

**National Statement of Bangladesh by Mr. Md. Sohorab Hossain  
Senior Secretary, Secondary and Higher Education Division  
Ministry of Education  
Bangladesh Representative to UNESCO Executive Board**

**At the 207th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board  
Plenary Debate: Paris, 14 October 2019**

**Mr. Chairperson,  
Madam President of the General Conference,  
Madam Director General,  
Excellencies, dear Colleagues**

Good afternoon,

I am honoured to represent Bangladesh at the 207th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board. It is my privilege to reaffirm Bangladesh's strong commitment to UNESCO's vision and missions towards building peace.

2. Bangladesh aligns herself with the ASPAC statement to be delivered by Pakistan.

3. I would like to convey our deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of invaluable lives and physical destructions caused by natural disaster notably Hurricane Humberto in Bermuda, Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, Typhoon Mitag in China and South Korea, flooding in India, and most recently by Typhoon Hagibis in Japan. These natural disasters as painful as they are, illustrate the devastating impacts of climate change and remind us of the urgency to address the menace with full vigor and commitment.

**Mr. Chair,  
(Education)**

4. Bangladesh deeply appreciates the official launching of UNESCO's global initiative on the *Futures of Education*. With the advent of new technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data and machine learning, launching of UNESCO's global initiative on the *Futures of Education* is most timely and we commend UNESCO for the initiative. At the country level, Bangladesh has taken a number of initiatives to face those challenges. We have set up the National Data Center (Tier-3 Certified). Work on the establishment of *Bangabandhu High-tech City* and around 28 other high-tech parks across the country are progressing fast. We are about to undertake a pilot project titled 'Digital Primary Education' with the objective to bring about qualitative improvement in education. Following the successful completion of the project, we will set up five hundred and three (503) model primary replicating the experience of project.

5. Under the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) with the support of UNESCO is developing the SDG4 Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Bangladesh. Similarly, Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) is working on developing the SDG4 National Indicator Framework (NIF) for Bangladesh with the support of UIS. Once developed, these instruments will strengthen the capacities in reviewing and developing education policies and strategies, including the integration of SDG4 targets and enhance capacity in monitoring and reporting with a focus on data strengthening in light of SDG4.

6. The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) and UNESCO Dhaka have jointly organized the Launching Ceremony of Global Monitoring Report 2019 in Bangladesh in the presence of the Hon'ble Minister and Deputy Minister for Education. High officials from different ministries, representatives of different government and non-government organizations, development partners, civil society organizations and media were present in the ceremony.

The event provided a platform for the education community to be engaged in an extensive and constructive discussion on migration and displacement and the other relevant issues.

**Mr. Chairperson,  
(Culture)**

7. Bangladesh welcomes the holding of the Forum of the Ministers of Culture at the 40th session the General Conference. This event will provide the participating ministers and high-policy makers a unique opportunity to reflect on the role and impact of cultural policies in the face of contemporary challenges addressed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**(Science)**

8. We believe, UNESCO also crucial role in addressing ethical challenges of Artificial Intelligence and Genetics. We acknowledge UNESCO's multidisciplinary approach to AI, through its specific focus on education, sciences, culture, and communication and information, as well as its global ethical implications for peace, cultural diversity, gender equality, and sustainable development.

**(Communication and Information)**

9. Bangladesh would like to commend extraordinary efforts of co-Chairs of the Memory of World (MoW) Open-ended Working Group to reach a consensus on this important issue. We endorse the proposal to extend the term of the Open-ended Working Group. We hope and urge all members of the Working Group to work in the spirit of understanding and accommodation to facilitate consensus so that the inscription process can recommence.

**Excellencies, dear Colleagues  
(Strategic Transformation)**

10. Bangladesh support the Director General initiative on Strategic Transformation of UNESCO. Half way through the process, some appreciable progress has been attained under Pillar I and Pillar II of the Strategic Transformation. Bangladesh also takes note of the selection and formation of the High-Level reflection group in the framework of the strategic transformation. Although we do not find any eminent personality from South Asian region per se, yet we have full confidence on the Group to provide useful guidance and recommendations to strengthen UNESCO

meet the challenges in the mid and long term. We look forward to substantively engaging with the Group in the coming days.

**Mr. Chair,  
(UN Reform)**

11. We reiterate the need to focus UNESCO's programs and activities in UNESCO's core mandates as well as areas where we have added value within the UN System. We hope that UNESCO will capitalize on the potential benefits of United Nations reform to further strengthen its support to countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the global, regional and country level.

12. The challenges now faced by the Organisation are much more than any time. While on one hand, we see depletion of financial resources of the organization in real terms, on the other hand we are asking UNESCO to deliver more. It is our responsibility to provide UNESCO with the wherewithal to meet member states' demands. Precisely for these reasons, we support the Director General's requests for approving the budget of US \$ 534 million for the coming 2020-2021 biennium.

13. Finally, I would like to assure you, Mr. Chair, of my delegation's full support to you in your effort to achieve a successful outcome of this session.

14. I thank you all for your kind attention.

**End of Statement**