



United Nations  
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pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of “The night of Jordanian Treasures”  
Concert of traditional Jordanian dance and music**

**UNESCO, 3 April 2007**

Your Majesty, Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan,  
Your Excellency, Mr Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania,  
Your Royal Highness, Princess Lalla Meryem of Morocco,  
Distinguished Goodwill Ambassadors,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to UNESCO Headquarters for “The Night of Jordanian Treasures”. This performance of traditional Jordanian dance and music has been specially organized to celebrate the 7<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors.

We are deeply honoured this evening to have with us Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan, His Excellency President Adamkus of Lithuania, and Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Meryem of Morocco, as well as many UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors and other distinguished guests. To all of you, let me extend once again a very warm welcome to UNESCO House.

Tonight's performance is placed under the high patronage of Queen Rania of Jordan. Before paying tribute to Her Majesty's inspiring work, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Majesty King Abdullah the second of Jordan for his unwavering efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

Distinguished Guests,

Her Majesty Queen Rania has pioneered many important initiatives to promote human development and intercultural dialogue, in particular through the Jordan River Foundation of which she is founder and Chair. Created in 1995, the Foundation focuses on improving the lives of women and children, with the aim of building a better future for all.

These are goals that UNESCO strongly shares and supports. I am in this respect delighted to inform you that this evening UNESCO has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jordan River Foundation, setting out a strong framework for cooperation between the two Organizations.

Our collaboration will focus on the field of education. In particular, I hope that we can build on the Foundation's excellent work in early childhood care and development.

Another valuable area for cooperation is the promotion of literacy. We enjoyed a very interesting discussion this afternoon among UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors on the power of literacy. We spoke in particular of the far-reaching implications of female literacy – for the empowerment of women, as for all aspects of family and social well-being. Tomorrow, we will address the theme of sustainable development, where literacy can also be a vital lever of change.

I know these are issues about which Your Majesty cares deeply, and where collaboration between UNESCO and your Foundation could yield real rewards.

Your Majesty, at the heart of our commitment to sustainable human development, is the shared belief in the need to preserve and promote local traditions and cultures. The latter represent rich resources – in terms of creativity, knowledge and economic opportunity.

This evening's performance, as well as the accompanying exhibition of artefacts and photographs that will be on display throughout the week, provide a fascinating introduction to Jordan's culture heritage.

These events also draw attention to the diverse influences that shaped this heritage, and how such intermingling can be immensely enriching. They are, above all, testimony to the importance of intercultural dialogue for fostering mutual understanding and peace.

It is now my great honour to give the floor to Her Majesty Queen Rania.

Thank you.