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Message from Ms Irina Bokova

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the ceremony to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the House of the Hungarian Parliament

Budapest, September 2012

It is a pleasure to express my best wishes on the occasion of the commemoration of the 110th anniversary of the House of Parliament in Budapest.

This cherished landmark carries tremendous historical and artistic value. It has stood for more than a century as a symbol of democratic aspirations. Hungary's sovereignty and commitment to democratic principles are engraved in its marble and stones. In 1989, the new Hungarian Republic was proclaimed from one of the building's balconies, marking a new era for democratic governance and human rights.

Parliaments are temples of democracy. The House of Parliament in Budapest is also a prominent part of the city's rich World Heritage network, and a magnificent example of the Gothic Revival style that dominated 19th century Europe. As we celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Parliament, we also pay tribute to its architect, Imre Steindl, who passed away in the same year the building was inaugurated.

Such heritage is vital at a time of rapid change. It provides a historical and moral compass, drawing on the past to chart a stronger future. In 2012, we celebrate also the 40th anniversary of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, along with the Year of World Heritage in Hungary. This is a unique opportunity to renew our commitment to the values we share. Culture is a wellspring of identity and knowledge. It is an accelerator for peace, mutual understanding, and reconciliation and a motor for development. With eight sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, Hungary has long demonstrated a deep commitment to World Heritage preservation at the national and international levels.

I wish to congratulate the Hungarian Parliament for adopting the World Heritage Law, which entered into force last January. This is a forward-looking initiative that will drive the sustainable implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Hungary. As I underlined during my visit to the House of Parliament in November 2011, we must all energetically pursue joint efforts to communicate the value of the world's cultural and natural heritage.

UNESCO and Hungary have developed rich cooperation in this respect, which I am confident will flourish in years to come. In this spirit, I reiterate my best wishes for a successful celebration, and I look forward to ever more fruitful collaboration in the safeguarding of heritage to build lasting peace and sustainable future for all.

Irina Bokova