

**Speech of His Excellency Mr Atsuyuki Oike,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO,
45th Session of the World Heritage Committee,
10 - 25 September 2023 Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.**

At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation for the activity of the World Heritage Centre (WHC). In terms of its priority focus on Africa, gender equality and SIDS, those are the areas which we attach a great importance.

With your indulgence Mr. Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to mention 4 major items as priority items for our future contribution to the World Heritage Convention.

First of all, we would like to pursue a more balanced list of World Heritage with enhanced authenticity. In this context, we should enhance our focus on Africa and SIDS which are underrepresented in the current list.

If I am allowed to introduce some of our activities, Japan is trying to support the nominations by African countries in terms of capacity building.

Also, we have made contributions to the delisting of a Ugandan property, “Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi” from the List of World Heritage in Danger. This will be adopted in the current session of the committee. We would like to expand this point in Item 5C “Priority Africa”.

Our second point is the enhanced synergies with other conventions protecting the heritage including Intangible Cultural Heritage, Geopark and MAB. If we can create synergies among the programs with common elements, we should be able to promote more effective and comprehensive protection policies.

Thirdly, compatibility with Sustainable Development. Regrettably, as we will see in days ahead, the compatibility between economic development and heritage conservation has become a really serious issue, which requires more dialogue

between concerned member states and Advisory Bodies. From this point of view, Japan is making a proposal to enhance such dialogue, in this committee under Item7.

Finally, the mitigation of the impact caused by climate change and natural disaster. Japan is supporting a UNESCO project, designed to introduce to Africa of the Early Warning System for Natural Disaster making use of AI, and if we could introduce this technology into protection of World Heritage, we should be better prepared to deal with natural disasters.

Mr. Chair, Japan will continue to make contribution to World Heritage Convention through the efforts that I have explained in this intervention.

Thank you, Mr. chair.