

225th Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO
National Statement by H.E. Mr. KANO Takehiro (Japan)



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Madam Vice Chair of the Executive Board,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Mr Director General,
Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

Japan associates itself with the ASPAC statement delivered by Thailand.

Let me begin by congratulating UNESCO on the successful visit of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to UNESCO Headquarters last month. In times of global instability, the presence and words of His Holiness greatly encouraged UNESCO's mission and multilateralism, while reminding us all of our collective responsibility. I thank the Director-General for his tireless efforts to make this visit possible.

The Director-General's visit to Japan in May on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of its accession to UNESCO was an important milestone for us to renew our commitment to the Organization.

Madam Vice Chair,

From next year, UNESCO's assessed contributions to the Regular Budget will be reduced by 22 percent. Given this stark financial reality and with challenges growing exponentially, how can we ensure that UNESCO's activities remain sustainable? That is the question we must tackle.

Reform is not optional, it is an absolute necessity. The Director-General rightly put it on the agenda from the outset, and the Board endorsed the UNESCO 80 Roadmap. Now we must implement it, in conformity with the 44/C5 budget and beyond.

We will have to make tough decisions on questions such as: How should we allocate limited resources between programs and administration? What should be the breakdown between the different sectors? Should we prioritize UNESCO's standard setting functions over its operations on the ground, or vice versa? Can we afford to take on new agendas? What configuration of field offices would be viable in both human and financial terms? Which part of the Headquarters complex should be given priority for renovation?

The Secretariat has presented documents that contain innovative elements, such as proposals for new appropriation lines for three intersectoral areas, namely artificial intelligence, climate change including disaster risk reduction, and crisis response. The report of the Pillar II Working Group, as well as the reports on the field network and the Headquarters Complex, also provide a good basis for discussion.

We strongly hope that the Director-General, after this session, will submit proposals with the boldest possible measures as part of the 44C/5, for examination at the next session. The fate of the reform will depend on how bold we are prepared to be in setting those priorities. We must not lose momentum, and Japan will engage in substantive discussions to make the reform a success.

This endeavour is a shared responsibility between the Secretariat and Member States. Implementing the recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on the UNESCO Governing Bodies is an important first step towards their more efficient operations.

Madame la Vice-Présidente,

Permettez-moi de souligner plusieurs domaines clés.

Le Japon attache une grande importance à la réponse proactive de l'UNESCO face aux crises et soutient pleinement l'Organisation dans ses efforts. En Ukraine, à Gaza ou ailleurs, nous ne ménagerons aucun effort pour permettre à l'UNESCO de répondre rapidement et efficacement aux crises dans le monde entier.

Le Japon soutient depuis longtemps l'UNESCO dans sa démarche visant à promouvoir l'éducation au développement durable. Nous sommes heureux de soutenir sa Conférence mondiale sur l'EDD qui se tiendra à Nairobi en janvier prochain. Ce sera la première conférence de ce type en Afrique qui contribuera de manière significative à la réflexion sur l'agenda pour l'après-2030.

Le Sommet des océans des États insulaires qui s'est tenu en juin dernier à Tokyo a créé une plateforme de coopération sur la planification et la gestion durables des océans, avec la COI-UNESCO au cœur du dispositif. La conférence a aussi démontré la valeur de ce modèle de coopération entre l'UNESCO et ses nouveaux partenaires, un modèle qui mérite d'être exploré plus avant.

Les limites des capacités opérationnelles de l'UNESCO pour assurer ses fonctions statutaires dans le domaine de la culture ne doivent pas être négligées, qu'il s'agisse du patrimoine matériel ou immatériel. En tant que membre du Comité du PCI depuis cette année, nous sommes prêts à nous engager dans la recherche de solutions.

La sécurité des journalistes et la liberté d'expression, qui relèvent des missions de la communication et l'information de l'UNESCO, ont besoin de plus de soutien. En tant que Président du PIDC, je continuerai de mettre l'accent sur ces questions.

Je vous remercie.