

```
<!-- /* Style Definitions */ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal
{mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan;
font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New
Roman"; mso-fareast-language:SR-CYR;}
p.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
li.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
div.CharCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
rCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
CarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCarCharCharCharCharCharCharCharChar
{mso-style-name:" Char Char Car Char
Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Char Char Car Char Car Char Car Char
Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char Car Char"; mso-style-link:"Default Paragraph Font";
margin-top:0in; margin-right:0in; margin-bottom:8.0pt; margin-left:0in; line-height:12.0pt;
mso-line-height-rule:exactly; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; font-size:10.0pt;
font-family:Arial; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-ansi-language:EN-US;
mso-fareast-language:EN-US;} @page Section1 {size:595.3pt 841.9pt; margin:1.0in 1.0in
1.0in 1.0in; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:0;}
div.Section1 {page:Section1;} -->
```

President Anastasopoulos,

Director General Matsura,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address the 34<sup>th</sup> General Conference of UNESCO.

The Republic of Serbia continues to uphold the enduring role of UNESCO: to construct an impregnable defense of peace in the minds of men and women through the bridging of differences and the promotion of our common heritage.

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 favour of peace, human rights, and a common sense of destiny.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks in part to the support and dedication of UNESCO's Centre for World Heritage, Serbia is home to a number of World Heritage Sites.

Four of these sites—all those that are located in Serbia's southern province of Kosovo and Metohija, under United Nations administration since June 1999—were placed in 2006 on UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger. Far from serving as a bridge of connection, Serbia's heritage in the province remains the focus of Kosovo Albanian apprehension and hostility. Tragically, more than 150 other Serbian churches and monasteries have been destroyed in the past eight years, including 35 during the March 2004 pogrom against Serbs in Kosovo.

*To destroy what those before you have built, in the conviction that you thereby erase the truth of it ever having been there, is an act of supreme inhumanity—of cultural cleansing.*

*In Kosovo as everywhere else, peace must not be allowed to be built on the ashes of destroyed heritage.*

*For reconciliation and peace is not the simple result of a unification of likeness; it requires the offering and accepting of the gift of difference.*

Allow me therefore to recognize the personal engagement of Director General Matsura, and to particularly thank Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic, together with the European Union and the Council of Europe, for their to help restore and conserve the Serbian heritage in Kosovo and Metohija. I can assure you that Serbia’s Ministry of Culture, together with our National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, will expand their cooperation with the international community—in order to more effectively implement the preservation and restoration of Serbian heritage sites in Kosovo and Metohija.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of Serbia is negotiating the future status of Kosovo and Metohija on the basis of the very values that bind us all to one another as human beings—values such as the quest for peace and justice. This is why we have offered Kosovo’s Albanian community a wide degree of autonomy in the conduct of their internal affairs. Our generous offer of substantial self-governance is designed to respect and promote their unique contribution to the fabric of our society, while respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country, in line with international law. I refer here to the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, among others.

We believe that only such a compromise solution can pave the way toward the more rapid integration of not only Serbia but all the Western Balkans into the European Union, a strategic imperative for all of us. And we believe that only such a compromise solution—a solution that embraces the concept of a common sovereign roof—can consolidate regional democracy, enhance security, promote cultural diversity, and deliver sustainable prosperity to the entire region.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, I would like to state that the Republic of Serbia supports the adoption of the Executive Board’s programme recommendations and budget. Serbia’s Delegation will continue to positively contribute to the building of consensus on these and other issues before the General Conference. We support the new programme evaluation mechanisms, and pledge to do our utmost to ensure that the proposed programme is implemented in its entirety.

In furtherance of our support for the Programme of the Medium-Term Strategy, it is my pleasure to announce Serbia’s intent to host a forthcoming annual summit of Southeast European heads of state on the topic of cultural heritage.

Moreover, the Republic of Serbia reaffirms its support for two of UNESCO’s most important priorities: Africa and gender equality. My country’s record in promoting Africa’s sustainable development in the post-colonial period speaks for itself. And the legislative and social achievements we have made in joining the European mainstream on the rights of women are noteworthy.

Finally, the Republic of Serbia will continue to contribute to the protection and preservation of world, regional and national heritage, heritage located in the developing world, heritage in danger, as well as heritage in post-conflict or disaster-affected areas.

I am proud of my country’s dedication to press forward our promotion of cultural diversity and fight against cultural cleansing. For the tangible and intangible achievements of the more than 6000 cultural communities that span the globe are the most precious treasure of humankind. They make up the “infinite tapestry of distinctions, nuance and change” of the world, in the words of our Director General. Protecting and enhancing these achievements of man is the great task before us all. For they constitute a foundation of identity, a basis of development, a tool of reconciliation, and an instrument of peace.

Thank you very much for your attention.