



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 opening session of the Annual Meeting of UNESCO

Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors

UNESCO, 15 June 2015

Your Royal Highnesses,

Excellencies,

Dear Friends,

I am extremely pleased to welcome you all to UNESCO for the *Annual Meeting of Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors*.

This is an important meeting for UNESCO, and it is an important for me personally.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank each of you for the commitment you bring to the Organization.

This is especially vital in this year when we celebrate UNESCO's 70th anniversary.

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

These words, written 70 years ago, have, I believe, special meaning to each of us gathered here.

I am convinced they have never been so relevant, for these turbulent times, when societies are transforming, when conflicts remain aflame, when the planet faces increasing pressure, when all countries are calling for social inclusion, fighting extreme poverty and for greater cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.

This is a particularly important year for the international community, when States are shaping a new global sustainable development agenda which is people-centered and negotiating a new agreement in response to climate change.

Demand for UNESCO has never been so high – we must meet these expectations and this is my ambition and responsibility as Director-General of this organisation.

This is the importance of the *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Programme*.

Each of you is a wellspring of ideas and initiatives, reflecting a rich diversity of experiences.

Each of you is a source of energy that deepens UNESCO's outreach, global work and advocacy.

Each of you is a flag bearer for UNESCO -- bringing our message of peace, tolerance and dialogue to new audiences, widening our appeal, taking our Organization ever forward...

I am honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness Grand-Duchess of Luxembourg, whose support in the field of education and microfinance is so important, notably in South-East Asia.

I welcome and thank Her Royal Highness Princess Firyal, a longstanding champion for UNESCO's Education for All Programme.

I wish to greet Pierre Bergé, and thank him for his support to our activities to fight against HIV/AIDS and our work in safeguarding cultural heritage.

I thank Jean-Michel Jarre, for using his outstanding artistic talents to advance UNESCO's key messages of peace and dialogue, reaching out to young people - which is so important today.

Ms Marianna Vardinoyannis is one of UNESCO's greatest advocates, promoting the Organisation's ideals and aims worldwide, for which I am deeply grateful.

I am pleased to welcome Metin Arditi, who continues to promote intercultural dialogue, most notably through projects in Palestine and Israel, and who initiated an important partnership with the University of Geneva on culture preservation, culture and development, and human rights.

I thank Bahia Hariri for her outstanding work in Lebanon and across the region, in education for sustainable development and in support of young women and men for dialogue and peace -- she welcomed me in Beirut very recently, and I remain very grateful for all her support.

I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of Countess Setsuko Klossowska de Rola, to promote world heritage through education.

I am grateful to Ms Ute-Henriette Ohoven for her action in supporting education for children in need, as well as her longstanding support to fighting extreme poverty in least developed countries.

UNESCO's work in the field of sustainable development is bolstered by the activities of Yvonne A-Baki, whom I warmly greet this morning for her work in supporting intercultural dialogue, and whom I met recently in Beirut.

I pay tribute to Jordi Savall for all his efforts in promoting cultural diversity and UNESCO's flagship *Slave Route project*.

I wish to greet Alexandra Ochirova and express my gratitude to her for taking forward UNESCO's objectives, especially in her native Russia and for contributing to the conference on culture and development in Moscow, showing the importance of culture and art for dialogue and social inclusion.

Let me highlight the importance of the activities undertaken by Mr Valery Ignatenko in access to information and language diversity.

I welcome Marianna Nicolesco and her work to support young talents in her native Romania and far beyond.

Musical education is at the heart of Maria de Medeiros' outstanding activities.

I thank Cyprien Katsaris for his continued efforts to promote peace through his music.

These efforts are taken forward also by Marta Sebestyen, whom I am pleased to greet.

Professor Malaurie plays a leading role in support of UNESCO's actions in the field of climate change – this is especially important in the run-up to the *United Nations Climate Change Conference* that will be held in Paris this December.

I wish to underline the ground-breaking work of Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, especially in the fields of education and sustainable development. She has led outstanding work with children in need through art education.

I am pleased to welcome Zurab Tsereteli, who shares the values of UNESCO through his professional activities across the world.

The commitment to building the defences of peace stands at the heart of Claudia Cardinale's work.

Alain Husson-Dumoutier has supported the Organisation through an inspiring exhibition at UNESCO earlier this year to fight racism and xenophobia, for which I express sincere thanks -- I was honoured to visit his atelier.

Those values are also shared by Hedva Ser, who continues to disseminate UNESCO's message of peace and tolerance through activities across the world – most recently, in Baku, Azerbaijan, which I was honoured to attend.

I wish to highlight the work of Miguel Angel Estrella who continues to support young artists and performers.

Let me highlight the important initiatives of the *Chœur et l'Orchestre philharmonique international*, represented this morning by Hugues Garros.

I greet Sergei Markarov, who makes the most of music to raise public awareness about our messages of peace.

I wish to thank Guila Clara Kessous for her unique projects and activities in the framework of UNESCO's 70th anniversary.

I am pleased to greet Charles Kaye – I am grateful for all the efforts of the *World Orchestra for Peace*, established with former Secretary-General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in performances undertaken across the world to advance our common goals.

Eijin Nimura is leading from the front in supporting musical education for young people in Japan who have suffered from the consequences of natural disaster.

It is my pleasure to greet Ali Mahdi Nouri, whom I thank for his relentless work to support child soldiers and children caught in conflict areas in Africa.

Let me greet and thank Amri Aminov for his commitment to raising UNESCO's flag through his artistic activities.

I thank Ino Mirkovic for his support to raising public awareness on our Organization's work through his performances.

Dear Friends, I wish to thank each of you -- I tried to mention only some of your initiatives – along with all Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors not with us today.

In this, let me single out the significant contributions made by Ms Marianna Vardinoyannis, as well as Professor Khalili to UNESCO in this crucial year, as well as Mr Metin Arditi.

I believe each of you embodies the UNESCO family, and the good news is that the family is growing!

On 22 January, I was honoured to designate the world-renowned Georgian pianist, Elisso Bolkvadze, as *UNESCO Artist for Peace*.

This designation recognises her unique talent — it highlights her commitment to supporting musical education for talented young Georgian girls and boys.

As *UNESCO Artist for Peace*, Elisso Bolkvadze will be deeply involved in UNESCO's activities in the field of education for children in conflict-affected areas.

Thank you, Ms Bolkvadze.

On 29 April, I designated CNN Chief International Correspondent, Christiane Amanpour, as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Freedom of Expression and Journalist Safety*.

I believe everyone here knows of the ground-breaking role Christiane Amanpour plays, carrying the banner of freedom of expression and safety of journalists across the world, including in some of the most dangerous areas.

I look forward to working with her, to strengthen UNESCO's actions for media freedom and the safety of journalists.

Let me also take this opportunity to inform you that Michaëlle Jean ended her mandate as a *UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti* last December, further to her election as Secretary-General of the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*.

Let me renew now my deep thanks to her, for her tireless commitment to UNESCO's work in Haiti over her four years as *UNESCO Special Envoy*.

Altesses, Excellences, Chers amis,

Les sujets qui ont été choisis pour cette réunion annuelle reflètent les domaines d'actualité de notre Organisation.

Il est important de partager ces informations pour explorer ensemble la meilleure façon de vous associer à nos actions prioritaires.

Nous sommes totalement mobilisés par la situation tragique en Syrie.

J'ai appelé, à plusieurs reprises, à une cessation immédiate des hostilités à Palmyre, site du patrimoine mondial où les combats se poursuivent.

J'ai appelé la communauté internationale à protéger la population civile et à sauvegarder le patrimoine culturel unique de Palmyre.

Nous travaillons avec les forces armées, les gouvernements, Interpol, les douanes, nous avons travaillé pour l'adoption d'une résolution au Conseil de Sécurité, qui interdit le commerce des objets culturels en provenance d'Iraq et de Syrie, pour combattre le financement du terrorisme.

Comme vous le savez, j'ai visité deux fois l'Iraq et j'ai lancé le 28 mars dernier lors de ma visite à Bagdad, la campagne #Unispourlepatrimoine, pour la protection du patrimoine.

L'objectif est de diffuser, sur les réseaux sociaux, un contre-discours à la propagande sectaire, de diffuser des connaissances sur ce patrimoine, d'expliquer pourquoi il est important pour nous, d'expliquer sa valeur.

Il ne faut pas laisser aux extrémistes le monopole du discours sur l'Islam et le patrimoine.

Par votre influence, vous pouvez contribuer de façon déterminante à cette campagne – et je vous invite à la rejoindre.

Et justement, il vous sera demandé, à l'occasion de la session de photo de tout à l'heure, d'apporter votre soutien à cette campagne en plaçant cette session de photo sous le signe de la campagne #Unispourlepatrimoine.

Nous avons également organisé le *Forum mondial sur l'éducation* à Incheon, en République de Corée du 19 au 22 mai dernier.

La *Déclaration sur l'avenir de l'éducation*, adoptée à l'issue de ce Forum, est un tournant pour la coopération mondiale dans le domaine éducatif -- nos collègues du Secteur de l'Education auront le plaisir de vous présenter les détails.

Suite aux attaques terroristes en France qui ont coûté la vie à 17 personnes, l'UNESCO a organisé une journée de solidarité et de réflexion intitulée « Être journaliste après Charlie » dédiée à la liberté d'expression, la sécurité des

journalistes, la promotion du dialogue interculturel et la lutte contre l'intolérance, qui marquait la deuxième partie de la journée consacrée à «comment vivre ensemble ».

Je saisis l'occasion pour renouveler mes remerciements les plus sincères à celles et à ceux d'entre vous qui étaient présents à nos côtés lors des diverses actions qui ont été organisées suite à ces événements tragiques.

Ces questions, au cœur du mandat et de l'action de notre Organisation, ont une résonance singulière en cette année du 70e anniversaire de l'UNESCO.

La conférence intitulée « Les jeunes et l'Internet : Combattre la radicalisation et l'extrémisme », qui aura lieu demain et après-demain vise à prolonger ce débat, à identifier des pistes concrètes de lutte contre l'extrémisme.

Vous seront également présentées, cet après-midi, les priorités de participation par l'UNESCO à la Conférence Paris Climat 2015, rendez-vous décisif de la lutte contre le dérèglement climatique.

Enfin, permettez-moi de remercier Monsieur Ali Mahdi Nouri, *Artiste de l'UNESCO pour la paix*, de nous présenter les artistes du théâtre « Al Buggaa », à la fin de cette réunion.

Vous êtes bien tous invités à cette représentation qui débutera à l'issue de la session de l'après-midi.

Notre réunion annuelle sera clôturée par un dîner de gala du Panorama des Nuits en Or, avec l'Académie des Césars et la société française Renault.

Notre Organisation ouvre ses portes à la 5e édition du Panorama, trois jours de projections pour voir et revoir les meilleurs courts métrages récompensés en 2015 par les plus grandes Académies de Cinéma.

Encore une fois soyez les bienvenus dans cette maison de paix, de culture, de dialogue et de dignité humaine.

A présent, je donne la parole à Son Altesse Royale la Princesse Firyal et à Jean-Michel Jarre, modérateurs de la réunion annuelle.

Je les remercie pour leur fidélité sans faille et pour leur soutien continu.

Merci.