



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 ceremony to designate Mr Marko Pogačnik as**

**UNESCO Artist for Peace**

**UNESCO, 5 February 2016**

Excellency Mr Andrej Slapnicar, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Slovenia to UNESCO,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

Dear Mr Marko Pogačnik,

Thank you for coming to UNESCO today.

We are honoured that you have brought your family here -- we need people like you to help share and carry our message forward, because we live in turbulent times, for women and men across the world, for the planet.

This is a time of change and turbulence, when societies are transforming, when planet Earth faces rising pressure.

This is a time of great promise also.

In 2015, every country of the world came together and agreed on a new vision for humanity, for the planet, for the next 15 years.

This is embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the historic Paris Climate Change Agreement.

I see these as the same agenda.

We know there cannot be an agenda for sustainable development that does not take into account the challenges of climate change, and there cannot be any lasting agreement on climate that does not integrate the human dimension of sustainable development.

This is a renewal of UNESCO's founding commitment.

No society stands alone.

No people can survive in isolation.

We must all stand together, on the same planet, sharing the same destiny.

UNESCO was founded more than 70 years ago on a vision to combine in the same platform our ambition for culture and science and education – we were discussing with Marko the legacy of the great Leonardo, and it is true that, during the Renaissance, science was considered as part of culture and culture as part of science – UNESCO thrives on the same vision.

This is what makes UNESCO unique and strong.

This is why it is such a pleasure to welcome Marko Pogačnik to the UNESCO today.

Marko Pogačnik, you once said, and I quote:

*“One has to open one's heart, to listen, to be open to what is happening around, to dreams, to special events...to react through one's own creativity in the same way – this is a new civilisation.”*

In your book, *Gaia's Quantum Leap*, you write that humanity is facing “a fundamental change in the environment that allows the further evolution of nature and humankind on the earth's surface.”

Both statements capture the essence of your philosophy.

This is a philosophy of transformation, a philosophy of communication.

This is about the intimate relationship between women and men and the places where they live, with planet Earth – it is about the harmony of connections, the wisdom from past cultures, and the need to recognize and nurture the energy of inner earth.

Fundamentally, this is about healing the relationship between humanity and earth, to interrupt the spiral of detrimental forces that are threatening future sustainability – how relevant is this to our concerns, and to our dreams today.

All of this draws on a life that has been dedicated to creativity and the arts as the means to understand and shape the reality we live in.

Marko Pogačnik studied sculpture and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana.

He founded the *OHO! Movement*, and has long been a leading artist in Slovenia and across the region.

His work in conceptual land art has gained world renown, and he has developed a unique method of earth healing – lithopuncture – using stone pillars, with carved cosmograms, as forms of acupuncture points on the landscape.

Your outstanding work -- including sculptures, illustrations and lectures across the world – has come to highlight the rising dangers facing the Earth today, and the processes by which we can, each of us, craft new forms of co-existence and communication with all living organisms on Earth, the planet and its landscapes.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Marko Pogačnik, vous avez qualifié votre approche de « géoculturelle » pour marquer une nouvelle harmonie entre la culture humaine et la terre, Gaia et la sphère biologique.

Et vous prolongez, par votre art, une longue tradition culturelle européenne et Slovène de respect et d'écoute de la nature, incarnée notamment par l'œuvre du grand poète romantique France Prešeren.

Nous devons construire une nouvelle culture de paix, pour que les hommes et les femmes puissent vivre ensemble entre eux, mais aussi pour que le genre humain vive en harmonie avec la planète.

L'importance de ce message n'a jamais été aussi forte.

Il résonne au cœur du mandat de l'UNESCO.

Il résonne clairement avec la philosophie du nouvel Agenda des Nations Unies pour le développement durable.

La durabilité n'est pas seulement une notion technique, économique ou financière.

Elle appelle de nouvelles manières de penser et d'agir, en relation avec les autres, en harmonie avec la terre.

Cette vision guide le travail de l'UNESCO pour l'éducation au développement durable, pour la protection de la biodiversité, pour le partage des savoirs autochtones.

Dans cet esprit, je suis convaincue de l'énergie que Marko Pogačnik peut apporter aux programmes de l'UNESCO dans le domaine des Geoparks et des réserves de biosphères par exemple.

C'est à ce titre, en pleine reconnaissance de votre talent et de votre dévouement, que j'ai le plaisir de vous désigner Artiste de l'UNESCO pour la paix.

Je vous remercie.