

221st Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO
National Statement by H.E. Mr. KANO Takehiro (Japan)



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Madame Chair of the Executive Board,
Madame President of the General Conference,
Madame Director General,
Excellencies and Colleagues,

80 years have passed since the establishment of the Constitution of UNESCO, which emphasizes the importance of constructing the defences of peace in the minds of men and women. Given the current international situations, with ongoing conflicts and growing uncertainties, we are still far from achieving that goal, unfortunately.

In the coming months, we will be organizing the election of a new Director General, who should bear the great responsibility of leading the Organization for the

next 4 years. But the responsibility does not rest on the new DG alone. It is our shared responsibility as member states. And I must emphasize that, in addressing the various challenges ahead, all Governing Bodies, the General Conference, the Executive Board, and the Secretariat led by the DG must work together, with the full support of all member states.

For Japan, this year marks the 75th anniversary of the application for membership to UNESCO. Over the last 75 years, Japan has consistently supported the Organization's mission. On coming Sunday, Japan will be inaugurating Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, with participation of many countries from around the world, under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives". Our commitment to supporting robust multilateralism into the future is steadfast. At this critical juncture, Japan is ready to play a responsible role within UNESCO, ensuring that the Organization continue to fulfill its missions effectively and efficiently.

Madame Chair,

Given the growing demand for UNESCO's missions as well as the geopolitical situations outside the Organization, the discussion on 43C/5 at this session of the Board will not be easy. Taking into account the financial uncertainties facing the Organization, Japan prefers ZNG scenario¹ for now, considering that it would be the most practical option to ensure the continuity and resilience of UNESCO. We are ready to be engaged in discussion in honest and constructive manner towards consensus.

Japan appreciates UNESCO's continued readiness to engage peace-building efforts within its mandate in conflict settings. Our support to UNESCO's operations in education, culture and journalism remains unwavering, whether in Ukraine, Gaza, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Considering Lebanon, Japan has decided to contribute 100,000 USD to support UNESCO's program in providing mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to school-aged children and youth.

Regarding Syria, Japan has been closely monitoring recent political development in the country and stands ready to engage in discussion to enable UNESCO to fulfill its role accordingly.

Madame Chair,

Africa and SIDS remain priority regions for Japan within UNESCO.

In addition to ongoing capacity building support to Africa in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage to enhance the representativity of the World Heritage List,

Japan is pleased to share its experience by supporting an African led initiative this year, namely the International Conference on Heritage Authenticity in Africa to be held in May in Nairobi, Kenya.

The protection of documentary heritage in Africa is another crucial area that deserves attention, as it is directly linked with people's history and identity. Japan is pleased to support UNESCO's project to safeguard ancient manuscripts in the Sahel region, including the Timbuktu manuscripts which were rescued from destruction by terrorists.

Japan will host the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) in August. Japan welcomes UNESCO's aspiration to seize this opportunity to collaborate more closely with other partners, such as the United Nations University, in areas such as Artificial Intelligence.

For SIDS, Japan has supported them through UNESCO in various fields such as education for sustainable development (ESD) and disaster risk reduction and will continue to do so.

Building on the steady progress of ESD projects in formulating educational policy and curricula in a Caribbean and African SIDS, we are now exploring the next step which is to support teacher development worldwide.

In Disaster Risk Reduction, we support the initiative of having UNESCO and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee work together to establish early warning systems in Pacific and Caribbean SIDS. In this connection, we have organized today in collaboration with Czech Republic and the Secretariat, a side event on Building Resilience and Advancing Early Warning Systems.

Madame la présidente,

Pour finir, permettez-moi d'aborder quelques autres sujets, sur lesquels l'UNESCO joue un rôle déterminant et contribue aux discussions dans d'autres forums tels que le G7 et le G20.

En ce qui concerne l'éducation, nous sommes heureux de constater que la nouvelle plateforme des écoles associées de l'UNESCO (réSEAU ou ASPNet) est désormais opérationnelle, offrant la prochaine génération la possibilité de participer à des échanges internationaux.

En ce qui concerne la culture, nous réaffirmons notre soutien à la conférence MONDIACULT qui se tiendra en septembre, et qui sera un événement de référence pour faire de la culture un pilier important dans le cadre de l'après 2030 ODD.

Nous continuerons à soutenir le processus d'élaboration de la Recommandation mondiale sur l'éthique des neurotechnologies, et nous nous réjouissons des efforts intersectoriels sur l'I.A. et sur la transformation numérique pour garantir un accès équitable à une information fiable et exacte.

Le Japon s'associe au discours qui sera fait par le Kazakhstan au nom du groupe ASPAC.

Nous vous remercions de votre attention.

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