

National Statement of the Republic of Korea to  
the 201th Executive Board of UNESCO (April 24, 2017)

To be delivered by Ambassador Byong Hyun LEE

Mr. Chairman, President of the General Conference, Madame Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I extend my congratulation to the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2347. I wish to commend, in particular, the Director General for her leadership and efforts made towards such milestone achievement.

The Republic of Korea also joined the efforts as a co-sponsor of the Resolution, and further lent its support by participating in the two conferences, held by joint initiatives of France and the United Arab Emirates. I hope the work of UNESCO and the ALIPH foundation will give a new impetus to international cooperation for the protection of heritage under threats.

I also welcome the Integrated Budget Framework, introduced in the 39 C/5 for the first time. This new framework and structured financing dialogue are intended to achieve greater transparency and predictability of funding and to broaden the donor base. In this regards, my government is now assessing our voluntary contribution to focus more on long-term and large-scale projects, in order to provide more strategic, sustainable and predictable funding. The Republic of Korea has recently launched several multi-year FIT(Funds-In-Trust) projects; to name a few, 'TVET for young Syrian refugees' as part of 'Bridging Learning Gaps for Youth', 'Women and Girls Education', as well as the 'second phase of the Bamiyan Cultural Centre in Afghanistan'.

However, we need to bear in mind that increase in extra-budgetary funding cannot substitute the regular budget. Given the chronic financial and cash flow difficulties, it is the constitutional obligation of all Member States to pay their contributions fully and on time.

I would like, therefore, to urge Member States in arrears with their contributions, to submit at least their payment plan without further delay.

Now I would like to share with you today, some food for thoughts on the management of field offices, after my visit to Zimbabwe and Rwanda last January, as part of a Korea-UNESCO project “ICT Transforming Education in Africa”.

Multilateral aid involves several stake-holders, which requires more time in decision making. This often causes delay in mobilizing human and financial resources on time and, in turn, affecting timely implementation.

To ensure more effective programme delivery at the field level, I am persuaded that we need to strengthen the capacity of field offices and ensure adequate funding.

On the other hand, the advantage of multilateral aid is that it allows sharing the lessons drawn from successes and failures of its programmes with the international community. This could serve as an opportunity to demonstrate unique expertise of UNESCO’s programmes and its comparative advantage.

I would like to commend the 25th anniversary of the Memory of the World programme and express our sincere gratitude to UNESCO’s efforts in the registry, preservation and development for the important memory of the mankind. As a strong advocate, my government has been fully engaged in the development of the program through the establishment of Jikji Prize and its contribution to capacity building activities. We will continue our commitment

with a new Category II center to be established in near future.

My government has been quite attentive to the ongoing IAC's review process. We look forward to its final report based on large consensus and recommendations from the Member States to further strengthen the Programme.

We consider that a key to its success has been the experts-oriented nature of the program. Thus, the Committee's independence free from political influence of the Member States should be maintained to ensure the perennity of the programme itself. We also wish that the current review process would include more holistic approach that encompasses not only nomination process but also conservation of and better accessibility to the heritages, capacity building and digital education etc.

The 2030 Agenda highlights Science, Technology, and Innovation as a key driver for sustainable development. I therefore, appreciate that STI has been recognized and reinforced as a priority under the current C/5.

UNESCO needs to take targeted efforts on the capacity building, and the Republic of Korea is ready to cooperate in such endeavors through newly established Category II center in the domain of water.

I also underline many achievements of IOC, in areas such as, climate change and biodiversity conservation. Considering vital role of ocean sciences to address many challenges facing the earth today, my delegation fully supports 'UN Decade for Ocean Science'.

Thank you. Mr. Chairman