

43rd UNESCO General Conference
General Policy Debate by Mr. Hiroshi MASUKO
Vice Minister of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology
(2025/10/31 @Samarkand)



Thank you, Mr. President,
Madam Director-General,
Distinguished Delegations of the Member States,

First, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Uzbekistan for its generous hospitality in hosting General Conference.

Today, the international community has reached an alarming juncture, confronted with Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestinian situation, and frequent natural disasters around the world.

This 43rd General Conference session will be of great significance for its election and appointment of a new UNESCO Director-General. At its 80th anniversary, UNESCO is experiencing notable changes. Japan expects UNESCO to advance its de-politicization and to play a leading role in addressing global challenges across its fields and Japan remains firmly committed to contributing to UNESCO.

Mr. President,

ESD is the key for achieving not only SDG4, but also all the 17 targets of the SDGs. Japan has been contributing to the promotion of ESD through its Funds-in-Trust since 2005, and we will further strengthen our efforts to promote ESD and expand its practice around the world.

Support for regions facing severe humanitarian conditions remains essential. Japan has been providing psychosocial support for children and students in Ukraine and Gaza and is committed to strengthening support for school staff in these regions.

Japan will actively participate in the revisions of “ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers” and the “UNESCO Recommendation concerning the

Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel”.

Mr. President,

The role of UNESCO is crucial in the field of science and technology. As Japan has experienced various natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and floods, advancing disaster risk reduction remains one of our highest priorities. We continue to support UNESCO’s efforts to build disaster-resilient societies, while further strengthening assistance to SIDS.

UNESCO plays an important role in the fields of water science and ocean science. Japan highly commends the activities of the IHP, which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. We also greatly appreciate the work carried out with the IOC under the UN Decade of Ocean Science. Japan has contributed to the IOC through its Funds-in-Trust and the active commitment by experts. Together with the re-elected IOC Chair, Mr. Michida Yutaka, Japan continues to advance ocean science, valuing the spirit of “One Planet, One Ocean, One Team.”

Setting norms for emerging and frontier technologies remains an important challenge. Building on the “Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence”, Japan continues to support capacity-building initiatives for Africa and SIDS. We also support the values and principles of the draft “Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology”, which will be submitted at this General Conference.

Mr. President,

26 World Heritage sites and 23 Intangible Cultural Heritage elements in Japan attract many visitors from the world, providing opportunities for them to know Japan. This contributes to peace through cultural exchange.

At the recent MONDIACULT 2025, discussions highlighted the future visions of cultural policy shared by countries around the world. Japan continues to work together with you all to ensure that culture contributes to the realization of a sustainable society.

Japan also supports the protection and preservation of heritage sites such as the Angkor monuments in Cambodia and the Bamiyan site in Afghanistan. We will continue our efforts to safeguard and preserve heritage that is under threat or at risk.

Mr. President,

Next year marks the 75th anniversary of Japan's accession to UNESCO. We renew our determination to strengthen our cooperation with UNESCO and further promote UNESCO activities in our country to construct the defenses of peace, here in Samarkand - the "Crossroads of Cultures". As the world's first private UNESCO association was founded in Japan, we will further enhance collaboration between the public and private sectors, including efforts to encourage and

expand private contributions.

We would like to express our sincerest appreciation to Madam Director-General Ms. Azoulay for her efforts over the past eight years. We also sincerely hope that, under the new Director-General, reforms of UNESCO will further accelerate.

Thank you for your kind attention.

(END)