



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 Mr Eric Falt,
Assistant Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the Gala Concert “Music for Peace”
Batumi, Georgia, 15 September 2015**

Mikheil Giorgadze, Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia,
representing the Prime Minister,
Khatuna Totladze, Deputy Foreign Minister and Vice-President of the Georgian
National Commission for UNESCO,
Elisso Bolkvadze, UNESCO Artist for Peace,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to join you for tonight's gala concert in Batumi, which concludes the international music festival and celebrates the 70th anniversary of UNESCO. I know that this event will give music lovers from close and far a special opportunity to discover the treasures of Georgia's famed musical tradition, and to hear virtuosos from other parts of the world.

Allow me first of all to warmly thank the Georgian authorities for honouring me with such a generous welcome.

Minister, I would also like to praise your Government in making UNESCO's priorities a cornerstone of your country's development vision. I have had a chance to discuss with you today your own objectives in the field of culture, and also a chance to exchange views with your colleagues the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as the local authorities, and I can testify to the unity of our common aspirations.

And then, of course, I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Elisso Bolkvadze, whom our Organization is honoured to count among its Artists for Peace. Elisso has been very active in her new role and, in the last 48 hours, I have been able to witness how intensely dedicated she is to her responsibility of Director of the festival and how passionate she is in creating a stage for young talents.

Thanks to Elisso, the Batumi International Music Festival mirrors Georgia's musical soul and generosity.

Let me tell you that our Organization is happy and proud tonight to celebrate with you UNESCO's 70th anniversary through one of the greatest expressions of the human spirit, music. As we all know, this form of expression reaches beyond borders; it stands beyond language, and it brings women and men together around shared emotions and values. This is truly the gift of music.

A music critic once asked the great composer Robert Schumann to explain a particularly difficult piece he had just played. Robert Schumann didn't reply. Instead, he took his seat once again in front of the piano and repeated the piece. This is the power of music. It goes beyond explanation. It speaks directly to our hearts and our minds.

Music has the unique ability to touch each of us and to bind us together as a single community. I believe music is more than simply a metaphor of peace - it is a source of peace, through its generosity and, of course, through its beauty and inspiration.

At UNESCO, we are convinced that promoting the world's vast reserve of musical expressions and other cultural traditions, through initiatives such as this Festival, enhances mutual understanding and dialogue.

This is the spirit of all UNESCO's work, for 70 years. To deepen solidarity between women and men, between all societies, through cooperation and joint action, through dialogue between cultures and across societies. These goals guide all of our work, so that we can protect the values and heritage that humanity holds in common, to strengthen bridges of respect and understanding, as foundations for human rights and dignity, and for more lasting peace.

Culture is also a force for social cohesion, economic prosperity and creativity, and in contemplating the growth of Batumi and Georgia, I am very confident that this aspect shall not be forgotten by the decision-makers. I know that this message is

also shared by all of you tonight and I express my gratitude to each of you for your commitment and support to our shared values.

I thank you once again and I wish you all a beautiful evening.