

**Statement by
The Asia Pacific Group
210th Session Executive Board of the UNESCO
3 December 2020**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

President of the General Conference,

Madam Director General,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour to deliver the Joint Statement of the Asia Pacific Group, in my capacity as the Vice-Chair of the Group.

At the outset, the ASPAC Group would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your efforts in maintaining the continuity of governance of UNESCO by conducting the 210th Session of the Executive Board in the hybrid format.

The organization of this 210th Session will be a benchmark of the effectiveness of the Governance of UNESCO in time of crisis.

The ASPAC Group is committed to support the successful deliberation of this virtual session in accordance with the recommendations on the working methods for a virtual session of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board meeting always has an exhaustive agenda. In this respect, the ASPAC Group would like to commend the hard work of the Chair and Bureau of the Executive Board in examining the agenda items to be discussed in the virtual and in presential session.

The ASPAC Group underscores the important role of the Chair of the Board and the Committees in navigating the discussion since we only have limited time. In this respect, the wisdom and firmness of the Chair is paramount.

The ASPAC group will play a constructive role along with other Member States to realize our shared objectives and take forward UNESCO's mission.

Mr. Chair,

The ASPAC Group underscores the essential role of UNESCO in attaining the SDG point 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all.

The Covid-19 pandemic has raised political awareness of many governments in mitigating its impact towards the education sector with various policies such as distance learning and open science. This should be used as a momentum to accelerate the achievement of the SDG.

The ASPAC Group will continue to support UNESCO's excellent work in ensuring inclusiveness, quality, and equity in education.

Mr. Chair,

The ASPAC Group welcomes the preliminary proposal of the draft Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2029 (41 C/4) and draft Programme and Budget for 2022–2025 (41 C/5). The ASPAC group appreciates the inclusive consultative process undertaken in drafting the proposal.

As an electoral group with the most diverse countries which represents two third of the world's population, the inputs from the ASPAC Group will be invaluable for the draft.

The ASPAC Group stresses the importance of UNESCO's decision in, at least, maintaining the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) as a priority group in its Medium-Term Strategy.

Thank you.