

Message from Mr Jan Hladik, UNESCO Representative to Uzbekistan and Head of UNESCO Tashkent Office, on the occasion of Independence Day of Uzbekistan, 1 September, 2020

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

On behalf of the UNESCO Tashkent Office as well as on my own behalf, I am happy to congratulate you on the occasion of the 29th anniversary of Independence of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is a country with ancient history and unique movable and immovable, tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Here lives a generous, hard-working, multi-ethnic people, unique in their cultural diversity.

Uzbekistan is one of the 193 Member States of UNESCO since 1993. Opening of the Representative Office of our Organization in Tashkent in 1996 has created important and wide-range opportunities for strengthening our co-operation and implementation of our mandate in Uzbekistan.

We work with the relevant Uzbek authorities in important fields such as the improvement and reforms of the education system, freedom of expression and safety of journalists, water resources management and safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The visit of the President of Uzbekistan H. E. Mr Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the UNESCO Headquarters in October 2018, as well as the visit of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, to Samarkand and Bukhara in August 2019 have marked important milestones in our co-operation in accordance with the Roadmap established between both partners.

One of our new and extremely important projects in Uzbekistan is the joint European Union-UNESCO programme to support the agricultural sector in Uzbekistan through the development of vocational education and training system. From 2020 to 2024, UNESCO will implement this

project in four regions: Karakalpakstan, Khorezm, Bukhara and Surkhandarya region, together with the ministries concerned and other stakeholders of Uzbekistan.

I sincerely hope to further advance UNESCO's cooperation with all the partners in Uzbekistan because only by our mutual co-operation we will be able to implement our mandate and to contribute to the sustainable development of Uzbekistan.

May I conclude my welcome message by wishing to all people of Uzbekistan an excellent health as well as personal and professional happiness.

Katta rahmat!