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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 Irina Bokova,**

**Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the Acceptance of the Anders Chydenius Medal**

**Helsinki, 2 May 2016**

Professor Gustav Björkstrand, Chair of the *Anders Chydenius Foundation*, Co-Chair of the *250 Delegation*,

Mr Kaius Niemi, Chair of the *Helsingin Sanomat Foundation*, Co-Chair of the *250 Delegation*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to receive the *Anders Chydenius Medal*.

I accept this on behalf of UNESCO, as a sign of trust in the Organization's work for freedom of information and freedom of expression across the world.

I accept this in the spirit of the partnership between Finland and UNESCO.

Anders Chydenius was a humanist and pioneer of liberalism and civic liberties.

Thanks to his pen, and Peter Forsskål, the world, indeed, saw 250 years ago the birth of the world's first Freedom of Information Law, covering modern-day Sweden and Finland.

In the words of Anders Chydenius:

*Freedom of writing and printing is one of the strongest bulwarks of a free organization of the State, as without it, the estates would not have sufficient information for the*

*drafting of good laws, and those dispensing justice would not be monitored, nor would the subjects know the requirements of the law, the limits of the rights of government, and their own responsibilities.*

This says it all...

Freedom of information and freedom of expression are essential for accountability and transparency... for good governance and the rule of law... for effective decision-making...

This breakthrough continues to inspire countries across the world, and this is especially important today, to take forward the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

As you know, this agenda “*of the people, by the people and for the people*” is set forth in 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are *ends* in themselves – they are *drivers* for the success of all of the goals.

They are foundations for the inclusive knowledge societies we need for the century ahead...

...especially today, in the Digital Age, when information is essential for creating and sharing knowledge, when the custodians of information extend beyond Governments, to include the private sector, academia, individual women and men, when new issues of transparency and privacy are rising...

In this context, we must do everything to prevent new divides from growing... gender divides, digital divides, divides in media literacy...

Today, more than ever, we must defend freedom of information and freedom of expression for every woman and man, in every society.

This is the message of Anders Chydenius -- one that we will send together tomorrow, on *World Press Freedom Day*.

This is why I am so honoured to be in Helsinki – ...it is not a coincidence Finland ranks first in the *2016 World Press Freedom Index*!

I am deeply grateful to Finland for its champion support to UNESCO, embodied in the project on *Promoting Freedom of Expression in Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen*.

This reflects values with deep roots in this country, led forward also by the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO.

I look forward to deepening this cooperation.

In this spirit, I am honoured to receive the *Anders Chydenius Medal*.

I thank the *Anders Chydenius Foundation* and all of you for your support.