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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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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 visit of the President of the Republic of Chile and the
signature of a declaration of intent for the development of a project on
capacity-building in sustainable eco-tourism on Easter Island**

UNESCO, 28 May 2009

Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Chile, Ms Michelle Bachelet,
Distinguished Chilean officials,
Mr President of the General Conference
Madam Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to receive Your Excellency, President Michelle Bachelet, whom I had the pleasure of meeting a few months ago on the occasion of my official visit to Chile. We welcome you to our Organization and we feel honoured that you have chosen this house to begin your official visit in France.

I am pleased to greet in particular, among the distinguished Chilean officials who are with us today, the Minister of External Relations, Mr Mariano Fernández, the Minister of Education, Ms Mónica Jiménez de la Jara and the Minister of Culture, Ms Paulina Urrutia. I wish to thank them once again for the hospitality they bestowed on me during my recent visit to Santiago.

I also wish to extend my very special greetings to Mayor Luz Zasso, who gave me an unforgettable welcome to Easter Island in February 2009.

Our initial deliberations on future cooperation are starting to take shape with the signing of a declaration of intent for the implementation of a project on capacity-building in sustainable eco-tourism in the Rapa Nui National Park, a site placed on the World Heritage List in 1995.

During my visit to Easter Island, I saw that the Island has become one of Chile's main tourist destinations, which was putting the fragile island ecosystem under increasing pressure. It led me to initiate this training project, whose aim is to reduce

the negative impact of tourism by means of a programme to develop eco-tourism skills for the sustainable management of natural and cultural resources, finding a balance between the needs for the preservation of the site and the development of the island community.

This project, which will be implemented jointly by Chile and UNESCO, has been made possible by the generosity of the Government of Japan, whose authorities expedited its approval in view of your visit, Madam President. I wish to take advantage of the presence of the Ambassador of Japan to thank him for his efforts and pay tribute to his country for its continuous support to our endeavours to safeguard unique cultural heritage of recognized universal value.

Madam President,

We know your interest and Chile's successful work in implementing UNESCO's cultural conventions, especially in the sphere of the world heritage. Chile has developed a resolute policy under the 1972 World Heritage Convention, and I shall highlight here two aspects of it. The first consists of having emphasized property belonging to the industrial heritage, demonstrating the leading role of the Sewell Mining Town and the Humberstone and Santa Laura Saltpeter Works in the exploitation of industrial resources since the nineteenth century. In addition, in the case of these two sites, Chile has shown its readiness to explore the positive consequences of the inclusion of a property in the List of World Heritage in Danger. This reflects its understanding of the List as a necessary tool for enhancing international cooperation in respect of a vulnerable site.

The Churches of Chiloe, the Historic Quarter of the Seaport of Valparaíso and the Rapa Nui National Park consolidate national experience and, simultaneously, serve to give fresh impetus to new challenges that are even more complex.

Chile has played a key role in achieving significant progress in the project to nominate the Main Andean Road – Qhapaq Ñan for inclusion in the World Heritage List. Together with Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, it has initiated the process for designating one of the most important and significant archaeological and anthropological heritage sites in the world as an outstanding example of physical, cultural, social and economic integration.

The project already has the support of the Summits of Heads of State and Government of Latin America. On the occasion of the Ibero-American Summit held

in El Salvador in October 2008, the project was considered key to regional integration.

It is to be noted that this nomination programme has been singled out by the World Heritage Committee as a good practice in the preparation of transnational nominations, constituting a model of international cultural cooperation, essential for integration at a time of particular importance for the region, as celebrations of the bicentenary of independence begin.

Chile contributes with its Tentative List a necessary overview of the origins of American settlement. The sites of Monte Verde and the Chinchorro Culture take us back to a distant past, to hunting and gathering societies that developed complex cultures between 13,000 and 7,000 years before our era. It will make a significant contribution to the thematic programme on prehistory that will be submitted to the World Heritage Committee in Seville in June 2009.

UNESCO will continue to support, as it has done up to now, Chile's efforts in regard to the world heritage and each one of the activities that take place within the purview of our Organization, confident that the cooperation established with your country will enhance multilateral cooperation in all the dimensions of sustainable human development, as reflected in the spirit of the text of the declaration that we have just signed.

Madam President,

I especially wish to emphasize the generosity of Chile, which has for years accommodated the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will very soon be an office for Chile as well.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate our gratitude for your visit and for the collaboration established with your country. I hope it will grow stronger and expand with the development of projects like the one which we are currently initiating for Easter Island.

Thank you very much.