

Joint Statement of ASPAC Group  
to be delivered  
at the 205<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board of UNESCO  
(3 minutes, approx. 360 words)

Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam President of the General Conference,  
Madam Director-General,  
Dear colleagues,

On this 205<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board, I am honoured to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of the Member States of the Asia-Pacific Group, or ASPAC.

In recent years, multilateralism is being tested. The international community is coping with existing challenges while facing new and emerging ones. UNESCO can and should fulfill its mandate as a key player in the United Nations development system by harnessing its programmatic, financial and administrative capacity.

In this regard, the current session is of vital importance for us as we will discuss various strategic issues for the future of UNESCO.

On the budget, ASPAC underscores the importance of having a balanced and efficient Draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium (40C/5) under the integrated budget framework.

We also have high expectations with the Strategic Transformation so that the Organization can strengthen its efficiency, transparency and accountability while respecting its inter-governmental status. We request the Secretariat to ensure further engagement of Member States in the upcoming process.

With regard to programmes, as a group made up of 44 countries with significant diversity, we emphasize the indispensable role that education and culture can play to construct peace and achieve sustainable development. We therefore welcome the recent inter-sectoral initiatives by the Secretariat such as prevention of violent extremism and Revive the spirit of Mosul. We hope to see more examples such as these in our region.

Furthermore, UNESCO is also expected to play a greater role in disaster risk reduction. Having in mind the increased number of disasters which hit our region with most recently the major earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, we encourage the Secretariat to enhance its activities in this area.

Lastly, ASPAC attaches importance to the inclusiveness of the Organization. We encourage the Secretariat to further address UNESCO's Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Action Plan. We also encourage the Secretariat to give more attention to gender and geographical balance among UNESCO staff.

Mr. Chair,

With these priorities, ASPAC is ready to continue its constructive engagement in this important session with all Member States and the Secretariat.

Thank you very much for your attention.