



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

# Opening ceremony 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 5 November 2013

## End of Mandate Address

by

**H.E. Ms Katalin Bogyay  
President**

**36<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference**

Mme Chair of the Executive Board, Mme Director General,  
Your Excellencies, Heads of Delegations, Honorable Ministers,  
Goodwill Ambassadors, Special Envoys, Artists for Peace,  
Fellow Ambassadors, Distinguished Delegates,  
Representatives of non-governmental organizations  
and Organizations Associated with UNESCO,  
Members of the international press,  
Dear friends and colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a special joy and privilege for me to welcome to UNESCO today the  
representatives of my own country and government,  
H.E. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Dr. János Martonyi,  
The Political State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Mr. Szabolcs Takács,  
H.E. The Ambassador of Hungary to France, Dr. László Trócsányi  
H.E. The Ambassador of Hungary to the OECD, Dr István Mikola  
H.E. The President of the Hungarian Commission of UNESCO,  
Dr. Miklós Réthelyi.

I vividly remember the moment two years ago when standing in front of  
you on this very podium, I felt your openness and trust. I want to thank  
you for your confidence in me, and for your cooperative spirit throughout  
my two years of tenure.

In particular, I would like to thank my government for proposing me, my  
colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their on-going support of  
my work and their trust.

I would like to thank the second electoral group, and the Executive Board for supporting and proposing me. And I want to thank you all for electing me to run the 36<sup>th</sup> session - as you encouraged me - in a true and transparent manner, and to serve as President in office for two years - as you encouraged me - to represent and communicate the universal values of this Organization to the outside world. I have promoted the actions of UNESCO, and offered meeting points for the Member States to enter into dialogue, to understand each other, to honour and value each other's differences.

Without the understanding, intellectual support, inspiration and great sense of humour of a very special man, my husband, Dr. Tamás Lőrinczy, I could not have focused with all my abilities on the tasks and challenges of these last two years. Thank you for standing by and being part of this joint venture!

So I take this opportunity to report to you, the General Conference, the governing body of UNESCO, about my activities and the ideas that guided me throughout troubled waters, as well as the beautiful and meaningful events in the headquarters and all over the world, to which you have invited me.

These visits and engagements have helped me feel the real pulse of different societies, to relate to people of all walks of life, to see first-hand the issues confronted by fellow human beings around the world and to report on that to the House and to build bridges between the Member States and the Organization. These engagements have also helped me promote UNESCO and the principles it stand for all over the world - specifically our mission, our vision, and our challenges, and to find collaborators for our work.

I would like to see a UNESCO which stands above political and ideological divisions. UNESCO that can give an example of universal consciousness and represent the alliance of different cultures, languages and religions - an idea of a peaceful world governed by shared international norms and principles, and not by power politics.

We know that the evolution of geopolitics is cyclical. Powers rise, fall and shift. Changes occur in every generation in an unending ballet.

The power of politics is driven by different economic and social realities, guided sometimes by narrow national interest rather than the interest of the entire humanity.

But we, human beings, women and men around the world are engaged in the same everyday struggle to love, hope, learn, and create a better future for the coming generations. And UNESCO should be linked to that human face of the world!

And I believe that the actors of this very house, and this very General Conference should act according to universal consciousness.

Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

“You are not a drop in the ocean” sang the 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, Rumi, “you are the entire ocean in a drop.” It is with such mindset, that we must look to our future – seeing every human being as an ocean of feelings, hopes and aspirations.

Diversity is the source of the strength and beauty of our planet. For me, diversity is not a burden but a source of inspiration.

From the very beginning I directly asked you, my dear colleagues, about your vision and expectations of my role in this important post. Your answers pointed to the need for a President with a mandate for leadership through consensus-building. You saw the President as the champion of the spirit of the Organization. One response, offered by my friend the Ambassador of India, resonated particularly deeply in my conscience: “just be the heart and the soul of the Organization”!

For me the heart of this Organization means the capacity to listen to each other and to look for joint solutions for a better future of humanity and the planet.

For me the soul of this Organization means to communicate with a sense of dignity, respect, compassion and transparency, granting every member, big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak the same attention and possibility.

I have tried to demonstrate that under UNESCO’s roof, everyone matters, and matters equally.

Distinguished HOUSE!

My education is of course grounded in European philosophies, but I am deeply fascinated and inspired by the African philosophy, Ubuntu, which should be a real reflection of the heart and soul of UNESCO! Ubuntu is based on the idea that: “I am human because I belong. I participate”. A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others and does not feel threatened by the strengths and abilities of others. People with Ubuntu have the self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong to a greater whole. They feel diminished when others are tortured, humiliated or oppressed.

Your Excellencies,

We, the Ambassadors, Permanent Delegates representing our countries at UNESCO are temporary occupants of this HOUSE, but what we do here will affect the global struggle for a peaceful tomorrow long after our mandates. I sincerely hope that during the past two years, despite the mistakes that we inevitably made along the way, we have set the right course for the Organization.

"Video et taceo"- (I see, and say nothing)! Was the motto of Queen Elizabeth I, the monarch of the Tudor dynasty.

This principle is also familiar to us, diplomats in the modern world. But there are turbulent times in life, and there were turbulent times that have reshaped UNESCO since the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference, and that reminded me of a different notion of silence - that of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian writer Sándor Márai, who emigrated from his native country in 1948, where under the growing power of dictatorship even the freedom of silence had been lost. In his newly discovered memoirs published under the title *I Wanted to Remain Silent*, he recognizes the occasions where times call for speaking out to defend one's core beliefs, the times when silence is no longer a morally tenable option.

I have always been a communicator, even when the communication had to be cloaked in artistic expression, in music, in poetry, in subtle reporting and hidden literary messages during my past life as a journalist. In the two years of my mandate as the President of the General Conference, there have been occasions where I have made the choice to speak frankly and openly in search of unity among all parties in difficult times. But in every situation, I have tried to protect the human dignity of all participants.

At times, I have also asked you to listen to your hearts.

I agree with the great Russian writer Dostoyevsky that "It is not the brains that matter most, but that which guides them -- the character, the heart, generous qualities, progressive ideas." I believe in the heart because it is sincere, and sincerity knows no barriers of age or nationality. Marc Chagall, an amazing painter who emigrated to France, once remarked: "If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head, almost nothing."

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In two years you cannot do everything that you would like to do. And if you do not want to jump from one point to another and stay on the surface, you have to dare to make your own choices and stick to them, however difficult they may be. Building on the work during previous periods of my life, I decided to focus my Presidency on three major themes of UNESCO's mandate.

These were:

- promoting and celebrating diversity;
- promoting gender equality and women's' role in peace and reconciliation processes; and
- using soft power – the combination of cultural, science and sport diplomacy to advance UNESCO's major objectives.

Let me stop for a moment at the second motive:

*"Peace is Action, Not Words"*

Betty Williams, peace activist from Northern Ireland Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, 1977

As we gather here today to look at ways to make our world better for tomorrow, let us acknowledge that the struggle to uphold the rights of girls and women in every corner of the world will be the moral imperative of the 21st century.

UNESCO, as the global house of culture, must lead the fight against the practices and policies that use the excuse of culture, tradition or social norms to deny the female population of the internationally recognized human rights. Culture immediately loses its appeal and importance when invoked to oppress individuals or groups, may it be ethnic and sexual minorities or women.

The potential of women for peace building and reconciliation has been widely recognized, but formal peace building and reconciliation initiatives continue to ignore or marginalize issues of gender, and women are often denied access to the broad conflict resolution agenda.

At UNESCO, we must pursue a holistic approach, thinking not only of “what women can do for peace,” but also of “what peace can do for women.” For it is a matter of fact that women who are treated equally, and have high degree of economic and political empowerment, can play greater role in building sustainable peace.

Dear Colleagues,

I will forever cherish the time when all three major organs of UNESCO - the General Conference, the Executive Board and the Secretariat were led by women. First in its history it happened in October 2011, when the Ambassador of Russia, H.E. Eleonora Mitrofanova, headed the Executive Board, the Director General H. E. Irina Bokova, the former Ambassador of Bulgaria was running the House, and I, the Ambassador of Hungary was elected as the President of the General Conference. Three women from Electoral Group II – Eastern-Europe – rich in cultural diversity and languages, dynamic in creative solutions, and often troubled politically, a turbulent part of the world where we had to constantly adopt and adapt, where we had to learn how to make our voices heard, and we had to learn over and over again how to live together as neighbours, as brothers and sisters. We even had to find ways to live with our enemies and oppressors. Three women heading the major organs of UNESCO, with Miss Alessandra Cummins from Barbados chairing the Executive Board for the past biennium, is a truly powerful message to the world that UNESCO is serious about its commitment to promoting gender equality and recognising the abilities of women. More importantly, it is a message to hundreds of millions of girls and women whose voices and hopes are currently unheard, that they too can aim high and realize their dreams.

As Mahatma Gandhi said:

*“No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive“*

Promoting and protecting cultural diversity, the diversity of languages, diversity of our nature and surrounding has been my life-long occupation – I have devoted my professional career to connecting people of diverse cultural backgrounds through the universal language of music, art and

communication, and I also promote the importance of interfaith dialogue, we will miss the opportunity to address many misconceptions and negative attitudes that feed hatred, intolerance and discrimination between groups of different people.

To “build the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women,” as UNESCO’s constitution declares, is the very essence of the Organization. “With our thoughts we make the world,” the Buddha teaches us. In the words of the great Indian statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru, “Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.”

But in isolation, no matter how powerful, the ideas within individual minds will not improve the lives of others. We must unite across the existing national, ethnic, and social boundaries to give our ideas a chance to cross-pollinate and spread for a truly global impact. And the most effective tool towards this end is the soft power of cultural, scientific and sports diplomacy.

Being a journalist by profession, I always summarize my experiences after an important period of my life. With the financial support of my government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, and the artistic and financial contribution of Espace Cinko of Paris, an establishment that is committed to open creative expression, and in collaboration with UNESCO I have just launched my new book : *The Art of Cultural diplomacy: Panorama of a Presidency* . In this book, I present to you a detailed summary of my key achievements as the President of the General Conference, and the related events and initiatives. I report to you about the use of cultural diplomacy to advance UNESCO’s ideas and values and about the exchanges of thoughts and ideas with people of different countries, cultures and occupations. Upon request, we would like to provide this book to the Heads of Delegations!

I would like to commend Madam Director-General for her firm commitment to leading this organisation through times of peril, and for facing up to all the challenges; for finding supporters and new partners in difficult moments; for making excellent choices of new Goodwill Ambassadors, Artists for Peace, and Special Envoys who will help us worldwide. I especially salute her for her political sensitivity in listening and responding to 195 different views, hopes, interpretations and suggestions.

I would like to thank Mme Alessandra Cummins the Chair of the Executive Board and all its Members for their untiring efforts to see through the implementation of the programme adopted by the 36<sup>th</sup> General Conference, and to prepare the future of this organization. And, of course, my sincere gratitude to both the Director General and the Chair of the Executive Board for their collaboration and for sharing their views with me.

I thank the Deputy Director General, Mr Engida and all the ADGs and the experts within the different programme sectors and the hard-working staff of the Secretariat for the dedication and proficiency revealed on every occasion of our professional interaction.

I would like to thank all the personnel that ensure the smooth functioning of the General Conference and the House; the event organisers, the translators, the room clerks, and the technical assistants.

Many of my friends and colleagues have offered vital assistance and inspiration, during my Presidency.

I must acknowledge the expertise with which the staff of UNESCO Secretariat has assisted me throughout my Presidential tenure, enriching my vision with their multicultural perspectives. I am especially grateful to Michael Millward, who hails from Great Britain, and Luis Salamanques, who comes from Spain. I cannot praise enough the intelligence, broad knowledge, intellect and accomplishment of my Personal Assistant, Irakli Khodeli from Georgia, the intelligent, insightful, multitalented and always supportive approach of my senior secretary, Catherine Thiounn from Cambodia, and the reliable and dedicated work of my security officer and driver, Algerian-French Ahmed Abdelli. I consider them not only my dear colleagues but my true friends.

I am grateful to the department of Security at UNESCO, who remain ever vigilant to ensure our safety in this house.

And you know my dear friends I always go home to where my heart and soul hails from. My own country, and the Hungarian culture which is welcoming and inspiring, rural and sophisticated, multi-layered, multi-ethnic, and represents different directions, but at the end protective of its roots and able to grow and develop, be reborn .

So I would like to thank my smiling, hardworking, beautiful Hungarian team in the Hungarian mission of UNESCO, never afraid of the workload and always ready for creative problem solving.

And now you, the delegates of the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the General Conference!

Honorable Ministers, Heads of Delegations,  
Excellencies, Fellow Ambassadors, Distinguished Delegates,  
Dear friends and colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 37<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference will be a culmination of the two years of fundamental transformations at UNESCO. The blueprint for UNESCO's future – its medium term strategy, its programme and budget, represents the product of these two years, and reflects many lessons learned along the way. The future vision of UNESCO will be yours to consider, review and adopt.

I wish you success in the deliberations and decisions that lie ahead. We must remember that *“not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced,”* as the American writer James Baldwin once remarked. So let's face the challenges together, united under this roof.

Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,

As many of you know I love to live a life that is strongly connected to art,  
poetry, music, fun and the joie de vivre !  
So of course I will finish my speech with music!

I would like to introduce four remarkable Hungarian Roma musicians,  
whom I have seen perform on many stages in the world, and who have  
created the Budapest Bar, protecting the great tradition of Hungarian  
Gypsy music which has inspired so many musicians from all over the  
world. Mainly and mostly the great Ferenc Liszt, whose Second Rhapsody  
will be now performed.

Thank you for your attention!  
Merci  
Cpaciba  
Shukran  
Gracias  
Xie, Xié  
Madloba (Georgian)  
Saum arkoun (Cambodian)  
and in Hungarian: Köszönöm szépen!!!!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Budapest Bar plays the second Hungarian Rhapsody by Ferenc Liszt!

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