

## **NEW ZEALAND**

### **Plenary Speech**

E nga mana, e nga reo, e nga iwi  
E rau rangatira ma  
Nau mai, haere mai, piki mai  
Tena kotou, tena kotou, tena tatou katoa  
Kia ora hui hui mai tatou katoa

All peoples of the world, all speakers, all the chiefly  
peoples here, all groups  
Welcome, welcome, welcome to you all  
Greetings to all gathered here

And particularly greetings to New Zealand's many friends  
in the Pacific:

Talofa lava  
Malo leilei  
bula vinaka  
kia orana

### **I) Mr President**

New Zealand considers that UNESCO's mandate remains  
as relevant today as in 1946.

This year and next year New Zealand is serving on the  
United Nation's Security Council. We are seeing firsthand  
the results when states and communities are at war. We  
are seeing conflicts that defy national borders, conflicts  
that draw on ideologies of hatred and violence.

We are reminded time and again that we must “build the defences of peace” in the minds of men and women.

UNESCO’s mandate to foster international connections in the promotion and protection of culture, in education, in the sciences is fundamental to this.

As is UNESCO’s work in highlighting the importance of freedom of expression including ensuring the safety of journalists.

UNESCO also has a specific role in working with the UN Security Council, including making sure the illicit trade in cultural property is not allowed to fund conflicts, and to ensure those tasked with keeping the peace know that this also includes safeguarding heritage.

UNESCO members must ensure that we all work constructively here in Paris to build peace. We must not use our organisation to add fuel to the fires of conflicts.

## **II) Mr President**

2015 has been a big year for the UN System, with the agreement of the Sustainable Development Goals. What an achievement they are!

The SDGs commit all countries - big and small, rich and poor - to work towards shared goals. UNESCO’s work is integral to many of the SDGs.

New Zealand will be looking to UNESCO to continue to ensure its education, science, culture and communication efforts contribute to our collective achievement of these

goals. And, we will be drawing on UNESCO's collective expertise in our own implementation of the SDGs.

### **III) Mr President**

New Zealand was delighted that our region was chosen to host the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014. We congratulate the Government and people of Samoa for an outstanding conference. I should add that we hope all states will support Samoa's candidacy for UNESCO's Executive Board.

We were delighted that the Director General of UNESCO attended that Samoa Conference. With the New Zealand Secretary-General, I was honoured to meet with her as she passed through New Zealand, thus able to discuss various issues with her.

From the Samoa conference, we now have the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, setting out the international community's commitment to action for Small Island Developing States.

Small Island Developing States bring enormous strengths to UNESCO. All the states in our Pacific region, both developing and developed, are guardians of large areas of the earth's oceans.

Yet the Small Island Developing States are among the countries most in need in our international community in 2015. They remain vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including the erosion of land, the impact on water and food supply and in extreme cases, the possibility of having to leave home.

UNESCO now has a draft Action Plan for SIDs. The Secretariat has worked hard to cost the various proposals as well as to identify which of the current UNESCO programmes benefit SIDS.

We acknowledge the work of the Apia office, and the leadership of Etienne Clément in addressing issues affecting the area.

We strongly support the view that SIDS interests must be accorded greater priority. There is urgency. It is imperative that the actions outlined in the SIDS Action Plan be prioritised in UNESCO's programme and budget. We know funds are tight. But so too is time. However, in small island countries, we know funds go a long way.

#### **IV) Mr President**

New Zealand also wishes to commend the emphasis UNESCO is placing on the importance of education. While return on investment is not necessarily immediate, investment in education always brings value to a society. We must not forget, taking the 1982 theme of Neil Postman, young people are the living messages we send to the time we will not see.

UNESCO's role for 70 years is, and continues to be, to foster the development of creative and innovative ideas. May this continue, not least in education, thus ensuring that new ideas are available to all members for their own deliberations in this important area.

#### **V) Mr President**

New Zealand has been a strong supporter of UNESCO since the beginning.

Our National Commission works effectively in New Zealand to take the organisation's mission and make it

real in our communities, supporting programmes across the range of UNESCO sectors.

The New Zealand Government remains committed to supporting our National Commission in this work.

## **VI) Mr President**

Our country is an independent, fair-minded, principled and constructive small state. We will play our part within the United Nations. We are playing our part in New York. We are playing our part in Paris. We are playing our part in our own region.

Mr President, we greet you again,

No rei ra,

Tena Koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.