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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the Conference of
Parliamentarians for UNESCO**

UNESCO, 3 October 2009

Distinguished Parliamentarians,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to be with you today, for this first and very important Conference of Parliamentarians for UNESCO. I am also particularly pleased to be accompanied by Ambassador Irina Bokova, who has been designated as candidate to the post of Director-General by the Executive Board.

Your presence gives me a final opportunity, before my term of office expires on 15 November to underscore the importance I attach to our cooperation with Parliamentarians. Indeed, I was very moved by your warm words of tribute to me earlier today. And I listened very carefully to the summary of your discussions presented by Professor Iba der Thiam from Senegal.

Over the past ten years, I have deeply valued the individual and collective contributions of Parliamentarians to UNESCO's work. As democratically elected representatives of the people, you are the guarantors of democratic principles in your societies. You are also well placed both to reflect citizens' concerns, and to adopt appropriate measures in response to their expectations. Our cooperation with Parliamentarians is a crucial partnership that enables us to involve in our programmes those who benefit from them.

Allow me therefore to express my sincere appreciation to all the Speakers of National Parliaments, Presidents of Parliamentarian commissions and members of

Parliaments, as well as representatives of parliamentary organizations for travelling so far to be here today.

Finally but not least let me welcome the representatives of our long-term partners: the Interparliamentary Union and other interparliamentary fora around the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The themes that you have explored today: Education For All and building on Regional Parliamentary Fora for Education; the promotion of press freedom, human rights and democracy; Action on Climate Change; and UNESCO's international conventions in the field of culture, are at the heart of UNESCO's work to build a better and more sustainable future for all the world's people.

Your presence as decision makers, as political leaders and as representatives of your communities reflects your commitment to promoting peace and development in UNESCO's fields of competence, and testifies your will to amplify the Organization's efforts to attain internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All goals in our Member States.

Although we live in uncertain times, one thing is very clear. The unprecedented financial and economic crisis that has wreaked devastation across the world over the past year, has affected everyone, hitting hardest those least responsible, and provided compelling warnings that our patterns of development are simply not sustainable.

After taking leave of you, I will speak to the 6th UNESCO Youth Forum, which is now part of the General Conference of UNESCO. My message there is simple: with the crisis comes the opportunity for change. Times of uncertainty open up possibilities for profound transformation. We must seize this chance, and use it to bring about more inclusive societies as well as more stable and equitable growth.

The strengthening of UNESCO's cooperation with Parliamentarians is vital in this regard. Through our enhanced interaction and with the assistance of Member States and civil society, I am confident that we will be able to contribute to building a world where quality life is a reality for everyone.

I hope that your discussions today will stimulate you to seek new ways of strengthening your cooperation with UNESCO, particularly by accelerating the ratification and implementation of UNESCO's international conventions in your national legislation.

In closing, I wish to express my confidence that the Declaration you are about to adopt will allow us to move forward in our efforts to attain UNESCO's universal objectives.

Thank you very much for your attention.