

**Address by H.E. President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev Nazarbayev
at the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference**

Paris, France, November 6, 2015

**Mr. Chairman,
Madam Director General,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great honor for me to welcome participants and guests of the 38th Session of the UNESCO General Conference.

UNESCO plays a special role in the UN Family.

This Organization, established 70 years ago, is rightly called “**the conscience of humanity**”.

It has made a significant contribution in maintaining our **cultural and historical heritage and** expanding international co-operation in **education, science and communications**.

Kazakhstan fully supports UNESCO in its work, the main priorities of which are important areas within the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

Twenty years ago, addressing the member states from this podium, I spoke about the goals and objectives of the young state of Kazakhstan.

In the last two decades, our country has made substantial progress and has met **most of the UN Millennium Development Goals**.

The poverty level has been reduced 11 times from *34% to 3%*.

We have built hundreds of schools and hospitals.

Kazakhstan's GDP has increased 19 times with per capita income reaching the level of middle-income states.

Life expectancy of our citizens now exceeds **70 years**.

Child and maternal mortality has decreased.

We have made significant progress in combating **AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis**.

We have adopted the **Kazakhstan - 2050 Strategy** that is fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals with the ambition of **joining the ranks of the world's 30 most developed states**.

Delegates,

In recent years, our world has seen the escalation of threats and clashes based on ethnic, cultural and religious divisions.

The debates of the 70th Session of the *UN General Assembly* underlined the pressing need for a new model for **global development**.

The international initiatives of Kazakhstan are aimed at addressing this important issue.

We propose **2045 Global Strategic Initiative Plan**.

Its main objective is to identify, agree and put in place a global strategy to

eliminate the root causes of wars and conflicts.

It is aimed at giving a **new development impetus based on fair access for all nations to global infrastructure, resources and markets** as well as universal responsibility for human development.

A nuclear-free world should be a central goal.

To achieve this aim, we propose to adopt a **Universal declaration on achieving a nuclear-weapons-free world**.

In 2016 we will celebrate **25 years** of signing the **Decree on closing the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site**.

The terrible legacy of 40 years of nuclear tests on our country and citizens is an important reminder of the need for the international community to unite to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Forming a common front to fight **terrorism and religious extremism** is another pressing global challenge.

Today the lands of **ancient Mesopotamia** – the cradle of world civilizations and our main religions – are subject to barbaric destruction and looting.

The actions of so called *Islamic State* are causing **irrecoverable damage** to the unique historical and cultural heritage of the Middle East.

Kazakhstan strongly condemns terrorism and extremism in any manifestation.

We propose the establishment of a **common global network for addressing international terrorism and extremism** under the auspices of the UN.

It is important that our collective efforts in countering Islamic radicalism do not confuse this distorted extremism **with peaceful Islam**.

We can best counteract extremism through inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

This is the goal of establishing an **“Islam against terrorism” Forum**.

We must harness the capacity of UNESCO to help achieve peace and international stability.

I propose to establish an International Academy on Maintaining Peace and Sustainable Development under UNESCO.

Basing on best international practices, this Academy could develop **progressive ideas and practical measures** to maintain peace and ensure sustainable development.

Of particular importance is the search for ways of **early conflict prevention** through the implementation of **the UNESCO Culture of Peace Concept**.

Its principles chime with Kazakhstan’s initiative to develop **the NEW FUTURE Concept** under the auspices of the UN.

Ladies and gentlemen!

In the mid-13th century the French monk *Guillaume de Rubrouck* visited the ancient Kazakh city **Kayalyk** where **Christian, Buddhist, Manichean and Muslim communities** coexisted peacefully.

Last year at the initiative of Kazakhstan, China and Kyrgyzstan **eight Kazakh archaeological sites, located on *the Great Silk Road***, were inscribed on *the UNESCO World Heritage List*.

They include the city of *Kayalyk* – an ancient symbol of tolerance, religious toleration and friendship.

Recently Kazakhstan has celebrated **the 550th Anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate**.

We are reviving the historical and cultural heritage of *the Great Steppe* and its spiritual values.

The monuments on the UNESCO Tentative List, among them ***Otrar, Turkestan, Sauran, Syganak***, are carefully preserved.

In 2013, **for the first time Kazakhstan became a member of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee**.

This imposes a special responsibility on us to preserve historical and cultural heritage.

Of particular importance is **the recognition and revival of *the Great Silk Road's* traditions**.

Its history proves that close cooperation and mutual cultural enrichment are the basis of peace and progress for all humanity.

I am pleased to note **the inclusion in the UNESCO Calendar of Anniversaries of the 1000th Anniversary of Almaty**, which was the hub of the Zhetysu segment of the Silk Road.

As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, Kazakhstan promotes the ideas of **tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony**.

The Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, convened at our initiative, has become a recognized platform for international dialogue, highly appreciated by the UN.

It was at Kazakhstan's initiative that the UN declared 2013 to 2022 ***the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures***.

We provide full support, including funding, for the program's successful implementation by UNESCO.

We hope for the support of UNESCO Member States for the establishment of ***a Center for the Rapprochement of Cultures under the auspices of UNESCO*** in Astana.

Participants of the Conference,

I am convinced that education is key to peaceful coexistence, sustainable development and the progress of humanity in the 21st century.

As a world leader in the area of education, **UNESCO should develop common standards of education quality** to which all countries should strive to attain.

For our part, Kazakhstan is already modernizing our national system of education.

Among the post-Soviet states, our country was one of the first participants

of the European zone of higher education.

Five years ago, we joined the ***European Cultural Convention and Bologna Process***.

A national network of intellectual schools and international level colleges has been established in the country.

The Nazarbayev University is a highly advanced project in the field of science and education.

Overall, Kazakhstan is one **of the four leaders among 130 countries with respect to the UNESCO Education Development Index**.

In order to support the UN Initiative "*Sustainable Energy for All*", the **EXPO World Exhibition** will be held in Astana in 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite all states to participate in EXPO 2017.

My proposal is to organize a **separate "UNESCO Pavilion"** within the exhibition to demonstrate its key in achieving sustainable development.

Using the EXPO 2017 Exhibition infrastructure we intend to open **an International Center for the Development of Green Technologies under the auspices of the UN.**

I suggest UNESCO becoming a scientific co-sponsor of this Center.

Dear friends,

Kazakhstan supports efforts to improve UNESCO's efficiency and to strengthen its credibility, modernization and adaptation to the challenges of our time.

I am confident that UNESCO will continue to be an **effective forum for cooperation between states and nations to promote enlightenment, humanism and peace**.

May I wish all the participants of the General Conference successful work for the benefit of humanity!

Thank you for your attention.