



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 occasion of the Annual Meeting of UNESCO

Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors

UNESCO, 10 May 2016

Your Royal Highness,

Excellencies,

Dear friends,

I thank you all for coming to UNESCO today.

I thank you, most of all, for the energy you bring to UNESCO.

Each of you is a flag bearer for this Organisation.

Each of you helps to share our message of peace, tolerance and dialogue, with new audiences, widening our appeal, taking our Organization ever forward...

This has never been so important.

You all know well -- we are living through turbulent times.

Opportunities are high everywhere, for positive change, for trade and prosperity, for exchange and dialogue.

But challenges are steep.

We see conflicts endure across the world, eluding resolution, tearing societies apart.

We see the rise of violent extremism, acts of barbaric terrorism, striking at societies in all regions.

I think of the brutal attacks in Paris in January and November, 2015, in Brussels this year, in many countries across the world.

In Syria and Iraq, we see a devastating humanitarian crisis exacerbated by cultural cleansing.

We see human rights violated on massive scale, minorities attacked, women enslaved, journalists beheaded, cultural heritage and cultural diversity destroyed.

I see this as a new global struggle for hearts and minds...especially young hearts and minds...

In this context, I am convinced the message we share has never been so relevant.

As you know well, UNESCO was created 71 years ago, after a devastating war, on the idea peace had to be built in new ways, and this is the idea we renewed together during the ceremony of the 70th anniversary of UNESCO last year.

Our Constitution opens with words that must remain our compass setting today:

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of women and men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

These words resonate at a time when societies are transforming, when the planet faces rising pressures, when all countries are calling for social inclusion, fighting extreme poverty and for greater cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

The rising complexity of global challenges calls for more UNESCO – it calls for more diplomacy, more multilateralism.

Look at the turning points of 2015...

Last September, the world agreed on the new *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

This builds on the Millennium Development Goals, and embodies a new universal and transformative agenda for people, for prosperity, for peace, and for the planet, for the next 15 years.

This agenda "*of the people, by the people and for the people*" was crafted with the active involvement of UNESCO.

In this respect, I thank Mr Thomas Gass, Assistant United Nations Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, for joining us today.

Let me say UNESCO is pleased to count Forest Whitaker as a recently-appointed *Sustainable Development Goal Advocate*, serving also as *UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation*.

We are honoured Her Highness Sheikha Mozah, *UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education*, has also been appointed as *Sustainable Development Goal Advocate*.

I thank both of them for their leadership and advocacy.

2015 closed also with the historic Paris Agreement, at the COP21.

This is a key moment for protecting the planet, while ensuring a life of dignity for all.

On 22 April, I was honoured to attend the high-level signature ceremony for the Paris Agreement, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

I see the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement as one single agenda.

An agenda for human rights and dignity – an agenda for poverty eradication – an agenda for sustainability.

These agreements show the thirst that exists across the world for multilateral diplomacy, despite the odds.

Critics say multilateralism is dying.

I think they are wrong -- it has never been so vital.

I believe demand for the United Nations, for UNESCO, has never been so high – we must respond...

...the last year has seen UNESCO acting on all fronts...

...we have been helping States shape the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, to craft ambitious universal goals for the next 15 years...

...we have completed the rebuilding of the mausoleums of Timbuktu...

...we stood up against cultural cleansing, to safeguard the great cultural heritage and diversity of humanity...

...we took forward the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199, in creating *United4Heritage*, a global coalition to halt the trafficking of cultural goods...

...we advanced media and information literacy, supporting youth engagement, including on the Internet, to prevent radicalization...

...we have defended freedom of expression, enhancing the safety of journalists and ending impunity...

...in continuing to sharpen the delivery of the Organisation, through root-and-branch reform...

The agenda is ambitious, and I am determined to meet it – and, for this, I need your engagement, I need your ideas, I need your initiative...

In this respect, I wish to say special words about two eminent members of the family of Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors, who have passed.

As you know, international lawyer and Holocaust survivor, Samuel Pizar, UNESCO *Honorary Ambassador and Special Envoy for Holocaust Education*, left us on 27 July, 2015.

Samuel Pizar made an outstanding contribution to UNESCO, to advance Holocaust education, to deepen respect for human rights and dignity, for mutual respect and dialogue.

In his own words:

“Unless we espouse, through remembrance and education, the core universal values embedded in all great creeds - spiritual and secular - the forces of darkness may return with a vengeance to haunt us again.”

Samuel Pizar spoke from experience and I asked UNESCO colleagues to put together this brief montage as testimony:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXkXLS7Feuo>

UNESCO paid tribute to Samuel Pizar during *International Holocaust Remembrance Day*, on 27 January, and this will be renewed tonight at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, to which you are all invited.

I wish also to pay tribute today to the memory of Zaha Hadid, visionary architect, *UNESCO Artist for Peace*, who passed on 31 March.

Zaha Hadid changed the face of architecture, crafting new space embodying a rich diversity of traditions, providing new bridges for dialogue between peoples and cultures.

Each is a unique experience of space and soul, and will remain to inspire future generations of thinkers and artists.

Please find here a brief video on her commitment to UNESCO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT9KPJEOk4Q>

In this spirit, I would ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to observe a moment of silence in memory of Samuel Pizar and Zaha Hadid.

Merci, chers amis,

L'UNESCO est forte par ses programmes, et l'UNESCO est forte par son message – un message de dignité, de foi en l'esprit humain.

Ce message doit être partagé et vous jouez un rôle central pour le diffuser, dans chacun de vos cercles respectifs, pour faire entendre la voix de la paix, du dialogue, de la raison.

Nous vivons un monde turbulent, où nous constatons tous les jours, l'action de forces mauvaises qui cherchent à attiser les haines, à falsifier l'histoire, à dresser les peuples ou les cultures les uns contre les autres.

La diversité culturelle est attaquée par des extrémistes car elle incarne une liberté de vivre et de penser qui leur est insupportable.

Notre rôle, votre rôle, est de répondre par encore plus de culture, de connaissance, de diversité créatrice et de porter un message d'espoir, de rappeler aussi la vérité et le sens du travail de l'UNESCO, et je me réjouis de voir le nombre croissant de personnalités, qui nous rejoignent.

Madame **Beate Klarsfeld** et Monsieur **Serge Klarsfeld** ont été nommés Ambassadeurs honoraires et Envoyés spéciaux de l'UNESCO pour l'enseignement de l'histoire de l'Holocauste et la prévention du génocide et je suis très heureuse de votre présence aujourd'hui, M. Klarsfeld.

Madame **Maha El-Khalil Chalabi**, dont nous savons le rôle en faveur de la ville de Tyr, continuera de promouvoir la « Ligue des cités cananéennes, phéniciennes et puniques » en qualité d'Ambassadrice de bonne volonté de l'UNESCO -- permettez-moi également de vous remercier, Madame, pour votre généreuse contribution au déjeuner d'aujourd'hui.

L'UNESCO compte aussi de nouveaux artistes pour la paix, le sculpteur chinois **Han Meilin**, le virtuose de jazz bulgare **Theodisii Spassov**, le styliste nigérien **Alphadi**, le sculpteur slovène **Marko Pogačnik**, la chanteuse de jazz polonaise **Urszula Dudziak**, la cantatrice lituanienne **Violeta Urmana**.

J'ai également nommé l'ancien Président du Kenya, Son Excellence **Mwai Kibaki**, Envoyé spécial de l'UNESCO dans le domaine de l'eau en Afrique, représenté aujourd'hui par Son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur du Kenya auprès de l'UNESCO.

Je tiens à remercier chacun d'entre vous pour toutes les initiatives que vous avez menées au nom de l'UNESCO -- ces actions sont résumées dans les lettres mensuelles et elles sont détaillées dans le Florilège distribué dans cette salle.

Comme vous en avez été informé, dans le but de déterminer les actions concrètes que vous pourrez soutenir dans les deux ans à venir, un examen des activités des *Ambassadeurs honoraires et de bonne volonté* est en cours, et nous vous informerons individuellement de ses résultats – c'est une décision du Conseil exécutif de l'UNESCO, je crois que c'est un bon signe que les Etats Membres veulent se rapprocher des ambassadeurs de bonne volonté, M. Eric Falt, Sous-Directeur Adjoint pour les relations extérieures, est à votre disposition pour toute information complémentaire.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Dans le tumulte où nous sommes, nous ressentons plus que jamais l'unité profonde du mandat de l'UNESCO – qui est de promouvoir la raison, la liberté de conscience et de créer, qui sont les fondements de la dignité humaine, et je le crois profondément, le socle de toute paix durable.

Vous incarnez cette liberté, cette diversité, vous avez tous une œuvre particulière, dans la musique, dans la peinture, dans la recherche et l'activisme civique, et par votre travail, vous aidez à la faire vivre, pour la paix.

Je vous en remercie et sans plus attendre je voudrais passer la Parole à notre Maître de Cérémonie, M. Jean Michel Jarre.