

**Speech of Mr Masahito Moriyama, Minister of Education,
Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan
42nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO
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Madam Director-General of UNESCO,
Distinguished Delegations of the Member States,
Madam President,

Today, the international community faces an array of serious challenges, such as humanitarian crises and the destruction of cultural heritage caused by war and conflict, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the Israeli-Palestinian situation, as well as the intensification and frequency of natural disasters caused by climate change.

In these turbulent times, we believe that UNESCO is one of the leading UN agencies that can offer the people of the world hope for the future.

Madam President,

Japan welcomes the United States' return to UNESCO and highly values Director-General Azoulay's leadership. As a UN agency, UNESCO, having earned true universality and full legitimacy, will be called upon to play an even more vital role in this 'age of division.'

We look forward to making the most of this momentum and achieving positive results at this General Conference.

Madam President,

Japan has been vigorously promoting ESD, considered to be one of the main catalysts for the realization of all the targets of the SDGs.

In December this year, Japan hosts the first "ESD-Net 2030 Global Meeting" in Tokyo together with UNESCO to share the achievements of ESD to date and spur momentum for further spreading ESD worldwide.

Madam President,

Japan also contributes to facilitating the global mobility of students in higher education in line with the "Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education," which entered into force this year.

In April, the Japanese Government announced an initiative to enhance international student exchanges and set a challenging target of sending 500,000 Japanese students to study abroad and receiving 400,000 international students to study in Japan each year by 2033.

In collaboration with other States Parties of the Convention, Japan will also promote discussions and contribute to the implementation of the Convention.

Furthermore, in regard to the revision of the 1974 Recommendation, Japan supports the dissemination of the revised Recommendation's principles and contents, reflecting the various changes in the situation surrounding education.

Madam President,

In the field of science, I strongly support UNESCO's efforts to enhance its expertise to build resilient societies and achieve the SDGs by addressing global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster prevention and mitigation.

In particular, we believe that the role of ocean science is crucial.

We welcome the strengthening of the IOC's budget and staffing for the next two years.

We strongly support the leadership of IOC Chair Professor Michida through the dispatch of experts and project support using the Funds-in-Trusts, and actively contribute to resolving ocean-related issues.

Japan will also actively contribute to the upcoming discussion regarding the development of the "Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology."

Madam President,

Japan has been playing a leading role in disseminating and implementing the "World Heritage Convention" and the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," this year marking the 20th anniversary of its adoption.

In addition, the recent international conferences under the leadership of UNESCO have led to a common recognition worldwide that culture is a public good of the international community.

We will continue to cooperate and collaborate with the international community to ensure that culture can contribute to the realization of a sustainable society.

Regarding the Memory of the World Programme, we highly applaud the Secretariat for resuming the biennial nomination cycles in 2021 with revisions to the nomination system.

We expect the programme to be steadily managed according to the revised scheme.

Madam President,

Now we are standing at a historical turning point, I believe that we should return to UNESCO's objective "to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms".

I promise you that Japan will play an active and leading role in discussions in every field and further efforts to promote friendship and mutual understanding among Member States.

As for the Israeli-Palestinian situation, the situation on the ground is highly unpredictable, and Japan has been paying close attention to the situation with deep concern.

Japan extends its sincere condolences to the families of all the victims and for the loss of UN staff and personnel.

Improving the humanitarian situation, especially in the Gaza Strip, is now the top priority.

We believe that, when circumstances permit, the UNESO should engage in a variety of support activities within the scope of its mandate.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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