

National Statement of the Republic of Korea
Statement by H.E. Ambassador Dong Gi KIM

Plenary Debate of the 207th Session of the UNESCO Executive Board
Paris, 14 October 9, 2019

Mr. Chairperson,
Madam President of the General Conference,
Madam Director General,
Distinguished representatives and delegates,

I am honored to address this Executive Board as the Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Korea.

I wish to first express my sincere appreciation for the role of UNESCO in pursuing our shared goal of establishing permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The joint inscription of Ssirum, the traditional Korean wrestling as intangible cultural heritage last year was a symbolic step toward inter-Korean exchange and cooperation through UNESCO, in particular, thanks to Madam Director General's valuable support in facilitating the process.

At the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in September, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea proposed transforming the Demilitarized Zone bordering the two Koreas into an international peace zone.

Furthermore, President Moon expressed the wish to work together with the DPRK to inscribe the DMZ as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, once peace is established.

The Republic of Korea will cooperate closely with UNESCO to materialize this peace project which, we believe, corresponds to the founding ideas of UNESCO.

Mr. Chairperson,

Challenges facing today's world are multifaceted and complex. Multilateralism is an indispensable means for the world to mobilize efforts to cope with the challenges.

We need to come together to make international organizations effective. UNESCO is reforming itself so as to become more effective and agile, better equipped to meet its priorities and goals. We believe the Organization needs to be provided with enough resources in order to ensure the effective implementation of all these transformative measures.

In this context, my country supports the highest level of the budget ceiling for the next C/5 among the possible scenarios.

We also support timely payment of assessed contribution and are a co-sponsor of the Swedish amendment for improved measures in this regard.

On education, the launch of the International Commission on the Futures of Education held during the last session of the UN General Assembly reaffirmed UNESCO's leadership in the discourse on education.

The ROK will continue to actively take part in this global initiative, with special emphasis on the Global Citizenship Education.

We also wish to encourage UNESCO's role in setting ethical norms on artificial intelligence as well as Open Science.

We believe UNESCO could be an inclusive forum of pooling wisdom of the international community on these subjects.

On culture, the ROK has been taking several initiatives on the interpretation of world heritage, aiming at raising awareness of the need to recognize multiple perspectives on heritage. In this regard, we have proposed the establishment of the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites in Sejong.

The ROK is also providing support for the Expert Meeting on sites associated with memories of recent conflicts which will take place in Paris in December this year.

On natural sciences, Korea has proposed the establishment of the Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designed Areas (GCIDA), which is expected to contribute to creating synergy among different sectors of UNESCO by harmonizing their capacities and resources.

Regarding the Memory of the World programme, allow me to quote a part of the unanimously adopted recommendation by the General Conference in November 2015: “the preservation of, accessibility to documentary heritage underpins fundamental freedoms of opinion, expression and information as human rights.”

UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize created by the ROK has been promoting these values since 2004.

The ROK will continue to actively engage in the ongoing comprehensive review, and hope that the Member States will reach a consensus to complete the review next year in a direction that strikes a reasonable balance between its expert driven character and state intervention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the accession of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO. We have never forgotten the invaluable assistance of UNESCO in helping Korea to achieve its rapid economic development through universal primary education.

Thus I would like to conclude by reaffirming our unwavering support for the UNESCO’s mandate. We are confident that UNESCO is the right place where we can construct the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women as stated in its Constitution.

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président.

(in French)

Monsieur le président,

L'année prochaine sera marquée par le 70e anniversaire de la République de Corée pour l'UNESCO.

Nous n'avons jamais oublié l'aide inestimable de l'UNESCO pour la Corée qui a pu réaliser une croissance économique rapide grâce à l'enseignement primaire universel.

Je saisis cette occasion pour réaffirmer notre soutien sans faille au mandat de l'UNESCO .

Nous sommes convaincus que l'UNESCO est le bon endroit où nous pouvons construire les défenses de la paix dans l'esprit des hommes et des femmes, comme indiqué dans sa Constitution.

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président.