so as to realize a “stronger UNESCO,” that can meet strategic challenges.

Japan is, therefore, ready to contribute to effective governance of UNESCO, and I myself humbly co-chaired, together with Ambassador of El Salvador, a meeting to discuss the issue of term limitation of the Board. Although opinions are yet to merge, I am proud that all participants showed noble enthusiasm to contribute to the Organization. Let’s continue discussions to create the common ground which everyone can support.

Monsieur le Président,

Cet été, dans le cadre de la Conférence Internationale de Tokyo sur le Développement de l’Afrique (TICAD 7), le Japon et l’UNESCO ont organisé deux événements sur l’intelligence artificielle et sur le développement des capacités dans le domaine du cinéma. Avec la participation et le soutien des Ambassadeurs africains ainsi que de la DG, nous avons pu diversifier la coopération entre le Japon et l’UNESCO.

As to AI, Japan worked hard for adoption of the “G20 AI Principles” for “human-centered development and use” at the G20 Summit held in Osaka. Japan also sponsored UNESCO’s High Level Conference on the ethics of AI in March. Japan supports UNESCO’s initiative to establish normative instrument on the ethics of AI.

Mr Chairperson

Japan’s strong commitment to UNESCO’s core mandates remains unchanged.

Turning to education, Japan strongly supports the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), that is a key instrument to address multiple global challenges and

to achieve SDGs across the fields. At the Climate Action Summit held last month, Japan and UNESCO co-organized a side event to engage the youth in our common efforts. Japan also organized an open-session event in Tokyo last month, envisaging the launching of “ESD for 2030” at the forthcoming General Conference. Japan reiterates its commitment to UNESCO’s “Futures of Education” initiative.

As for the intangible cultural heritage, Japan is ready to actively engage in the comprehensive review, which Japan proposed in Mauritius last year. We need to review many aspects of the program including evaluation procedures and inscription standards, with a view to improving transparency, fairness and integrity. Japan will financially support the expert meeting, that will start next March.

In light of the climate change, causing major natural disasters in many parts of the world, we need to mobilize expertise and networks of UNESCO in strengthening science-based efforts for disaster risk reduction. As Japan itself has suffered serious natural disasters so many times, we are ready to share our knowledge and expertise with all friends of the world.

Japan attaches great importance to “the UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainable Development” starting in 2021. Consultation process has been launched by UNESCO for each region to prepare implementation plan, and Japan hosted the workshop for North Pacific in July, in cooperation with the WESTPAC. Japan will actively contribute to formulation of the decade’s plan.

Mr Chairperson

In concluding my remarks, I would like to reiterate the importance of the political reform of UNESCO, which will not only defend UNESCO from politicization, but also will help UNESCO to fulfill its core mandates.

In this context, we welcome the progress achieved so far in the comprehensive review of the Memory of the World Program, while stressing essential need to create an effective mechanism, which can protect UNESCO and her experts from political pressures, and secure the inscriptions of uncontested innocent dossiers. Recalling the original objective of the Program, that is conservation of valuable documents, Japan remains determined to actively contribute to this critical process.

Thank you for your attention.