

Joint Statement of ASPAC Group  
to be delivered  
at the 204<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board of UNESCO  
(3 minutes)

Mr. Chairperson of the Executive Board,  
Madam President of the General Conference,  
Madam Director-General,  
Dear colleagues,

I am honored to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of the Member States of the Asia-Pacific Group, or ASPAC.

Congratulations once again to Madam Director-General, Ambassador Lee, and the new members of the Executive Board.

Mr. Chair,

As we seek to advance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we need to work together to strengthen and reinvigorate UNESCO in discharging its mandate which impacts upon all the SDGs.

That is why we welcome the recent presentation by the DG on **the Strategic Transformation of UNESCO**, and look forward to working with the DG on the way forward. We wish to emphasize that this process should be inclusive, transparent, and fully take into account the views of the entire membership of this organization.

At the heart of the reform process is how to deal with the financial situation of the organization. Therefore, there is a pressing sense of urgency to move forward with **the Integrated Budget and Structured Financial Dialogue**.

As for UNESCO's Human Resources, we encourage the Secretariat to address the issues of **gender and geographical balance among UNESCO staff**.

Mr. Chair,

ASPAC represents two-third of the world's population. It is the region where UNESCO has brought about many success stories, and yet many challenges remain. Thus, all our countries fully embrace and are committed to implementing **Education 2030**.

**UNESCO's role on the ground** in our region remains as pivotal as ever. Therefore, this year, we look forward to important meetings to be held in our region. First, in Bangkok, in July, **the Technical Consultation Meeting on the future of Education for Sustainable Development**, funded by Japan. Second, in Seoul, in September, **the 2018 International Conference on Global Citizenship Education (GCED)**.

Mr. Chair,

ASPAC is a region exposed to threats of natural disasters and the impact of climate change. We, therefore, welcome the extension of **Strategy for the reinforcement of UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict** to cover natural disasters. And in this regard, we wish to highlight the importance of **UNESCO's Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Action Plan**.

Thank you.