

Policy Statement of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
by Ambassador & Permanent Delegate Mr. Kyaw ZEYA
Plenary Debate of the 209th session of the UNESCO Executive Board
Paris, 2-3 July 2020

Mr. Chairman,
President of the General Conference,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to commend the UNESCO Director-General for all initiatives in response to unprecedented circumstances resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic including organizing virtual online meeting of Culture Ministers, virtual dialogue on COVID-19 with all sectors, and the Sixth Special session of the Executive Board.

The Covid-19 pandemic has led us to contemplate over the working methods of the Executive Board under confinement. We highly appreciate the hard work of the working group in this respect.

COVID -19 response and Economic Plan

On the national front, Myanmar has taken a whole-of-the-nation approach, mobilizing the strength of the people, private sectors and volunteers, educating the public and seeking public participation in the fight against the pandemic.

Myanmar's COVID-19 response adheres to the principle of "leaving no one behind" which covers all vulnerable communities, including people living in ethnic areas, disabled persons and IDPs.

The Ministry of Education has launched in May 2020 "Myanmar COVID-19 National Response & Recovery Plan for the Education Sector".

The Ministry of Education is planning to reopen high schools in Myanmar on 21st July 2020. The reopening of the middle- and the primary-level schools will follow based on this experience. The Ministry has also planned to provide increased amount of stipends and cash transfer, and masks, face shields and PPEs to highly affected townships.

Priorities are given to the prevention of learning loss, discrimination and school dropouts. Virtual classrooms are being set up on Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP) to provide concurrent TOT trainings to over 35,000 selected teacher trainers around the country.

Myanmar will continue collaboration with UNESCO and other development partners in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic.

Myanmar has always placed an emphasis on conservation and management of **cultural heritage** in cooperation with UNESCO. Myanmar enacted the protection and preservation of cultural heritage region law on 28th February 2019.

Myanmar has set priority on the prevention of the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property, and implemented security management plans in coordination with State and Region authorities to prevent smuggling and trafficking of cultural heritage in the midst of Covid-19.

Since 2013, Myanmar has collaborated with UNESCO for designation of Natural World Heritage Site. Inle Lake and Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuaries were designated in the **Man and Biosphere** list in 2015 and 2017 respectively, and seven natural areas in the tentative list. Myanmar has successfully inscribed Pyu Ancient Cities and Bagan on UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014 and 2019.

In the **Communication and Information sector**, Myanmar has organised the Conference on Media Development annually in partnership with UNESCO and media organizations since 2012.

The Media and Information Literacy Awareness Promotion Committee has been established for countering misinformation and hate speech. Workshops, Seminars and trainings on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and media development are occasionally held under the aegis of the Ministry of Information and UNESCO.

Myanmar is firmly committed to the freedom of news media and the rights, among others, that ensure the safety of news media personnel.

Myanmar appreciates the **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)** support in providing sea-level monitoring system, providing the trainings and workshops relating with the tsunami disaster mitigation activities. Myanmar is pleased to collaborate in implementing impact-based flood early warning system, and conducting training courses on use of GIS and remote sensing in disaster risk management and early warning system.

Conclusion

Myanmar's cooperation with UNESCO in a number of initiatives and projects on the ground has ranged from biosphere reserves and archaeological sites to policy dialogues on education for peace and sustainable development.

I wish to reiterate Myanmar's strong commitment to the implementation of the ongoing UNESCO programmes in order to achieve the 2030 sustainable development goals.

A time-honoured saying "United we stand" seems to be treated as a myth given the social spacing circumstances due to Covid-19; still, I am convinced we need to continue working hand in hand among Member states and with UNESCO to respond to new challenges imposed by Covid-19.

I thank you.