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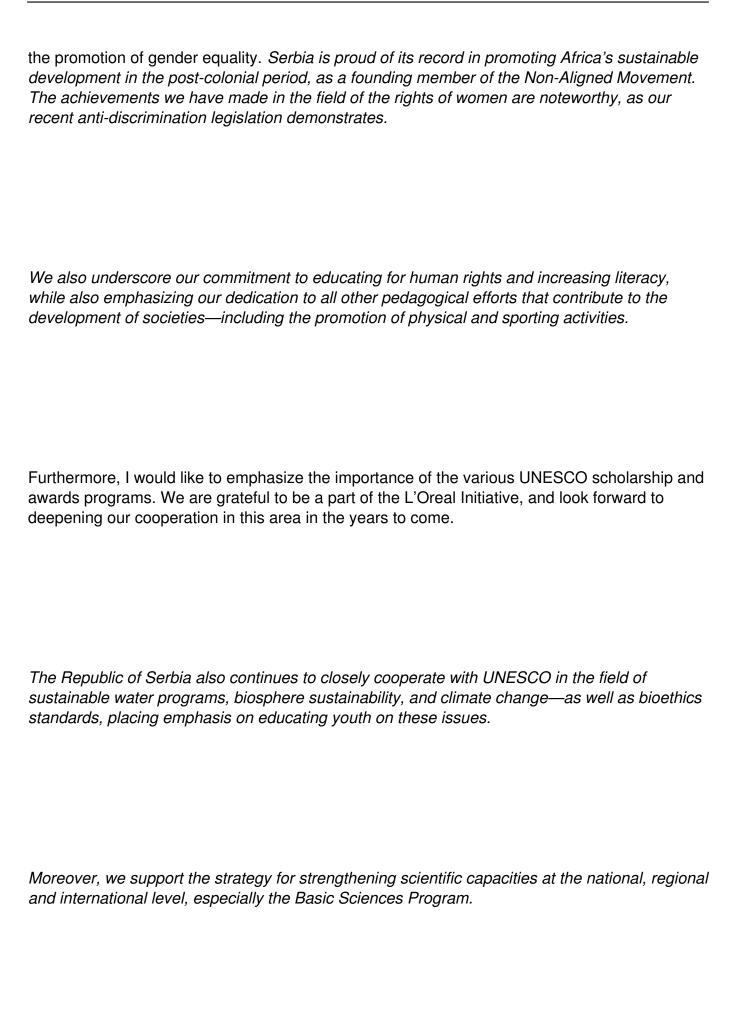
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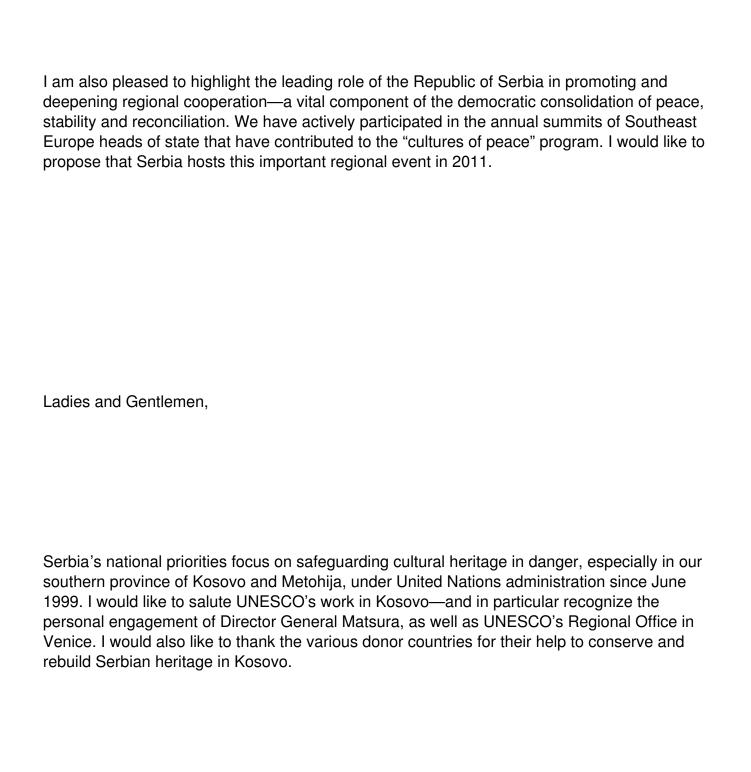
Mr. Chairman of the Executive Board,

Mr. President of the General Conference,

Address Before the UNESCO Executive Board in the General Debate Held at the 181st Session of the Boa

Tuesday, 21 April 2009.





The Republic of Serbia, in a recent exchange of letters, signaled to UNESCO our commitment to the use of funds collected during and subsequent to the donors' conference to the tune of 5.5 million dollars. This reaffirms the traditional, good-faith partnership between UNESCO and the Republic of Serbia in the area of cultural heritage, to the benefit of all.

There is still much work to be done. More than 150 churches and monasteries, including dozens that were buil

t as long ago as the 1 1 th

century, have been destroyed by

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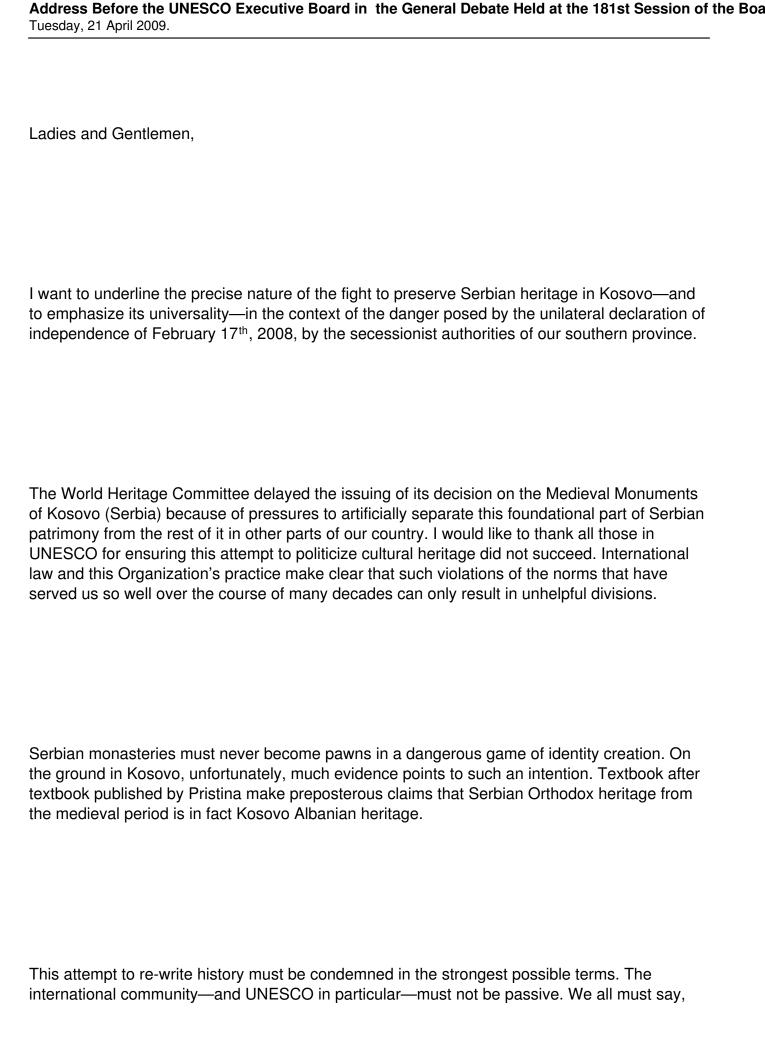
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Albanian extremists

in the past ten years, including 35 during the March 2004 pogrom against Serbs in Kosovo. While some of these have been rebuilt on the basis of a process commenced with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, many more holy sites remain ruined or severely damaged.

One such example is the 11th-century cathedral church of the Holy Mother of Ljeviska—placed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger. Located in the old quarter of Serbia's ancient capital of Prizren, its frescos were almost completely destroyed during the March 2004 pogrom. It has repeatedly been desecrated since.

Nonetheless, its restoration through the UNESCO process will, hopefully, strongly encourage some of the more than 10,000 Kosovo Serbs who have been ethnically cleansed from Prizren since June 1999, to return to the city. For this to happen, UNMIK and EULEX must provide a more secure environment for IDPs. Otherwise, one restored, the Ljeviska church stands in danger of becoming a mere museum piece, instead of a living, active place of worship.



Let me make it clear: the Serbian people seek reconciliation. We seek to compromise. We seek agreement. We want to live in peace. Attempts to instrumentalize culture as a tool of conflict do not bring us closer. I fervently believe that only when we come to look at diversity as a source of strength—only when we embrace the view that individual cultures genuinely prosper and progress when they come into contact with other cultures—can we say that the tide has inexorably turned in favor of peace and a common sense of destiny. To protect and enhance the myriad cultural achievements of humankind—this is a great task before us all. It is high time to re-dedicate ourselves once again to this noble, 21st-century undertaking of man.

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| Address Before the UNESCO Executive Board Tuesday, 21 April 2009. | d in the Genera | I Debate Held at | the 181st Session | on of the Bo |
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| Thank you very much for your attention. | | | | |
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