

Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
Madam Director-General,  
Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

First, on behalf of my Government, I would like to express our deepest condolences to all governments and people of the world on the recent terrorist attacks. At this moment, we must emphasize UNESCO's mission to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men and women.

The 39/C5 is based on a new Integrated Budget Framework, which calls for strengthening of strategic cooperation among the Secretariat, Member States and private-sector partners.

In this context, Japan has been, and will remain an earnest strategic partner of UNESCO. Our cooperation includes both financial and expert-based, intellectual contributions by the government, academic and private sectors. Allow me to illustrate a few examples.

On Priority Africa and Gender, Japan has just launched a project to support IICBA's teacher-training activities in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda to promote peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. We are also finalizing another project to promote gender-responsive STEM education in Kenya and other Sub-Saharan African counties.

Japan continues its commitment to the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). We will support national policy-making and teachers' capacity building in this area through the Japan Funds in Trust (JFIT) as well as UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD.

In science, Japanese experts have been actively participating in important intergovernmental bodies such as IOC and IHP as the chair or vice-chair to sharpen UNESCO's strategic priorities. Our Government has long provided support to capacity building activities and the establishment of early warning system for flood and other disasters. International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICCHARM) in Japan cooperates closely with UNESCO as a global centre of excellence for research, education and networking.

Preservation and protection of heritage has never been so important. Japan has been a long-standing and earnest supporter for the protection of tangible and intangible heritage. Our ongoing projects provide support to Angkor, Bamiyan, Island of Gorée and Qhapaq Ñan, among many others. In an international symposium on Bamiyan to be held in Japan this September, experts will discuss future revitalization of the site. The outcome will help policy discussions on how to restore World Heritage properties damaged in armed conflicts. We are proud of our contribution to the conference held last February on Iraq's cultural heritage.

Japan continues to make full use of its expertise in our common effort to improve resource mobilization for the World Heritage, as well as evaluation processes for the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Japan will also continue its human resource support to heritage programmes through JPOs and Associate Experts. In this regard, we appreciate increased regular budget allocation to these flagship programmes in the draft 39/C5.

Regarding the Memory of the World, we welcome the active engagements by experts and continue to support their work for sound development of the programme.

Japanese private-sector partners have been active in partnership activities with UNESCO. Panasonic, All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) have steadily supported UNESCO projects in such areas as the World Heritage and ESD. More recently, the Nippon Foundation has signed a framework agreement and cooperated with the Organization in such areas as digital empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Finally, a sound integrated budget needs to be implemented by a robust leadership and its workforce. In this regard, we welcome an increased focus on strengthening staff in the draft 39/C5. On its part, Japan will continue its contribution as a responsible Member of UNESCO, so that the Organization fulfills its main mandate of promoting friendship and mutual understanding among Member States.

(595 words)