

Statement by H. E. Mr. Kim Yong Il,
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Mme. President,
President of the Executive Board,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, let me extend warm congratulations to Your Excellency Mme. Zohour Alaoui, on your election to the Presidency of the 39th session of the General Conference of UNESCO. I expect that your able leadership will lead this session to a resounding success.

My special thanks go to Mme. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO for her devotion for the development of UNESCO for the last 8 years despite of difficult situation. At the same time, I sincerely congratulate Mme. Audrey Azoulay on her nomination as the candidate of the Director General.

Mme. President,

For the last biennium , UNESCO has been actively leading the implementation of Education 2030 Framework for Action for the SDGs and made a good deal of progress in the fields of its competence such as biosphere reserves and protection of cultural properties.

It is the noble mission of UNESCO to build peace in mind of men and women thus contributing to the peace, security and prosperity of the world.

SDGs can be achieved successfully only when all the countries and nations are engaged collectively. And therefore, it requires the international cooperation and collaboration to be further strengthened.

Yet, the efforts of UNESCO and the international community to build a peaceful and civilized world aspired by the humankind are faced with serious challenges.

Infringement of sovereignty, interference in other's internal affairs are taking place openly in various places of the world and the endless confrontation among states, powers and civilizations still continues.

The military actions under the cloak of "democracy" and the "war on terror" as well as the conflicts between religions and civilizations result in the worst refugee crisis and destruction of valuable cultural properties of the humankind.

The recent announcement of the U.S. to withdraw from the UNESCO soon after its withdrawal from Paris Agreement on Climate Change is putting more obstacles in the way of UNESCO as it moves towards SDGs.

The anti-DPR Korea hostile policies of the U.S. and its military threats and pressure such as “total destruction” of the DPR Korea obviously counter the Charter of the United Nations and the mission and purpose of UNESCO, hinder the efforts of the DPR Korea for building the civilized power and constitute the main factors that threaten the peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

Mme. President,

Education is the sector which should be prioritized before anything else in achieving global peace, common prosperity and sustainable development of the humankind.

For the successful achievement of the SDG-4, it is necessary for UNESCO to promote the political and legal system and enhance the international cooperation and relevant financial supports so as to ensure universal 12-year education, education for all and life-long learning. And at the same time the role of UNESCO should be raised for the improvement of quality of education, while strengthening the technical cooperation.

In the field of science, universal access to advanced science and technology should be provided and their exchanges properly ensured on the basis of equality and mutual benefits, promoting north-south and south-south cooperation.

International cooperation for the protection of cultural properties should be enhanced, fostering friendly relations among nations and regions through intercultural and civilizations dialogues and promoting the building of knowledge society by means of ICT.

Mme. President,

Currently vigorous campaign is underway in the DPR Korea to implement the 5-year strategy for national economy development from 2016 to 2020 under the wise leadership of the respected Supreme Leader **KIM JONG UN**, Chairman of State Affairs Commission of the DPR Korea.

In accordance with the constant policy of the DPR Korea Government to attach great importance to education and science, universal 12-year compulsory education system has been enforced since 2014.

Higher education system and pedagogical education system are improved and national distant education system and sci-tech network are greatly enhanced as required by the new century, thus the quality of the national education has been further improved.

The Government of the DPR Korea has set forth the target of the building sci-tech power to put the national science and technology on the cutting-edge level of the world and to develop all the sectors by the pivotal role of science and technology.

Research and developments are actively conducted to surpass the cutting-edge, making a great contribution to the power of the country and improvement of people’s livelihood.

Such struggle of the Korean people is taking place amidst sanctions of the U.S. and its following forces.

The U.S threats and sanctions to stifle our sovereignty as well as right to existence and right to development give huge negative effects not only on education, science and ICT but also even on sports and everyday life of the people.

Such acts against humanity and civilization which destroy the modern civilization should be put to an end at once.

Despite of the current difficult situation and condition, the Korean people will continue their energetic struggle to build the civilized nation and to achieve the SDGs with the great driving force of self-reliance and self-development and with the strength of science and technology.

The DPR Korea will, in the future, too, further strengthen and develop international cooperation and solidarity under its foreign policy ideals of independence, peace and friendship and actively join UNESCO and other member states in their efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.