Statement by H.E. Mr. PAK Yong Su
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to UNESCO

At the 40th Session of General Conference of UNESCO
16 November 2019
Mr. President,

Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, I would first like to congratulate Your Excellency Ahmed Altay Cengizer on your election to the Presidency of the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO and look forward to a fruitful outcome of the session under your able leadership.

I would also like to thank Your Excellency Director General Ms. Audrey Azoulay and the secretariat for their sincere efforts for the successful holding of the session.

Mr. President,

Building peace in the minds of women and men by promoting international collaboration among nations through education, science, culture, communication and information with an aim of contributing to global peace and security represents the noble mission of the UNESCO as enshrined in its Constitution over 70 years ago.

We are approaching the second decade of 21st century, however all sorts of attempts such as the infringement of sovereignty, interference in internal affairs of other nations and regime change still continue to occur ceaselessly in many parts of the world and precious human heritages are being relentlessly destroyed as a result of the civil wars and armed conflicts.

This reality reminds us of the letters and spirits of the UNESCO Constitution that peace can remain genuine and lasting one only when it is based on intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

In realizing the common desire of the mankind to put an end to a century-old history of war, inequality, hunger and poverty and to write a new history of justice, peace, prosperity and development, UNESCO as an Organization in the field of intellectual and civilized development assumes an ever-more important role to play.

Mr. President,
Today, expediting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 presents itself as a main task of the international community and UNESCO in their endeavor for a peaceful and prosperous new world.

Over the last biennium, proactive efforts have been made by UNESCO for achieving SDGs within its competence such as realization of inclusive, equitable and quality education.

UNESCO has been excellently leading the world education development by organizing successive international, regional, national-level meetings such as the Global Education Meeting which remarkably raised the keen attention of member states on the importance of education as the foundation of peace and development, followed by the promotion of new international toolkits and instruments including Global Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualification.

The knowledge and information system for the protection of global ecosystem, water resources and clean ocean management has been further reinforced and the study on the ethics on artificial intelligence conducted successfully contributing to the sound development of science and moreover the treasure trove of human civilization has been enriched following the newly listing of many tangible and intangible heritages as world heritages.

The DPRK Delegation takes this opportunity to appreciate UNESCO Secretariat’s work for having smoothly led the strategic transformation and the implementation of its programs during the last 2 years overcoming the budgetary restrictions and lack of human resources. In particular, the Delegation wishes to appreciatively refer to the energetic effort of Director General Ms. Audrey Azoulay for the improvement of the Organization’ activities.

Mr. President,

The Government of the DPRK has been joining the UNESCO’s efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as motivated by its acknowledgment that the targets indicated in the Goals conform to its policies.
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Today, under the wise leadership of Chairman **Kim Jong Un** of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK, the Korean people are waging the vigorous struggle to open a new turn in the socialist construction by holding up the banner of self-supporting and self-reliance as the treasure sword for the prosperity.

The DPRK Government, while enforcing the universal 12-year compulsory and free education system since 2014, has now been carrying out the work of building the country into the one of education and a talent power regarding the education as the core of national affairs.

The Government set forth the strategic banner “Let us make a leap forward by dint of science and guarantee the future by dint of education!” and launched a nation-wide and all-people campaign to raise the country’s education to the most developed level in the shortest period by increasing its investment and support to the education sector and by taking qualitative improvement measures such as capacity building of teachers and build-up of education on IT based.

In accordance with the policy of the DPRK Government on building a sci-tech power, endeavors are widely made to integrate the science and technology with the production and the valuable research findings presented are accelerating the growth of hi-tech industries and knowledge-based economy contributing to the revitalization of the national economy.

The struggle of the DPRK for the construction of a powerful socialist civilized and sci-tech nation is being challenged by the persistent and vicious sanctions and pressure of the forces hostile to the DPRK.

However, we will pave our way forward and pursue our development, prosperity and civilization with our own efforts, technology and resources holding up the banner of the great spirit of self-reliance.

Mr. President,

The important task before the UNESCO in overcoming the global challenges in the fields of education, science, culture, communication and information and
achieving the SDGs successfully is to give top priority to the capacity building of the developing countries like African countries for sustainable development.

The DPRK Delegation considers that all capacity building programs and means within UNESCO’s competence including the training in the UNESCO Category 1 and 2 Centers and scholarship programs should be scaled-up efficiently to contribute to practical improvement of knowledge capacity of the developing countries.

Improving and strengthening UNESCO’s activities in accordance with the changing environments and the developing trends is the unanimous demand of all member states and an important issue relating to the future prospect of UNESCO as well.

We consider that the strategic transformation which has now been translated into action should be pursued fairly and democratically on the principle of respect for sovereignty, equality, unity and mutual benefits, while remaining faithful to the ideals and purposes of the Organization as provided for in its Constitution and maintaining its identity and intrinsic characters as an intellectual Organization.

Today, in the light of the world’s recognized basic principles of the international relations being openly ignored and sanctions, pressure and even attempts of regime changes being bluntly committed against countries selectively by high-handedness and arbitrariness of a specific country, it is imperative for UNESCO to play its due role in realizing genuine global justice.

The UNESCO should adhere to the principle of impartiality and reject politicization and discrimination in its activities of cooperation in line with its purposes and missions for humankind’s common development of civilization.

Mr. President,

Korean nation itself is the master of the peace, prosperity and reunification on the Korean peninsula and the issues such as inscribing the Demilitarized Zone on the list of the World Heritage site are of a matter that North and South must first agree in the spirit of the North-South Declarations.
As in the past, the Government of the DPRK will continue to develop international cooperation and solidarity based on its foreign policy ideas of independence, peace and friendship and, as a responsible member state of UNESCO, actively join the Organization and other member states in their efforts for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.