

20th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee
For the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Speech by H.E. Mr KANO Takehiro (Japan)

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Committee, Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

As this is my first time taking the floor at this meeting, allow me to begin by congratulating to you, Mr chair, on assuming your important position, and by expressing my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of India for its warm hospitality. My appreciation also goes to the UNESCO Secretariat and the Evaluation Body for their professionalism and dedication.

Japan has long attached great importance to the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Domestically, Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties as early as 1950, and under this Law, has engaged in the safeguarding of ICH even before the creation of the Convention. As a pioneer in this field, the Law also emphasized sharing our extensive expertise with international partners. Japan remains committed to contributing to safeguarding and transmission of the intangible cultural heritage.

In that regard, we have been supporting various initiatives across the globe, such as assisting Caribbean SIDS in safeguarding heritage

against disaster risk and strengthening capacity-building to facilitate inscriptions for African countries.

We have also played a leading role in promoting the effective implementation of the Convention, including the creation of mechanisms in 2022 to stabilize the number of inscriptions. We are pleased to note that all 3 of our proposed extensions submitted this session are expected to be inscribed, enriching the Representative List, in line with this mechanism.

With regard to this particular file, on behalf of the Government of Japan and all concerned local communities in Japan, I am honoured to express my sincerest gratitude for the inscription, on an extended basis as a national extension of “Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan” on the Representative List.

The skills of “Nakatsugi-omote” inscribed today, a type of tatami surface, together with the “Production of tatami mat”, which was already inscribed on the Representative List in 2020, constitute a craft that has formed the foundation of Japan’s wooden architectural culture since ancient times.

In Japan, our traditional wooden structures inscribed on the World Heritage List can only be transmitted to future generations through the preservation of the skills of these traditional artisans. Under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, Japan has safeguarded its

tangible and intangible cultural heritage in an integrated manner.

I am confident that this inscription will be an opportunity to further encourage the preservation and transmission of this element down to future generations, while fostering greater public interest in Intangible Cultural Heritage in Japan.

Thank you very much.