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**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the designation of Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko
as UNESCO Champions for Sport**

UNESCO, 4 December 2006

Your Excellency, Mrs Yushchenko, First Lady of the Ukraine,
Messieurs Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko,
Distinguished Ambassador,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to UNESCO Headquarters on this special occasion, when we will designate the world-class boxers, Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko, UNESCO Champions for Sport.

Let me begin by thanking the First Lady of the Ukraine for joining us in this celebration. Ms Yushchenko is no stranger to UNESCO. In November last year you accompanied President Yushchenko when he delivered his keynote address at our 60th anniversary ceremony. Earlier this year, I had the honour to meet you and President Yushchenko again, during my second official visit to the Ukraine to attend the international conference organized to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Here, I was privileged to appreciate at first hand Ms Yushchenko's inspiring commitment to the renewal and development of her country. I am delighted to welcome you again to UNESCO.

I am also particularly proud to welcome for the first time to Headquarters our new champions: Mr Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko. This evening you will join the ranks of other truly outstanding sport personalities including: the legendary football player

from Brazil, Pelé; the Formula One World Champion from Germany, Michael Schumacher; the Olympic Judo Champion from France, David Douillet; and the renowned hockey player, and Olympic and World Champion from Russia, Mr Viatcheslav Fetisov. Next week, I shall also designate our first woman Champion of Sport – Justine Hénin-Hardenne, one of the greatest tennis players of all time.

I know that this is not the first time that Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko have stood triumphantly on the podium. Your outstanding performances have been crowned by the highest awards: European Champion, Intercontinental Champion and World Champion.

In designating you UNESCO Champions for Sport we pay tribute to your immense talent and success. We also honour the commitment you have shown, from the very beginning of your careers, to use this success to help people in need.

There is not space here to list all of the humanitarian activities that you have initiated over the years. Let me signal just some examples of your devotion to helping others.

First, I would like to mention the International Sport Fund, “Sport – 21st Century”. Physical education and sport, especially among the young, can serve to foster confidence and hope. They are a means for instilling the values of fair play, pride, determination and respect for others. They are also important for good health and well-being. Through your Fund, you are creating opportunities for young Ukrainians to gain access to these great benefits.

Let me also refer to your creation in 2003 of the “Klitschko Brothers Foundation”. The purpose of the Foundation is to initiate, support and implement social projects aimed at promoting a healthy way of life, and addressing social problems. It is active in fighting such scourges as drug abuse, HIV and AIDS, and homelessness.

As our audience well knows, Vitaliy and Volodymyr Klitschko have also taken a particular interest in the UNESCO Programme “Education of Children in Need”. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the close and fruitful cooperation that exists between the Klitschko brothers and Mrs Ute-Henriette Ohoven, UNESCO Special Ambassador for the Education of Children in Need – who we are honoured

to have with us here today. Together they have visited and supported numerous projects in the Ukraine, Germany, Romania, Brazil and Namibia.

I am sure that in your capacity as UNESCO Champions for Sport you will continue to set an inspiring example to young people – teaching them to understand the meaning of fair play; to achieve a healthy balance of body and mind; to enjoy victory and accept defeat; and to respect fellow competitors. These are values, by the way, that are important not just for sport, but for life. They are the basis, in fact, of a peaceful, tolerant and prosperous society.

For this reason, UNESCO is particularly concerned to address those factors that threaten the moral value of sport. Not least is the grave problem of doping.

UNESCO has devoted considerable efforts to combating doping in sport. In particular, we have developed the International Convention against Doping in Sport, which will come into force very shortly. I am pleased to note that the Ukraine ratified this Convention last month, becoming one of 29 countries to have deposited their instruments of ratification with UNESCO. We are now missing only 1 ratification.

The entry into force of this Convention will be essential to preserving the integrity of sport. I know that you recognize the importance of this act. You have, in the course of your career, shown how sport can be a source of honour, excellence and inspiration. UNESCO looks forward to working with you to preserve and promote these noble sporting values.

It is now my great pleasure to confer to you the diploma of UNESCO Champion for Sport.

[You now read the diplomas and give them to the Klitschko brothers]

I congratulate you for joining UNESCO's Champions for Sport, and wish you every success in your new mission.

Thank you very much.