

(Japan)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam Director-General,  
Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin my statement by emphasizing the importance of the current session of the Board, where we will discuss issues of strategic importance for UNESCO, such as the Draft Program and Budget 40C/5, and the Strategic Transformation. As a responsible Member State, and as a major contributor, Japan is ready to render full support to achieve “stronger UNESCO”, and humbly announces its payment of this year’s assessed contribution.

Mr. Chair,

Japan welcomes the initiatives of madam DG to expand UNESCO’s frontiers.

“Revive the spirit of Mosul” is a good example, for which Japan is now examining its possible cooperation.

(Japan)

The rapid innovation of artificial intelligence could surely benefit our societies and economies, but it is also posing new challenges to us, such as privacy, security, and disparity of access to the benefit. UNESCO should lead international discussions on the ethics of AI, capitalizing on its rich expertise. Actually, Japan has recently launched a national multi-stakeholder council on “Social Principles of Human-centric Artificial Intelligence”. Based on our own expertise, Japan supported convening of the expert round table of UNESCO last month. Japan will further support UNESCO in collaboration with other Member States for promoting initiatives on this subject including capacity building of developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

Japan also supports strengthening UNESCO’s existing core programs.

On Education for sustainable Development (ESD), Japan proposed the decision to the last Board session, together with 46 co-sponsors, to establish a new, post-GAP framework beyond 2019. ESD is an indispensable vehicle for UNESCO to fulfill its noble mission as the lead agency of the SDG4. Foreseeing the follow-up process of the SDGs in United Nations, it is essential for us to propose a draft framework on ESD to the next Board session, and to adopt it at the next General Conference.

(Japan)

In preparing such framework, Japan stresses the importance of the following points. First, we need to ensure consistency with the concepts advocated by the ADG for Education, namely the “right to education”, “education in emergencies”, and “foresight education”. Second, we need to enhance multi-stakeholder partnership with the UN family and other key players including the private sector and NGOs. Third, UNESCO should formulate measurable targets and evidence-based policies, utilizing rich statistical data it possesses. Once the new ESD framework is established next year, Japan will seek to host an international conference on ESD in 2020 in partnership with other interested Member States.

On Intangible Cultural Heritage, Japan once again thanks all the state parties who kindly supported our reelection to the Intergovernmental Committee. Today, fifteen years after the adoption of the Convention, we recognize the necessity to review the Program so as to improve its transparency, fairness and rationality, recalling the original spirit of the Convention. Japan, as one of the founding members of the Convention, will actively contribute to this debate.

(Japan)

Given the increased number of natural disasters which devastated various countries, most recently the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, Japan is ready to support UNESCO for disaster risk reduction, utilizing its expertise. Japan will dispatch a high-level panelist to the discussion on “World Tsunami Awareness Day” on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Chair,

Last but not least, Japan stresses the importance of political reform of the Organization, that is an essential foundation to push all the above-mentioned initiatives forward.

In this regard, Japan values the proactive approach taken by Madam DG to mitigate the political tensions affecting UNESCO. Of course, much needs to be done further. Particularly, it is vital to steadily advance the comprehensive review of the “Memory of the World” Program so as to protect the Program from further political tensions. To do so, it is vital to adopt an effective action plan in this session, so that Member States can fully engage in examining all possible options to develop a “basic legal document” which stipulates substantial elements of the Program.

(Japan)

Finally, I once again stress Japan's readiness to render full support to achieve a "stronger UNESCO" together with all other Member States.

I thank you very much.