

National Statement of Bangladesh
by H.E. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain
Permanent Delegate of Bangladesh to UNESCO
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Plenary Debate : Paris, 8 October 2018.

Mr. Chairperson,
President of the General Conference,
Madam Director General,
Distinguished Representatives and Delegates,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon.

I am honoured to represent my country at the 205th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board. Bangladesh align itself to the statement made by Japan on behalf of the ASPAC Group.

Climate Change

2. At the outset, I would like to convey our deepest condolences and sympathies for the huge loss of lives and physical destructions in the Earthquake and Tsunami in Indonesia, Hurricane Florence in the United States, Typhoon Mangkut in Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, and Southern China, Flooding in Japan and Mudslides and Dust Storms in India.

3. These massive natural disasters strongly manifest that climate change is happening and it's real and in terms of risk from natural disaster, we rank 5th. We are fully committed to implement the Paris Agreement. To address climate change impacts, Bangladesh is spending over 1% of our GDP.

4. Considering local geo-morphology and global climate change impacts, Bangladesh has very recently adopted ***Delta Plan 2100 to secure the future of water and mitigate the likely impact of climate change including natural disaster.*** Perhaps, we are the only country that has adopted such a long-term development plan spanning 82 years.

Mr. Chair,

Strategic Transformation

5. Bangladesh supports Director General's proposal on the UNESCO's **Strategic Transformation Process** and appreciates Secretariat's sincere efforts regarding the preparation of the documents. We, however, should be mindful of the **intergovernmental nature of the organization** and the imperative to constructively and effectively engage with the Member States.

6. With regard to the proposed "Thought Leaders" consisting of 12 independent and recognized personalities to advise the Director General on emerging trends and challenges, we propose to adopt "12+1" formula, whereby, an expert from the United Nations University, a global think tank and a knowledge partner of UNESCO, may join the 12 members team to the consultation process.

Structured Financing Dialogue

7. In the current difficult financial climate at UNESCO, holding the "Partner's Forum" last month, had been most timely and useful. We congratulate the Director General for this timely initiative. We believe the event did succeed in its objective.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education

8. I am happy to inform that since 2010 in Bangladesh students are receiving free textbooks from pre-primary to secondary levels in school. This year, 355 million free text books were distributed among 44 million students which continues from 2010. Vision impaired students receive braille books. Children from ethnic minorities are given books in their mother languages. In the last 9 years, we have increased literacy rate from 45 % to 72.9%.

9. Regarding TVET, Bangladesh has prepared 'National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework' and formed

12 sector-based Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) for networking between labour market and industrial establishments.

10. In this context, Bangladesh notes with appreciation the crucial role played by UNESCO in achieving Education 2030 agenda as the lead UN agency coordinating SDG 4.

Bangladesh as current E-9 Chair is—contributing to the Education 2030 Steering Committee as a collective voice of E-9-member states.

11. Our national policy for promotion of women's empowerment is well aligned with UNESCO priority in this area. We are doing so through enhancing education opportunities for women and facilitating their political and economic emancipation. At secondary level, girls and boys ratio is 53:47, which was 35:65 in 2009. Women constitute 80% of 4.5 million workers engaged in the largest export earning garments sector. I am happy to mention that Bangladesh has topped the South Asian countries in gender equality for the third consecutive year according to Global Gender Gap report 2017 of World Economic Forum. We ranked 47th this year out of 144, which was 72nd in 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

Cultural Heritage

12. A nation's identity is defined by the values, traditions, practices, rituals and traditional crafts- means cultural heritage. At this point, I would like to express our deepest sadness at the loss of huge collections of natural history artefacts in the fire at National Museum in Rio last month. We share the pain with our friends In Brazil.

13. Bangladesh has made several policy and implementation level initiatives to preserve the tangible and intangible heritages of the country. I am happy to note that a project worth 50 million US dollar is being implemented for the conservation of the Sundarbans.

Science and Technology

14. Scientific research and innovation play a major role in economic development of our country. We have made our foray into the world of space technology by launching our own satellite, "**Bangabandhu-I**", being the 57th country in the world to have done so. Establishment of Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park in Jessore is a milestone in our effort for promoting research and innovation that also helps to create a conducive environment for collaborations.

Distinguished Representatives and Delegates,

15. In conclusion, we believe tolerance, dialogue, diversity, inclusiveness are principles to be engrained through inclusive policies that truly leave no one behind.

This is the soft power of UNESCO, this is what Bangladesh lives by.

16. I wish the 205th Session of the Executive Board all success.

17. Thank you.