



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

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the Award ceremony of the Order Dostyk of the
Republic of Kazakhstan**

UNESCO, 3 April 2014

Honourable Mr Imangali Tasmagambetov, Mayor of Astana and Chairman of the National Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan for UNESCO,

Excellency Mr Nurlan Danenov, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Kazakhstan to UNESCO,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to receive this High State Award, the *Order of Dostyk*, from the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I accept this as a sign of confidence in UNESCO.

I accept it as a sign of commitment to the values we share, to our joint efforts to build lasting peace and sustainable development.

On behalf of UNESCO, I thank the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for this recognition.

I am especially grateful to Mr Imangali Tasmagambetov for his presence today and for his leadership as Chairman of the National Commission of Kazakhstan for UNESCO, in which capacity he has shown an unwavering commitment to UNESCO, for which I am deeply grateful.

Peace. Friendship. Cooperation.

These words embody the *Order of Dostyk* – they also express the essence of UNESCO's mission.

This mission builds on the idea that peace cannot be decreed only through treaties, that it must be nurtured through the dignity, rights and capacities of every woman and man.

It is a way of being, a way of interacting with others, a way of living on this planet.

To be lasting, it must be founded on solidarity, on the basis of respect for human rights.

In a world that is increasingly fragile, we need a renewed commitment by all to peace, friendship and cooperation.

Societies are more connected than ever -- this calls for greater respect and understanding.

Societies are more diverse than ever -- this means we need new and stronger forms of dialogue.

This is why the 'soft power' of UNESCO is so important today, to give women and men every opportunity, through education, through scientific cooperation, through freedom of expression, through the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage.

We are living through an era of transition, when the old ways are passing and new ones are emerging.

This transition is giving rise to new questions -- questions we must answer together about the societies we wish to live in, about protecting the planet, about building the foundations for peace.

We need to craft responses together to these questions, and, with the support of Kazakhstan, UNESCO is acting across the world to strengthen the foundations for sustainable development and lasting peace.

We saw the strength of Kazakhstan's leadership in co-sponsoring the *2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures* that UNESCO led, with over a thousand activities across the world.

We saw it with the United Nations General Assembly resolution to launch the *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)*, which, again, Kazakhstan helped sponsor.

I am honoured UNESCO has been invited to lead the *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures*, to promote mutual understanding and respect through intercultural dialogue.

This global leadership draws on values that have deep roots in the society of Kazakhstan, in this country's long and rich history as a cross-road of the ancient Silk Route.

We see this history in the three sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List – the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, the Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of Tamgaly and also Saryarka, the Steppe and Lakes of Northern Kazakhstan.

At UNESCO, we experienced first-hand the cultural wealth and diversity of Kazakhstan through a memorable concert, *Melodies of the Steppes*, held last April, as well as the outstanding works of the great painter, Aubakir Ismailov, whose exhibition I was honoured to open with his daughter, during the 37th session of the General Conference.

Let me add to this horizon of partnership Kazakhstan's engagement across the full range of UNESCO's mandate -- including through the *Central Asian Regional Glaciological Centre*, which I launched, through UNESCO University Chairs, as well as through the commitment of Mr Serik Sapiyev, a world-class boxer, whom I was

honoured to designate as *Goodwill Ambassador for Sport* last August at a memorable event with so many young women and men.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Avec le soutien du Kazakhstan L'UNESCO est déterminée à poursuivre dans la voie de la paix et du dialogue, notamment dans le cadre de la *décennie internationale pour le rapprochement des cultures*.

En août dernier, j'ai été honorée de participer au lancement de cette décennie internationale à Astana.

J'ai pu mesurer le rôle du Kazakhstan et le leadership du président Nazarbaev, que j'avais déjà pu constater en tant qu'invitée spéciale au *4^e congrès des chefs des religions du monde et traditionnelles* en mai 2012.

La *décennie internationale pour le rapprochement des cultures* nous offre la possibilité de tracer les contours d'un nouvel agenda de la solidarité et de la citoyenneté globale, pour la diversité culturelle, pour la réconciliation et pour la paix.

Nous en avons plus que jamais besoin, à l'heure d'accélérer nos efforts en direction des objectifs du millénaire pour le développement et pour dessiner l'agenda post 2015.

La dignité, la créativité et le dialogue doivent être au cœur de ce nouvel agenda.

Comme disait le grand poète kazakh, Abai Kunanbaev :

« La connaissance et la raison sont ennemies de la duplicité, elles nous enseignent la gentillesse, l'honnêteté et les bonnes actions, c'est-à-dire, la compassion. »

Dans cet esprit, je souhaite remercier le président Nazarbayev, le gouvernement du Kazakhstan, pour l'insigne honneur que vous me faites en me remettant la distinction de l'ordre de Dostyk.