

## **National Statement of the Republic of Korea**

- 210<sup>th</sup> session of the UNESCO Executive Board -

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. President of the General Conference, Madam Director-General, dear colleagues,

I am glad that we are able to gather today before the end of the year to discuss the organization's vision and way forward in these unprecedented times.

This demonstrates our shared commitment to multilateralism and our global partnership which is more important than ever to tackle this crisis all together.

Long standing challenges to peace are compounded by new global challenges such as climate change, racism, discrimination and digital gap. The pandemic also exacerbated existing inequalities and human rights issues. UNESCO needs to step up its efforts and be more proactive in leading global discourse and actions on these issues.

As for 41C/4 the Republic of Korea expresses its support for the Preliminary Proposal. We believe, it faithfully reflects the expectations and priorities identified by Member States and a strategic transformative vision of the Organization to meet global challenges reflected in the 2030 Agenda.

To translate these proposals into concrete outcomes, I believe, among others that it should be accompanied by inter-sectorial collaboration, enhanced communication, and capacity building of each sector and field offices.

The Republic of Korea hopes that these proposals will be seamlessly executed throughout the period under the able leadership of Director-General Audrey Azoulay. We welcome and support Madame Director-General's continued commitment to carrying out UNESCO's mission.

On education, UNESCO's leadership in achieving SDG4 is more urgent due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, the Republic of Korea places importance particularly on strengthening of international coordination, Global Citizenship Education and preparation for the digital age, as policy direction and tools for achieving quality and inclusive education.

On culture, we welcome the efforts of UNESCO to raise awareness on the critical role of culture in healing minds of people in the face of crisis and to create more enabling environment for artists and creative sectors. We are pleased to chair the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to be held in February 2021.

As the host country of 2020 Global Week of Media and Information Literacy, we look forward to UNESCO's active follow-ups with concrete activities.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Group of Friends for Solidarity and Inclusion with Global Citizenship Education has been working closely with the Member States to counter all forms of hate, discrimination and stigmatization.

The Group initiated the draft amendment of 'Elimination of racial discrimination, racial hatred and racial hate crimes in the world' including Global Call against Racism. The Republic of Korea expresses its gratitude to 36 co-sponsors and other Member States for their support.

Cooperation with UNESCO for peace and security is special for my country. We will continue to explore peace building cooperation including possible joint inscription of the Demilitarized Zone in the Korean Peninsula as a UNESCO World Heritage site. We

look forward to support of Madame DG and Member States in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

Inclusive and participatory interpretation of the World Heritage sites can help future generations understand the full history and multiple narratives embedded in heritage. We need to take consistent efforts to honor the commitment for the decisions concerning the interpretive strategy of the property undertaken in front of international community. For the sake of integrity of the World Heritage Committee, we need to ensure that the decisions of the Committee are fully implemented and abided by, in letter and spirit.

Regarding the Memory of the World programme, we should not lose the sight of its original purpose. One of the key objectives of the programme is to promote universal and permanent accessibility of documentary heritage to all, without hindrance. Its concern is with the preservation and accessibility of primary sources, not with their interpretation or the resolution of historical disputes.

If we allow one country to hinder accessibility to documentary heritage, it would contradict the very purpose of the Programme. Granting such power to a unilateral decision is no different from a veto power by political motivation, which would lead to exclusion of certain memories, and thus politicization of the Programme..

Dear colleagues,

In concluding, allow me to express my firm confidence that our strong collaboration with UNESCO will enable this noble organization to become the most efficient platform for building sustainable, inclusive and peaceful world during and beyond the pandemic. Thank you.