

**Introduction by H.E. Mr. KANO Takehiro
of the exhibition “Towards the Formation of a
Universal Conscience: International Institute of
Intellectual Cooperation, 100 years”**

Madame President of the General Conference,
Mr Nicholas Jeffreys, Assistant Director-General for
Administration and Management,
Distinguished Panelists,
Excellencies, Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to
Her Excellency Ambassador Simona-Mirela Miculescu,
President of the General Conference, for her leadership
to organise this important event today. My sincere thanks
also go to staffs of the Secretariat and the Permanent
Delegations of France, Monaco and Romania for their
dedicated contribution to the preparation for this event.

It is my great honour to introduce the exhibition,
now open to visitors in Salle des Actes, showcasing
UNESCO's archives and its digitisation programme. We
are proud to have supported this digitisation programme
between 2017 and 2020, because better preserving and
making accessible the contents of UNESCO's archives is
crucial for UNESCO to fulfil its mission as enshrined in
its Constitution.

As we all know, the UNESCO Constitution proclaims the importance of building the defence of peace in the minds of men and women. In fact, this spirit goes back to the time of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) , established 100 years ago.

In the exhibition where we will visit shortly, we can see with our own eyes, documents related to IIIC. The IIIC documents, now accessible thanks to the digitisation project we supported, bear witness to the fact that so many people around the world made dedicated efforts, in the aftermath of the First World War, to promote peace through intellectual cooperation.

Personally, looking at the documents, I was touched to find the name of a Japanese national, Dr NITOBE Inazo, Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations, who supported the convening of International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation and the creation of IIIC.

The same efforts must have been made 20 years later to establish UNESCO after the end of the Second World War.

A century after the foundation of the IIIC, and nearly 80 years after the establishment of UNESCO, the world is still tackling with the devastation and suffering caused by war and conflict. The peace mission that UNESCO inherited from the IIIC remains unfulfilled.

In this situation, making the past experiences of IIIC and UNESCO widely available is highly important.

A British diplomat and historian E. H. Carr, the author of “The Twenty Years’ Crisis 1919-1939” and “What is History?”, wrote:

“History is an unending dialogue between the present and the past.”

UNESCO's archives are not a static database but should be a platform for such dialogue, a window through which we can dialogue with our past and gain insight for action into our future.

To that end, more resources are needed.

We hope that this exhibition will raise our own awareness of the importance of the archives, so that more Member States or other stakeholders will join in supporting this collective endeavour to make the UNESCO archives more accessible to the wider public.

Without much further ado, I would like to invite all of us to visit and see the exhibition, and let the documents speak themselves to you.

Thank you. Enjoy your dialogue with the documents.

(End)