



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

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

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,**

**on the occasion of the inauguration of the
Cultures and Developments Exhibition**

UNESCO, 5 October 2009

Your Excellency, the Right Honourable Governor General of Canada,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Mr Chair of the Executive Board,
Madam Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain,
Mr Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you to UNESCO Headquarters for this exhibition, which has been organized for the 35th session of UNESCO's General Conference and focuses on a crucial issue of our time – the links between culture and development.

Allow me to extend warm words of welcome to Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, whose longstanding commitment to the values of cultural diversity is exemplary.

It also gives me great pleasure to welcome the Ambassadors of Spain and Norway to UNESCO, Ms San Segundo and Mr Harald Neple. I thank them both sincerely for their generous contribution to the funding of this exhibition, a gesture which demonstrates the importance which their countries attach to culture as a vector for development, peace and social cohesion.

I wish you all a warm welcome.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the course of my two terms of office as Director-General of UNESCO, I became convinced of the need to promote a holistic vision of culture that addresses the many issues related to cultural diversity around the world.

Our strength and leading edge lies in the coherent core of standards we have succeeded in building over time – the six main conventions, adopted in 1954, 1970, 1972, 2001, 2003 and 2005, which give substance to this vision.

We face the important challenge, however, of establishing harmonious and operational ties between these instruments, particularly between the 1972, 2003 and 2005 conventions.

The 1972 World Heritage Convention, the best known and most widely ratified instrument, now plays a key role in promoting protected sites and monuments as places of sustainable development, social cohesion, reconciliation and collective memory.

Since the signing of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, it has become a widely accepted view that cultural practices are also an important part of cultural diversity and human creativity. In future, the 1972 and 2003 Conventions will therefore have to be interpreted in close conjunction with one another.

Lastly, there is the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Canada achieved recognition of the dual economic and social nature of cultural activities, goods and services, and their role as bearers of identity, values and meaning.

As this exhibition demonstrates, our common ideal should inspire us to promote a vision of cultural diversity and development in which these multiple factors are included in national policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Development is no longer measurable only in terms of economic and technological progress, and I am convinced that cultural policies play an essential role in national development strategies.

To bring this holistic vision of culture to life, UNESCO has been deeply committed to implementing the “Culture and development” chapter of the UNDP-Spain Millennium Goals Achievement Fund since 2007.

The Fund’s 18 projects, which focus on tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cultural policies, intercultural dialogue, indigenous know-how, creative industries and cultural tourism, illustrate diverse approaches in relation to cultural development.

This exhibition celebrates and recognizes that diversity, by taking a fresh look at the different aspects of current culture policies, in the form of eight theme areas on subjects as varied as education, cities, water and heritage.

A symbolic ninth theme area looks at the UNDP-Spain Achievement Fund and pays tribute to the dynamic partnerships created within the United Nations system to meet the development needs of States.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Every two years, UNESCO’s General Conference provides the international community with a unique forum for debate and exchanges on the great challenges of our time.

This intersectoral and interdisciplinary exhibition is intended as an innovative contribution for reflection on these issues, where people are invited to come look, discuss and learn in an interactive manner.

By presenting culture as a pillar of sustainable development I have no doubt that we will contribute immensely to a debate which has enormous practical and political repercussions today.

Thank you for your attention. I hope you enjoy your visit to the exhibition.