

## **The General Statement of Japan in the Opening Session at the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Executive Board**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Madam Director-General, Excellences, Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you Mr. Chairperson for organizing the special session at the right time. Without your strong initiative, this session would not have taken place.

I should like to offer my sincere appreciation to co-facilitators, Ambassador of Morocco and Ambassador of Switzerland, for their precious efforts to coordinate opinions among the Member States. Although their efforts did not bring a perfect consensus, we came so close to that thanks to the facilitators.

The last but not the least, I thank the Secretariat for their support for the special session, including arrangements for the first-ever virtual session and the preparation of informative and useful documents.

Mr. Chairperson,

Now is the time for UNESCO to send a clear and strong political message to Member States and the international community. This message does not have to be long, precise or detailed. All it should say are;

1. UNESCO is relevant and indispensable in our fight against COVID-19. We, Member States on the Executive Board, commend the Director General for the initiatives taken so far and commit ourselves to continue working harder.
2. We will ensure that education, culture, science and technology remain an integral part of mitigation and adaptation strategies in addressing COVID-19.
3. We reiterate the importance of working together with other international organizations and private sector to achieve our goal.
4. We will continue to review our activities in this regard in 209<sup>th</sup> and 210<sup>th</sup> Sessions of the Executive Board.

Mr. Chairperson,

This is all we have to say now. It does not have to be a decision. It can be a joint declaration of the membership of the Executive Board. I would appreciate it if my colleagues could give a thought to this possibility.