

**JOINT STATEMENT OF ASPAC GROUP TO BE DELIVERED AT
THE 201st SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNESCO
(3 MINUTES)**

Mr. President,

Madam Director-General,

1. On this 201st Session of the Executive Board, I am deeply honored to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of the Asia and Pacific Member States of UNESCO.

2. The ASPAC Group underscores the importance of having a balanced and realistic Draft Programme and Budget for 2018-2021 (39 C/5) that meets the expectations of the Member States, particularly in facing the many challenges of attaining the global Agenda 2030. We also believe that inclusive engagements and constructive dialogues are imperative towards achieving a step-by-step approach of the Integrated Budget Framework and Structured Financing Dialogue.

3. In this respect, we invite UNESCO to continue to strengthen collaboration with the ASPAC Group in its competency areas in order to contribute to the changes demanded by the peoples of the region, as well as to ensure the effectiveness of the field offices.

4. ASPAC Group takes great interest in the UNESCO's essential role in SDG-4 aiming at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. Its water and biodiversity related programs are so important to our collective efforts to limit the impact of climate change, especially to affected nations such as the small island developing states. We also welcome that IOC is presented in a stand-alone chapter in the 39C/5.

5. ASPAC supports the recent unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 2347. This resolution constitutes a major step forward for UNESCO and gives a clear recognition to the organization's actions in the field of safeguarding cultural heritage.

6. ASPAC welcomes the Action Plan (2016-2021) to implement the MOST Strategy as adopted at the 13th Intergovernmental Council of the MOST, and expresses our gratitude to Malaysia for hosting the First MOST Forum of Ministers of Social Development for the Asia-Pacific region on the theme "Building Inclusive Societies", that was held back to back in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on March 2017.

7. ASPAC also notes with appreciation that the E9 Ministerial Meeting on Education 2030 hosted by Bangladesh in February 2017 which adopted Dhaka Declaration underscoring the importance of aligning national education policies with the SDG-4 education goals.

8. ASPAC aspires to fully engage in the reform process to make governance in UNESCO more inclusive and effective. To this end, ASPAC also commends the ongoing efforts of the Working Group on governance, procedures, and working methods of the governing bodies of UNESCO, to undertake Member State-driven reform to improve governance and strategic decision-making in UNESCO.