

**National Statement of the Republic of Korea
to the 202nd Executive Board of UNESCO (October 9, 2017)**

To be delivered by Ambassador Byong Hyun LEE

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

The 202nd Executive Board is very important for the future of this Organization. During the session, we have to finalize 39/C5 and we will elect a new leader of UNESCO. I wish that we would elect new Director-General whose visions correspond to the very special mandates and *raison d'être* of UNESCO.

Also, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mme. Bokova, who has ably led this Organization past 8 years. During her tenure, UNESCO achieved substantive progress in such areas as gender equality, UNESCO's enhanced contribution towards 2030 agenda. I would also like to pay tribute to the efforts of Mme. Director-General for leading the historical adoption of the UNSC Resolution 2347. I wish that her endeavors for the reform will continue by her successor to finalize it.

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to bring your attention to the acute financial crisis and to the letters of the Director-General circulated in June and August. With the implementation of the contingency plan, the efforts of the Secretariat cannot be dissociated from the corresponding efforts of the Member States. The least of our obligation is to pay our assessed contributions **in full and on time and without conditions**. In times of difficulty, we need to show our solidarity by taking our own responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

(MoW) The Republic of Korea has been committed to the Memory of the World Program since its inception. Through our contribution to the capacity-building and raising awareness, we became aware of the necessity for an institution capable of providing practical support to the MoW program for preservation and access to documentary heritage. In this framework, my government has proposed to establish the first Category 2 center with a view to enhancing the capacity of developing countries. We look forward to the valuable support from the Members of the Board on this proposal.

As for the review process of the MoW, I will make a separate statement. Nevertheless, I would like to point out that there have been no precedents by which revised Directives and operational Guidelines were applied retroactively to pending nomination files. Introducing retroactive rules will disrupt the stability of the MoW program and undermine its credibility. As for the Member State's political responsibility for MoW, in my view, it should be dealt with as a matter of governance reform in the mid and long term perspective.

(C2 Center) The Republic of Korea has submitted proposals to renew two of its Category 2 Centers at this session. While two third of the Category 2 centers are not operational according to the revelation of the last IOS report, the Category 2 Centers in Korea received a favorable evaluation. I hope that our Category 2 Centers could serve good examples for other centers which wish to improve their functions and capacities. We also appreciate the findings of IOS which will serve to review and develop a comprehensive strategy for Category 2 institutes. We consider the revision should move towards reinforcing viability of the current instrument, while alleviating the burden of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman,

(Science) Recently, we have witnessed the devastating consequences of natural disaster caused by climate change. It is vital that the responses to climate change should be based on international cooperation and effective water management. The role of IHP is highly relevant

than ever to address manifold challenges at the global level. In this context, the Republic of Korea has started collaborating with UNESCO on the Sustainable Water Security project for African countries to establish measures for water safety and we look forward to the successful outcome of such initiative.

(Culture) In the area of culture, the Republic of Korea, as a World Heritage Committee member, has been actively engaged in ‘World Heritage Interpretation’, which is an equally important element as inscription and conservation of heritage sites. We will continue our commitment to further develop World Heritage Program. In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that Korean government will host the presentation of the thematic studies on the ‘Interpretation of Site of Memory’ in Seoul in November 2017 and I would appreciate your participation and support to this important event.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the 12th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH(Intangible Cultural Heritage) will take place from 4th to 9th December of this year in Jeju Island, which is known as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage, Biosphere Reserve, Geopark and Ramsar site. All State and non-State Parties to the 2003 Convention are invited to this session and I hope to be able to meet you all on this beautiful island. Thank you.