

**Mr President,
Mr Chair Executive,
Madam Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen, and
Distinguished Colleagues,**

Allow me to **start by congratulating Stanley Mutumba Simaata for being elected as President** of the 38th Session of UNESCO's General Conference. On behalf of the Hungarian Government, I wish you, President **Simaata**, a successful Presidency.

It is an honour to address the General Conference today.

Mr President,
UNESCO, and we, Member States and governments are facing enormous challenges. These, however, must be seen as opportunities, to concentrate our efforts within the organisation in these critical times.

A crucial step in this direction was the unanimous adoption of the General Assembly resolution on **saving the cultural heritage of Iraq**. We especially welcome the „UNITE4HERITAGE” campaign to build support for the protection of cultural heritage endangered by extremist groups. To this end, we recommend the establishment of a new common database with the coordination of UNESCO that could function as a collection of currently available documentation of endangered cultural heritage values.

In this context, it is key to take effective measures concerning the return of illegally exported or imported cultural goods. Hungary actively participates in this international information exchange process. Hence, **Hungary has applied for membership in the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation** of UNESCO. We appreciate your support for the Hungarian application.

Besides tangible cultural heritage, we are especially committed to the preservation of **intangible cultural heritage**, as indicated by the fact that Hungary was elected member of the Intergovernmental Committee and its Bureau for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014. Reflecting our particular interest in sharing our tested and proven techniques regarding intangible cultural heritage, Hungary has submitted the nomination “Safeguarding of the Folk Music Heritage by the Kodály Concept” to the *The Register of Best Safeguarding Practices* and we are hoping for a favourable decision in 2016.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNESCO-related anniversaries prove to be successful in Hungary. This year we are observing the 150th anniversary of the death of Ignác Semmelweis and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Flóris Rómer. Next month, an exhibition in honour of these outstanding Hungarian individuals will be on display in the Salle Miro of UNESCO.

As for the future, I would like to ask for your support during this Session for Hungary's anniversary nominations:

- the 1700th anniversary of the birth of Saint Martin of Tours in 2016; and
- the 50th anniversary of the death of Zoltán Kodály in 2017.

Distinguished Delegates,

Hungary has actively participated in, thus warmly welcomes the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. We are convinced that the implementation of **Sustainable Development Goals** requires holistic, forward-looking policies created both nationally and internationally. The UN system has a very important role to play in providing guidance and essential tools which contributing to policy design and implementation in the fields covered by the SDGs. Hungary is looking forward to the discussion within UNESCO on the implementation of the Agenda in all fields.

We recognize that **education** is a main catalyst for sustainable development. Under SDG 4 on education, Member States agreed to ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. By its horizontal nature, education is not only a goal in itself but also a contributor to and beneficiary of all the other Sustainable Development Goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hungary is committed towards the global effort tackling **climate change**. Our aim is to adopt a single global legally binding agreement applicable to all at the COP21 in Paris this December. Therefore Hungary welcomes UNESCO's contribution to the success of the COP21.

Madam Director-General,

The **World Science Forum** is being held at Budapest between 4 and 7 November. The Forum has grown to be one of the most prestigious scientific event and we are proud that this year, UNESCO's involvement reached exceptional levels due to the active and invaluable contribution of the Natural Sciences Sector. We are looking forward to the speech of Director-General Irina Bokova later this week.

Finally, let me emphasize that the **Hungarian Government is fully committed towards UNESCO** and its programmes.

Thank you for your attention!