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Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

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,**

**at the opening of the first UNESCO World Forum  
on Culture and Cultural Industries**

**Monza, Italy, 24 September 2009**

Mr Minister of Culture,  
Mr President of the Lombardy Region,  
Mr Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to inaugurate this first World Forum on Culture and Cultural Industries, organized by UNESCO and the Italian authorities here in Monza.

Allow me first to extend my most sincere thanks to the Italian Government, represented here by the Minister of Culture, Mr Sandro Bondi. I also welcome the presence of Mr Roberto Formigoni, President of the Lombardy Region, and the representatives of the city of Monza.

Their steadfast support has enabled us to bring this excellent initiative to fruition and to respond together to a widely shared expectation, namely to create an international platform for dialogue and exchange on the policies to be conducted in the field of the arts and cultural industries.

I personally hail the launch of this pioneering initiative, intended to bring together decision-makers, artists and the private sector to address the issues involved in creativity, innovation and excellence, as the crowning achievement in UNESCO's action to promote the diversity of cultural expressions. I therefore thank you all very warmly for having accepted our invitation and for helping us to conduct this dialogue.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In launching this forum, we set out from the conviction that globalization, often seen as a threat to cultural diversity and creativity, is in fact a mainstay and vector of diversity and creativity, provided, and I must say this from the outset, that it is placed in the service of sustainable development in the fullest sense of the term, respectful of people and of their socio-cultural environments.

Underlying this requirement, there are others which this forum will seek to identify – quality education for all, whether formal or non-formal; participatory and inclusive processes conducive to better integration and representation of women; mechanisms for North-South and South-South solidarity and diversified partnerships, particularly between cities and regions.

The purpose of this forum is indeed to determine how, in the areas of fashion, design and crafts, these themes can be incorporated into sustainable development strategies.

The fact is that these three sectors of activity are underpinned by fundamental linkages between the transmission and sharing of knowledge, excellence and innovation.

What is needed today is to engage in this debate with all the relevant players in the cultural industries, for it is they who sustain the diversity of cultural expressions on a daily basis and enable dynamic cultural sectors to emerge through the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of the various forms of cultural expression.

This is a key issue for UNESCO, aware as we are today of the huge potential of cultural industries with regard to sustainable development, economic growth and improved living standards. And in addition to that, through the diversity of the forms of cultural expression they represent, they help to maintain the necessary vitality of cultures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cultural vitality is synonymous with innovation and diversification. It also serves to maintain a broader goal of peace and social cohesion.

UNESCO needs you, in this context, to devise alternative development strategies that enable the creative capacities of individuals to flourish and take account of the needs of all artists, professionals and practitioners involved in the cultural sector.

I am sure that in the course of the plenary meetings and parallel workshops to be held during the first three days, you will share your own experience with us and chart the course for joint action.

In a spirit of cooperation and sharing of good practices it will be useful for us to hear more, for example, about the new development challenges faced by local cultural industries; the role of public authorities, civil society and private-sector actors in sustaining the viability of the cultural sector and, lastly, the measures that need to be taken to strengthen, in a sustainable manner, the capacities of cultural organizations at the regional and local levels.

In short, what we expect of this Forum, first and foremost, is to give us deeper insights into how, together, we can facilitate sustained, equitable and universal access to the creation and production of cultural goods, activities and services.

It is in this spirit that, on the last day of the Forum, the debate will focus more directly on the theme of culture as an engine for revival as we face the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to say again how happy we are to embark on this debate together with partners from very different backgrounds, united in the conviction that sharing will be conducive to the emergence of fully-fledged knowledge societies that are free and pluralistic.

It is through such exchanges that we will be best placed to convey the concerns of those involved in the cultural sector and to associate them with the formulation and follow-up of cultural policies. What is at stake here is democracy, as well as transparency and good governance.

I therefore hope that the momentum triggered by the Monza Forum will have a lasting impact on our practices and behaviour and, with this in mind, I wish you a very pleasant and successful meeting.

Thank you for your attention.