

Dear colleagues of the Secretariat of UNESCO and the Government of Japan,

- (1) It is my great pleasure to co-organize with you the Annual Review Meeting for 2024, an important occasion to highlight and guide Japan-UNESCO partnership.
- (2) In the current international situations marked by various conflicts, frequent natural disasters, political and socio-economic challenges in different regions, the role of UNESCO in promoting educational, scientific, and cultural cooperation among nations is more important than ever. Japan, as a key partner, remains steadfast in its commitment to support UNESCO's initiatives under the new C/5 framework.
- (3) We continue to have serious concern for the Russia's aggression against Ukraine now entering in the third year as well as the situation in Gaza facing a humanitarian crisis. In response to UNESCO's request, we have actively collaborated and provided support in a timely manner. Last year, Japan extended approximately \$10 million in aid through UNESCO to Ukraine and the surrounding countries. This year, we have contributed an additional \$14.6 million in aid to Ukraine. We have pledged 100,000 dollars to bolster UNESCO's efforts in Gaza, focusing particularly on mental health care for children.
- (4) In natural disaster, Japan's own experience of enduring natural calamities—from the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake to the recent earthquake on the Noto Peninsula earlier this year—has endowed us with invaluable knowledge on resilience. UNESCO, on the other hand, plays a unique role characterized by three approaches, namely: the “multi-hazard” approach covering various disasters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, and tsunamis; the “multi-sectoral approach” cutting across education, science, and culture; and the “multi-stakeholder” approach involving not only governments but also universities, private companies, and other stakeholders. By collaborating with UNESCO, Japan aims to leverage its disaster resilience expertise to assist the Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

and African countries, which are also prone to severe natural challenges.

- (5) This year, Japan wish to focus on “Protection of all forms of heritage”, “ESD”, “Disaster Risk Reduction”, and “UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development”. “Emerging technologies such as AI and neurotechnology”, and “Promotion of Mondiacult Declaration 2022”, as strategic priority areas.
- (6) Japan has been actively involved in various initiatives to protect endangered World Heritage sites. With a history of over 30 years of collaboration in Angkor and more than 20 years in Bamiyan, we not only continue our support for these ongoing projects but also encourage new initiatives, especially in light of the objectives of OEWG, which holds the next meeting this week.
- (7) In ESD, Japan supports the formulation of national ESD initiatives and the creation of ESD networks, fostering global cooperation. Additionally, through JFIT, we will support the expansion of the Global Convention on Higher Education. Our hope is for an increase in the number of participating countries and the promotion of global exchange of intellectual resources.
- (8) In disaster risk reduction, we expect UNESCO to strengthen its cross-sectoral initiatives such as the protection of cultural heritage and disaster education.
- (9) With regard to ocean science, in support of the leadership of IOC Chairman Professor Michida, we will continue to promote the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science, particularly focusing on Vision2030 and SIDS.
- (10) In emerging technologies such as AI and neurotechnology, Japan places importance on the establishment and implementation of global norms. We will continue to support the implementation of recommendations in AI, while actively participating in the formulation of ethical guidelines for neurotechnology through expert meetings and consultations.
- (11) Finally, we fully share the spirit of Mondiacult Declaration 2022 in promoting culture as global public goods and support

initiatives contained in the Declaration.

- (12) Last but not least, this year, we wish to enhance the visibility of our initiatives even further. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the "Japan Visibility-Day" organized by BSP, as it plays a crucial role in promoting awareness of JFIT. Not only does the initiative inform the Japanese public of UNESCO's activities, but it also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of our endeavors globally. I kindly invite you to view my video message on the "Japan Visibility-Day" website and SNS, which will be available this week. Through our continued advocacy, we wish to explore innovative approaches to amplify the impact of our work and actively seek to expand meaningful partnerships.
- (13) Thank you for your attention. We look forward to continuing to work together.