

○ Hello everyone,

I am Nagaoka Keiko, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan.

- Congratulations to you all on the holding of this Edinburgh International Culture Summit. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Rt Hon Nadine Dorries, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; the Rt Hon Angus Robertson, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture; the Rt Hon Alison Johnstone, Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament; Sir Jonathan Mills, Director of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, and to everyone else who devoted themselves to the holding of this Summit.
- I also wish to celebrate with you the 75th anniversary of the Edinburgh International Festival, your famed arts festival held annually at this time of year. I regret not being able to participate in the Edinburgh Culture Summit this time due to scheduling conflicts, but I am sending this video message under the theme of 'Culture and Education'. Here I would like to introduce some of the latest developments in this field in Japan.
- In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has jurisdiction over both cultural and educational affairs. In the past, the relevant education departments in MEXT were responsible for arts education at schools, but as a result of legislative reforms

passed in 2018, the responsibility for arts education was shifted to the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA). An outside agency under MEXT, the ACA is a specialized organ for implementing cultural policy. This enables the ACA to make optimal use of its expertise in measures for promoting the arts and culture and its networks of arts-related persons for arts education in schools. The ACA is developing integrated initiatives for arts education — from cultivating students' interest in the arts in school to fostering top-level artists.

- Next, I would like to talk about our initiatives for securing opportunities for children to come in contact with culture and the arts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the impact of COVID, after 2020, the opportunities for children to appreciate and experience culture and the arts inside and outside of school were sharply decreased. Fortunately, now the situation has greatly improved, but it still is not the same as it was before the pandemic.
- We want to get back those opportunities for children to appreciate and experience in diverse environments traditional culture, performing arts and various other art forms. For that, the government has taken measures for art troupes to make performance tours of schools, artists, performers and others to be dispatched to schools, and children to attend for free performances at theaters and elsewhere. These measures are giving children opportunities to enjoy the arts at their own schools, community theaters and other venues and to stimulate their

imagination and creativity even during the so-called post-COVID and with-COVID periods.

- Japanese schools are also utilizing ICT in arts-related subjects. As part of our GIGA School Initiative, the Japanese government has provided one computer for each student and prepared high-speed Internet networks at schools throughout Japan. The priority issue at this point in time is transitioning from the preparation of these devices and networks to their effective utilization. MEXT is strongly supporting this initiative particularly through its specially established teams so that all schools across Japan will be able to provide education utilizing ICT.
- The utilization of ICT is also making rapid inroads in arts-related subjects like music and art. For example, in some schools, students can receive lessons from professional artists online, and in others, students can study and enjoy artworks kept at museums distant from their schools. Schools are also actively making efforts to broaden the range of students' artistic expression through the use of photographs, video and so on by means of their computer terminals. Moreover, by taking photos and videos by tablet cameras of students' works and the process of their creation, teachers and students can utilize them for effective assessment.
- To facilitate further reference to this environment for education, MEXT has been providing explanatory videos

and materials on its website regarding this unique utilization of ICT in arts-related subjects.

- During the global COVID pandemic, we have reaffirmed the ‘power of culture and the arts’ to ease people’s minds and give them courage. Culture and the arts play a vital role for enriching children’s sensibilities and imagination, fostering creativity that in turn creates social value, and nurturing a richness of humanity by children’s learning together with their companions. Japan will resume, continue, and develop these cultural and artistic activities while securing opportunities for children to experience the arts and culture and further enhancing art education.
- I sincerely hope that the discussion today at this Edinburgh International Culture Summit will be an opportunity for showing a clear direction and guidelines for meeting the new challenges to culture around the world and particularly for culture and education during this post-COVID and with-COVID period.

Thank you for your attention.

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