

Statement of Her Excellency Ms Kuni Sato
Representative of Japan to the Executive Board
on the occasion of the 196th session of the Executive Board
Monday 13 April 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chair,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honor for me to attend the first Executive Board Session of the year that marks UNESCO's 70th Anniversary, in my capacity as Japan's new Representative. This Organization is at a critical juncture facing important issues and challenges.

Let me begin with the next biennium budget which will be a main focus of this Board. As one of the largest financial contributors, Japan emphasizes once again the need for a most efficient and effective budget, which will enable UNESCO to fulfill its mandate, including the post-2015 development agenda. We need to mobilize all financial resources, including the Emergency Fund and current cost savings, to strengthen programs and reforms in the next biennium.

Now, I would like to touch upon UNESCO's global priorities.

First, Japan attaches great importance to the empowerment of women. Under Prime Minister Abe's initiative to create "a society where women shine" Japan is engaged in various activities both nationally and globally. It will continue its strong support to UNESCO's gender priority, including the new initiative for the education of adolescent girls and young women taken jointly with UNWomen and other agencies.

Second, regarding the threat of terrorism and extremism, Japan fully supports UNESCO's actions in the protection of cultural heritage and the safety

of journalists. We are pleased to be co-sponsor of the two draft resolutions proposed by our distinguished colleagues. I would also like to highlight our recent extra-budgetary contributions of 5 million dollars to UNESCO's projects in Iraq and the Middle East in the areas of education, culture and disaster risk management.

Third, Japan will continue to support the Global Priority Africa. We have been extending extra-budgetary support to UNESCO's projects in areas of the latter's comparative advantage, such as gender-sensitive education, teacher training, youth development and cultural conservation in Africa.

Mr. Chair,

I now turn to the programmes.

Education is a core of the Organization's mandate, and Japan will continue to lead discussions in this field. I first would like to express my sincere appreciation to more than 1,000 participants of the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Aichi-Nagoya. Japan encourages UNESCO to build upon the outcome of the ESD Conference for the World Education Forum to be held in Republic of Korea next month, and to integrate ESD in the post 2015 development agenda. We further welcome UNESCO's efforts to ensure a single and comprehensive education agenda.

In the area of science, UNESCO and Member States need to enhance cooperation to operationalize "Sustainability Science", a cross-cutting and integrating approach of science toward sustainable development. In disaster risk management, Japan has provided approximately 4 million dollars for UNESCO's project in Pakistan to improve its flood warning system and management capacity.

In the field of culture, Japan strongly supports UNESCO's continued

engagement in the 1972 and 2003 Conventions, including through extra-budgetary contributions for heritage conservation and capacity-building. Japan welcomes UNESCO's increased focus on the protection of cultural property in conflict-affected areas through the 1954 and 1970 conventions. Regarding the World Heritage Convention, we welcome the efforts made by Germany as Chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group of the World Heritage Committee for its proposal to enhance transparency and give due respect to the expertise of the advisory bodies.

UNESCO has unwavering support from the Japanese people including my Government, local authorities, universities, schools, associations and researchers. Japan will continue its active contribution and partnership with UNESCO, so that UNESCO, under Madame Bokova's leadership, can continue to play important roles in the international community.

Thank you for your attention.