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科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the World Heritage inscription ceremony  
of the Centennial Hall in Wroclaw**

**Wroclaw, Poland, 4 June 2007**

Honourable Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you here this evening for the official inscription ceremony of Wroclaw's Centennial Hall on the UNESCO World Heritage List. I would first like to express my warm congratulations to the Government of Poland. Thanks to this latest inscription, Poland now proudly claims a total of thirteen sites on the World Heritage List.

Constructed between 1911 and 1913 by Max Berg, the chief architect of the city of Breslau, as Wroclaw was then called, the Centennial Hall is indeed outstanding in a number of respects.

At its 30<sup>th</sup> session in Vilnius last July, the World Heritage Committee qualified this multi-purpose recreational building as "a pioneering work of modern engineering and architecture, which exhibits an important interchange of influences in the early twentieth century". The Committee also recognized the monument as "one of the climax points in the history of the use of metal in structural consolidation".

With its massive central dome measuring some 65 metres in diameter and rising a dizzying 42 metres, the Hall's proportions are truly awe-inspiring.

However, this unique monument takes on additional significance as one of the few examples of modern architecture to have survived a particularly destructive century in a region ravaged by an unprecedented loss of cultural property. It is a powerful reminder that this troubled time was also a period of remarkable innovation, creativity and technological advances.

Inclusion on the prestigious World Heritage List carries with it a huge responsibility for safeguarding sites and monuments for future generations. The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which created the List, undoubtedly constitutes the leading international legal instrument, serving as the “global conscience” for the protection of cultural and natural heritage sites.

Among the objectives of the World Heritage Convention, as this instrument is commonly known, is to improve national frameworks of law and management and to enlist public support to ensure the protection, preservation and presentation of all cultural and natural properties within the territories of the Convention’s States Parties. Moreover, the Convention specifically refers to the importance of research, technical training and general education to preserve these properties, and to integrate their conservation within national development actions.

In this context, the World Heritage Committee specifically requested Polish authorities “to continue in the efforts already made for the conservation and management of the Centennial Hall”, and to give particular attention “to the planning and design of any new structures to house the services and facilities in the exhibition grounds, respecting the values of the existing historic context”.

I might add that this recommendation is particularly relevant in the context of Wrocław’s bid to host the 2012 International Exhibition under the theme “Culture of Leisure in World Economies”. I wish the Polish Government every success in this regard.

The ultimate goal of heritage conservation is to improve the quality of our collective existence and to transmit to future generations a culturally diverse world. It is by ensuring the long-term survival of humankind’s shared heritage, that we can help build the foundations of sustainable development and peaceful co-existence. It is therefore crucial that all forms of heritage, as well as creative industries, play a central role in contemporary society, in particular through innovative and forward-

looking partnerships between the public and private sectors. UNESCO looks forward to pursuing its collaboration with Polish authorities in its efforts to safeguard the diversity of the world's cultural and natural heritage.

I now have the honour, on behalf of UNESCO, to present you with this World Heritage certificate for the Centennial Hall in Wroclaw and to inaugurate this official World Heritage plaque.

Once again, I would like to offer my congratulations and encourage the relevant authorities to take all necessary measures to preserve this outstanding monument for future generations.

Thank you.