

*Congratulatory Message on the occasion of the Appointment of Madam
Audrey Azoulay as Director-General of UNESCO*

*By H.E. Dato' Mohd Zulkifli Mohammed, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of
Malaysia to UNESCO, Chairperson of the Asia and Pacific countries (ASPAC)*

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Madam President,

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Chairperson of the Asia and Pacific countries or in short ASPAC group in UNESCO, I have been accorded the rare honour and privilege of addressing you on this auspicious occasion of Madam Audrey Azoulay's assumption of the office of Director-General of UNESCO.

While offering her our warmest Congratulations, we also wish to take this occasion to thank most sincerely the other eight candidates who took part from the beginning so forthrightly in our electoral process.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ASPAC group wishes to assure our newly-elected Director-General that individually as a Member State or collectively as a cohesive group, we can be fully counted upon to co-operating in ways expected of us in enabling UNESCO to fulfil its noble mission. We believe that our rolling programmes in Education, Sciences,

Culture, Communication and Information as well as those that stand out in the Social and Human Sciences, Climate Change, and the Ocean remain as tangible foundations in the pursuit of peace culture. We are also deeply aware that the commitments for UNESCO to meet its obligations vis à vis the realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals puts the onus on our general Conference to inter-alia allocate the much needed financial resources, as required. Further, many Member States are already participating actively in providing extra-budgetary funding in support of regular programme activities where others are actively undertaking UNESCO-Sponsored activities through Category II Centres. In this connection, UNESCO has over the years a proven record of service and its constant stand on issues of peace and development remains our endearing organization with our peoples. We are confident that by working together, we will continue the journey with UNESCO in its mission in making the world a better and safer place by consolidating its activities which this conference is called upon to approve on a bi-annual basis.

Dear Madame Azoulay,

The ASPAC group is one of the largest UNESCO regional groups which made of 44 Member states with consists of many, widely diverse culture with long histories. If I may reiterate the ASPAC joint statement during the 202nd session of Executive Board, amongst others are the importance of education as a major element in combatting the ill-effect of climate-change that such initiatives on access to quality education for persons in vulnerable situations and crisis-affected populations is remain paramount.

The ASPAC Group is also committed to Agenda 2030 and to the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. ASPAC believes that through the promotion of

education and training of life skills in these areas, UNESCO may help to pave the way for self-sustaining communities in the years to come as showed in the report released by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics with regards to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which show how effective the programs can be rendered to be in such situation.

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Above and beyond, we wish if Madame Azoulay could also give a special attention to the diverse needs of the ASPAC member states although we have taken note that the 2 global priorities of UNESCO are on Africa and Gender equality.

Madam President,

In conclusion, ASPAC wishes to reassure the Director-General our full co-operation in enabling UNESCO to carry out its mission.

Thank you Madam President.

Dato' Mohd Zulkifli Mohammed

Paris, 13 November 2017