

~~Draft~~ Joint Statement of ASPAC Group to be delivered
at the 202nd Session of Executive Board, October 2017 (03 minutes)
by Malaysia, Vice President of EB (Chair of ASPAC)

Mr. Chairman,

Madame Director General,

Esteemed colleagues,

Good afternoon,

1. Allow me to begin with a few words in my capacity as chair. It is an honor to deliver the Asia Pacific Group's Joint Statement to this distinguished audience. The 202nd session of UNESCO's Executive Board marks the last time some of us will sit around this table as members and we wish to thank you all for your contributions.

2. ASPAC, first and foremost, wishes to convey its deep condolences and sympathies to all nations that have lost and suffered over the last few weeks and months. The natural disasters around the world have caused extensive structural damage and loss of life. Several countries in Asia have recently gone through horrific floods that have caused thousands of deaths and many more displaced persons. In developing areas where Education is crucial, thousands of schools have been flooded resulting in millions more children who sadly find themselves out of the classroom.

3. Our climate is an issue getting more serious by the day and as we all know, Education is a major element in combatting the ill-effect of climate-change. Initiatives such as Major Programme I in the draft 39 C/5 that seek to “ensure access to quality education for persons in vulnerable situations and crisis-affected populations”, remain paramount.

The ASPAC Group therefore reiterates its commitment 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. We have taken note of the report released by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics with regards to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which show how effective the programs are can be rendered to be in such situation. Also, ASPAC considers the role of sport and education as a tool to the achievement of some of the SDGs and to strengthen peace and stability in the World. We welcome and encourage any initiative by member states to promote sports and physical education as a means to combat discrimination and to promote human rights.

4. We have previously welcomed the move towards a Structured Financial Dialogue and an integrated budget framework. Nevertheless, our organization needs to seek ways and means to encourage Member States to pay their membership dues in time as well as to find a better way of getting Member States to participate in contributing to the extra budgetary programme.

5. We have already started this process through the Working Group on Governance Issues, which we fully support. We would like to commend the Working Group for having proposed a draft for the General Conferences' deliberations. We hope the debates at the General Conference will result in meaningful discussions and that the results would help in making UNESCO more inclusive, transparent, efficient and effective.

6. Soon, UNESCO will have a new Director General, as usual ASPAC will continue to make its presence felt at the next Executive Board. Our Group expresses its strong commitment to cooperating with all member states and regional groups to achieve the overarching goals of this great institution.