

General Policy Debate of H. E. Mr. LEE Byong-hyun
Ambassador and Permanent Delegate
Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Korea to UNESCO

Plenary Session of the 38th Session of the General Conference

At 12:50 pm, 4 October 2015, Paris

Honorable Mr. President

Madame Director General

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honor and privilege to speak on behalf of the Republic of Korea during the 38th session of the General Conference when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. This session takes place with a towering achievement, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, which will guide the international community to attain sustainable development for the next 15 years.

Over the last 70 years, UNESCO has been at the heart of actions to strengthen the defences of peace and sustainable development, by promoting education for all on the basis of human rights and safeguarding cultural and natural heritage of humanity. UNESCO has been acting to advance scientific cooperation and innovation for the benefit of all and to lead social transformations and defend freedom of expression.

UNESCO's mandate has never been so more relevant to us than today. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its full support to the mandates and fundamental principles of UNESCO and renews its pledge to further these tasks as shared responsibilities of humanity.

(Education)

The year 2015 is a milestone for global education.

The World Education Forum 2015, which was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea in May, set out the direction of the global education agenda for the next 15 years. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all stakeholders for their participation and contribution.

I am certain that the Incheon Declaration adopted at the Forum for the inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all paved the way for the adoption of the mandated goals in education on the 2030 Agenda.

The Republic of Korea is determined to increase its ODA spending in education and continue its close cooperation with UNESCO to translate the Agenda into concrete actions.

In the same vein, the Republic of Korea is determined to take the lead in the “*Better Life for Girls’ Initiative*” with a view to overcoming inequalities in education and building capacity for the most vulnerable girls in developing countries, as Madame President Park Geun-hye remarked at the GEFI high-level event during the UN Summit.

Also, the Republic of Korea is planning to launch a new project “*ICT Transforming Education in Africa*”. Taking stock of achievements and the lessons learned through our previous projects, such as *BEAR*(*Better Education for Africa Rise*), the Republic of Korea is looking forward to engaging in future programmes for developing countries.

(Natural Science / Social & Human Science)

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

I highly appreciate Secretariat’s efforts for the inclusion of water, oceans, biodiversity and science policy on the 2030 Agenda. I look forward to UNESCO’s continued contributions and strong presence in these fields of competence with the expertise and experience of its international scientific programme such as IHP, MAB, IOC.

In this regard, I highly welcome the adoption of the MAB strategy 2015-2021, which reconfirms the mission of MAB for sustainable development.

[I would also like to call your attention to the 4th World Humanities Forum in the Republic of Korea next year, which will be organized jointly with UNESCO. Your valuable support to this Forum will be much appreciated.]

(Culture)

Distinguished delegates,

It is our belief that the cultural universality and diversity unites and thrives all of us on the planet. [That is the core value of humanity that we should uphold for coexistence and prosperity.] As confirmed through the 2030 Agenda, *culture* is one of the major players for the sustainable development.

Recognizing the importance of unlocking potentials and the values *culture* has, the Republic of Korea is using its utmost endeavors on the basis of the national policy goals, which are ‘Happiness for the people’, ‘Cultural enrichment’.

In addition, my Government notes the great impact of the World Heritage Convention on the sustainable development and thus implements various activities with our expertise, in particular with the aim to strengthen the capacity to protect and preserve the world heritage of developing countries.

Also, my Government fully supports UNESCO's mandate of promoting and preserving documentary heritage and continues to extend our cooperation in the activities of the UNESCO Jikji Prize along with assistance on Memory of World registration through training workshops.

Mr. President

Distinguished Delegates,

The Republic of Korea is committed to respond to the global call for action in the new era of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development as a trustworthy partner of UNESCO throughout the journey, as it has always been.

Together with all of you in UNESCO, we will embark on a great journey toward a future with greater happiness, greater peace all over the world.

Thank you!