



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

38th session of the World Heritage Committee

Doha, Qatar- 15 June 2014

Address

by

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Your Excellency, Mr Prime Minister,
Ms. Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee,
Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board,
Members of the World Heritage Committee,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you for the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Qatar, and the Chairperson and her team for hosting this session of the Committee in Doha.

Dear Colleagues,

In the last 38 years of the sessions of the Committee, with the efforts in preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the world for more than forty years, we have witnessed the inscriptions of more than 1000 sites that stand as testimonies of great civilizations. This is what we should be proud of, because we are more than convinced that, what we are doing today is beneficial to the humanity as a whole.

The achievements that we have made today depend on the strong political will of all member states of UNESCO, on the tireless efforts of all experts and researchers present here, as well as those who had no chance to attend our conference due to various reasons who also deserve our respect and appreciation.

Dear Members of the Committee,

Today, preservation of world heritage is highly concerned by all member states. Achievements are already behind us; more challenges, such as climate change, natural disasters, regional conflicts, are waiting ahead. The Chinese philosopher Confucius once stated:

*When at thirty years old, we become truly independent;
When at forty years old, we are no longer confused about
what we are doing;*

To tackle these emerging challenges, we need to listen to different voices from member states, to exchange the experiences and best practices. In this regard, I would like to suggest the following approaches:

First, education is the way to guide the young generation to heritage preservation;

To raise the awareness of this importance and to enhance the sustainability of our work, youth need to be involved in this process, since they are the one we pass the heritage to and the one who pass it on.

Therefore, we encourage integrating the elements of our preservation work of heritage into textbooks for primary and secondary schools; we encourage establishing the concerned disciplines, or centers in universities to conduct the researches while bring up the talents in this regard.

Second, efforts may be made through heritage work to integrate the culture into the post 2015 agenda

As we are discussing the post-2015 global agenda today, culture has been leveraged onto an unprecedented level. Last year, UNESCO hosted an international conference on culture and adopted *Hangzhou Declaration*, which emphasizes the role of culture in preserving diversity and sustainable development.

Last month, I also attended a meeting at UN headquarters in New York, to advocate the role of culture as an enabler and driver of sustainable development with the view to integrating culture in the post-2015 development agenda.

Natural and cultural heritage constitutes an essential part of the cultural development, and thus would have impact to our future agenda.

Third, based on the resolutions on structural reform of our organization, we need to push forward as well the reform on the heritage work.

Much progress has been made in the past in this regard, however, in order to facilitate the universal representation in the Committee, we need to explore all possibilities as to increase the diversity of the membership of the Committee.

Hence, it was with joy that I welcomed the news of the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group, by the General Assembly of States Parties, with a mission to enable all regions to be equitably represented at any time.

Fourth, natural and cultural heritage should be the band to link different civilizations for mutual learning and understanding;

“Different cultures may come in different colors, there’s no dominant culture in the world and this makes the mutual leaning and exchanges possible and valuable.” As said by Chinese President in his speech, Mr. Xi Jinping, during his last visit to UNESCO on 27th last March, he also cited the example of the role played by Silk Road in bridging the East and West and creating opportunities for prosperity and wealth for the inhabitants of both regions.

Hence, heritage can be considered as a critical element to promote the understanding and to maintain the peaceful development.

At last but not the least, I call on the governments to integrate the heritage work into national strategy, and focus needs to be put not only on the application but more important, on the preservation.

The international community expectation from us is to reinforce the diversity of sites represented on our list. It is evident that such historical wealth will enrich our convention and will ensure a balanced, representative and credible World Heritage List.

Finally, on behalf of the General Conference of UNESCO, I wish you all a very fruitful Session and a lot of success in your works.

Thank you

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