

**National Statement of the Republic of Korea
at the 39th General conference of UNESCO (November 6, 2017)
To be delivered by Ambassador H.E.Byong Hyun LEE**

Madam President of the General Conference,
Mr Chair of the Executive Board,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Let me firstly convey my heartfelt thanks to Mme Irina Bokova, for her dedication and accomplishments over the last eight years of her service for UNESCO. I wish her continued success in her future endeavors.

(Intro) UNESCO is at a critical juncture in its history. Given the fact that UNESCO is facing institutional and financial difficulties, it is a time of a crisis. However, on the other side of the coin, this could be an opportunity to make UNESCO a stronger organization. As Sir Winston Churchill said, ‘A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.’

From the perspective of an optimist, I am convinced that our decisions on the 39 C/5 and our new Director General will provide us with new momentum to take a leap forward. This should be matched by corresponding efforts of the Member States. Paying our assessed contributions **in full and on time** is an obligation incumbent on Member States. For UNESCO, to remain as an attractive partner to the world, it should make every endeavor to enhance its transparency, effectiveness and accountability.

(Korea's contribution) The Republic of Korea has always been a steadfast partner and will continue our support for UNESCO. Our voluntary contribution to UNESCO has increased by five times during the last 10 years. In 2016, US\$ 12 million was granted as voluntary contribution. Together with financial contribution, we have also provided the secondment of experts to UNESCO Headquarter and Field Offices.

Madam President,

(ED and SHS) In the area of education, we will continue our support for the UNESCO's core programmes through Better Life for Girls and Better Education for Africa's Rise called, "BEAR" which are now extended to 10 African countries. We also fully endorse and recognize the important role of SDG 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship in preventing violent extremism through peace education. With rising humanitarian crisis and increasing violent extremism today, the role of education to promote peace, human rights and intercultural dialogue is clearly more relevant than ever.

In this context, the World Humanities Forum was jointly initiated by the Republic of Korea and UNESCO in 2011 and ever since the Forum took place biennially. On the basis of their success, the 5th World Humanities Forum will be held in Busan next year, under the theme, 'The Human Image in a Changing World'.

(Science) Science is a key to building a foundation for sustainable development. In this regard, the established scientific programmes such as IHP, MAB, and Geoparks should be fully optimized as a platform for realizing the SDGs. The Republic of Korea also supports UNESCO's work in ocean including its proposal for an International Decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development. We are pleased

to join its endeavors through a newly launched project to address climate change by supporting water security for developing countries.

Madam President,

(MoW) The Republic of Korea has contributed to the Memory of the World Programme in many ways, including the awarding of the Jikji Prize and the establishment of the International Center for Documentary Heritage. We will continue to render our support and play a leading role in enhancing global awareness of the significance of the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage.

(Culture) The importance of heritage has been underlined from generation to generation. Whether it is tangible, intangible or documentary heritage, we have a noble responsibility to preserve our heritages and pass them on to future generations. In this respect, the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2347 is a meaningful decision for the protection and security of our common heritage against threats of destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage. As a co-sponsor to this historical Resolution, the Republic of Korea pledges its support to strengthen the strategy of UNESCO for the protection of culture and the promotion of cultural pluralism.

Lastly, we would like to inform you that the forthcoming 12th session of the Intangible Heritage Committee will be held from 4 to 9 December this year in Jeju Island. Jeju Island is well known as a UNESCO Multi-internationally Designated Site. I hope every State Party will have a chance to discover why it is so designated. We look forward to your participation and support to make this event a great success. Thank you.