

**Speech by His Excellency Mr KANO Takehiro  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO  
(Reception, Thursday 18 December 2025)**

Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,  
Good evening.

I am honoured to host this reception to reaffirm, together with all of you, the importance of safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage and World Heritage.

Last week, we successfully concluded the 20th session of the ICH Committee in Delhi. I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my gratitude to India for its warm hospitality, to Ambassador Sharma for his able chairmanship, to all Committee members for their valuable support and to the UNESCO Secretariat for its professionalism and dedication.

For Japan, we are very pleased that all three of our nominations have been inscribed on the

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, on the basis of extension, namely, “Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan,” “Washi, craftsmanship of traditional Japanese hand-made paper,” and “Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan.”

I won't go into details of those files, but allow me to show a brief explanatory video about them again, for those who may have missed it in Delhi.

[Video screening]

Thank you for your attention.

These inscriptions, like that of traditional sake-making inscribed in Asuncion, Paraguay, last year, have reminded us of the value of ICH and the vital importance of preserving and transmitting it to future generations.

With this renewed commitment to the 2003 Convention, Japan is now a candidate for election to the ICH Committee for the term 2026-2030. A

leaflet outlining our candidature is available for you today.

As you may know, Japan has supported the 2003 Convention right from its inception. We have actively contributed to the safeguarding and promotion of ICH worldwide through a range of concrete measures.

Just today, I had the pleasure of signing with ADG Ottone the document extending by 8 years the mandate of the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region, or IRCI, our category 2 centre.

Through the Japanese Funds-in-Trust, we have supported more than 100 projects worldwide, notably focusing on capacity building in SIDS and Africa.

Moreover, Japan was actively engaged in the 2022 reform process of the listing mechanism of ICH, in order to ensure that the implementation of 2003 Convention remains fair and sustainable.

If elected as a member of the committee next year, I can assure you that Japan will further contribute to the effective implementation of 2003 Convention,

leveraging its extensive experience and human resources to support international efforts for safeguarding ICH threatened by social transformation, demographic change, natural disasters, and conflicts.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

With regard to World Heritage, I would like to thank you all once again for the support extended to Japan during our tenure as a member of World Heritage Committee, which ended this year. As a dedicated State Party to the 1972 Convention, Japan will continue to support the Convention in various fields, including the follow-up of the Nairobi Conference on Authenticity and its Outcome Document.

I would also like to mention Japan's nomination that will be examined at the forthcoming 48<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee, namely Ancient Capitals of Asuka and Fujiwara.

Asuka and Fujiwara were Japan's ancient capitals, flourishing between the late 6<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> century. The nominated property comprises 19 component

part, including palace sites, Buddhist temples, and mounded tombs.

These two capitals mark the origin of Japan's ancient capital tradition and had a profound influence on later capitals such as Nara and Kyoto. They also bear outstanding testimony to the emergence and establishment of a centralized state system in Japan.

We will share a short introductory video on this nomination this evening, while you enjoy a selection of Japan's intangible cultural heritage: a traditional cuisine and sake.

I wish you all a most pleasant evening together as we approach the end of this eventful year of 2025.

Thank you.