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## **Statement by the Executive Board of UNESCO following the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, France**

16 April 2019

We, the Member States of UNESCO, meeting today in the Executive Board at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, wish to solemnly express our deep emotion at the fire that affected Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris yesterday.

This tragedy reminds us that through the world heritage, it is the bond that unites humanity that is at stake. UNESCO stands always alongside the heritage, as an expression of the values we all share.

Notre-Dame Cathedral, in the heart of Paris, is a powerful symbol not only of France, but of humanity as a whole because of its exceptional architecture, its spiritual function, its place in history and its literary and artistic legacy. This is the outstanding universal value recognized and honoured by UNESCO in 1991, when it included the Cathedral in the World Heritage List.

This episode, like all the other episodes of inestimable loss and destruction that have unfortunately marked our history, reminds us that the heritage is vulnerable and that, accordingly, the commitment of the international community remains crucial for its protection and safeguarding. This is an opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering attachment to the protection of the heritage, an objective that the United Nations has set itself through UNESCO.

We, the Member States, express our full solidarity and determination to act. We share the grief of all those who have lost a majestic figure in the collective imagination of peoples around the world as a result of the destruction, which was fortunately stopped by the heroic efforts of the emergency services.

We stand resolutely with the French authorities to support the work to restore Notre-Dame Cathedral, and to share UNESCO's expertise in this task, in line with its mandate for the protection of the world heritage. For us and for future generations, it is our responsibility to ensure a future for our past.