

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice générale, honorables délégués, Mesdames et Messieurs...

La France - berceau des valeurs démocratiques, de droit de l'homme, de la liberté, de la culture - a été *de nouveau brutalement attaquée*. Permettez-moi d'exprimer mes condoléances les plus sincères aux proches des victimes et des blessés. En ce moment tragique notre pensée, soutien et solidarité appartiennent à l'audacieux peuple français. *Nous sommes tous Paris!*...

Brutal and barbaric terrorist acts against defenseless civilians deserve our total condemnation. This is inhumane and against any religious beliefs. When some of the witnesses described what happened at the Bataclan theatre, they said the terrorists had behaved like machines. Yes, because they lost their souls, their humanity! Without them, we can turn to machines. Terrorists all around the world – in Paris, Beirut or Kenya – are inhuman machines regardless their motivation or ideology. They are simply killers, enemies of mankind. Their way brings no solution, just death.

Our immediate spontaneous reaction must be *resolve and unity*. *Defense* of our values and way of life. What is of the essence - is not to allow the terrorists to form our agenda! They declared themselves faithful to Islam. They want to force upon us their perverse version of one of the great world religions - Islam. We all know it is a shameful lie. They represent no religion. We will not allow them to bring the fight to the people of different faiths, hatred based on religion, race or ethnicity. His Holiness Pope Francis has said in his reaction to Friday's tragic events in Paris: "the road of violence and hatred does not resolve humanity's problems and using the name of God to justify this road is blasphemy".

We in Europe are proud of our historic heritage including Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy. We should remember and occasionally remind ourselves that during the Middle Ages, Greek ideas were largely forgotten in Western Europe. They re-entered the West through translations from Arabic to Latin thanks to Islamic philosophers such as Al-Kindi (Alkindus), Al-Farabi (Alfarabius), Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). The re-introduction of these philosophies, accompanied by the new Arabic commentaries, had a great influence on Medieval philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas. That has been a real contribution of Islam to Europe. We need more Islamic philosophers and scientists and less hate preachers.

Mr. President,

UNESCO is playing and will continue playing a key role in creating the world where there is no space for terrorists. We have gathered here today to share our views about its future. No terrorist can change that. Our organisation celebrates its 70th anniversary. We are going to take stock of our efforts so far. But most importantly, to help create a vision for future UNESCO. The one that is better equipped to deal with the global threats and challenges. Their scale is unprecedented, including violent extremism and international terrorism...

Mr. President,

When UNESCO was created 70 years ago, it was a response to the shock and moral crisis triggered by World War II. Lessons learned from its atrocities called for the establishment of the *universal platform for dialogue*. To assist states in co-operating and promoting education, culture and science. And to safeguard our common heritage for the benefit of the nations. Hence this idea has been firmly rooted as a main objective of UNESCO in Article 1 of its Constitution...

Education, culture, science, communication and information are genuine parts of our lives. Wherever we live and whatever we do. Human beings can't simply exist without them. They contribute to the satisfaction of our material and mental needs, interests and aspirations. They are tools enriching the welfare of the entire humankind. But, unfortunately, they also are abused for the promotion of false ideas and vicious ideologies of terror...

As our response to recent wave of terror the need to define a *new humanism* is relevant more than ever. It should be bringing nations and people back together through education, culture, science and communication. We have to refresh the spirit of London of 1945 and adapt it to the present world, its needs and challenges. UNESCO is a huge laboratory of thoughts. Let's together make a better use of it for the creation of a new humanism further reflected in a new multilateralism...

I fully agree with Madam Director General Irina Bokova. She calls for a return to the *original meaning of culture*. From the very beginning of her tenure she wanted it to be accepted by all of humanity. Because we see it matters. There can be no lasting peace and global prosperity without the intellectual and moral cooperation among the nations...

Mr. President,

We are utterly devoted to the *Universality of UNESCO*. In our understanding, we deem it a capability to act together in a concerted manner at the worldwide level. But it is a political category rather than an arithmetic one. We have a joint responsibility to ensure that UNESCO further enhances its capacities for effective global action. Today it is more required than ever...

En parlant de l'UNESCO, on utilise souvent le mot valeurs. Dans ce contexte, j'ai surtout envie d'évoquer les *valeurs qui ne sont pas cotés en Bourse*. Et de répéter avec René Maheu (6. GR UNESCO): „*L'essentiel de la mission de l'UNESCO n'est pas d'ordre technique; il est éthique*“. En affrontant les difficultés, l'UNESCO doit rester fidèle à sa mission éthique...

Dans toute *organisation internationale à vocation universelle*, il existe toujours des dossiers qui causent des divisions entre les États. Les désaccords sont naturels et inévitables. Ils sont également très utiles et, à long terme, ils renforcent notre capacité à délibérer sérieusement. Mais aussi à respecter nos différences et à trouver ensemble les meilleures solutions...

Nous devons être bien conscients que les *organisations intergouvernementales ne sont pas éternelles*. Elles font partie et sont le résultat d'un processus d'évolution. Leur espace vital s'annonce plus darwinien que jamais. Elles sont parfois gourmandes, égocentriques et déjà trop nombreuses. Seules les plus aptes subsisteront. La capacité de réinventer et de s'ajuster au nouvel environnement et aux nouveaux défis est essentielle...

Mr. President,

We need UNESCO more than ever. It should play an even *more significant role in addressing the present-day threats*. It has to continue its efforts to eradicate illiteracy and poverty. Stand up against escalating conflicts and rising violent extremism. And resolutely reject barbaric attacks and savage destruction of precious cultural heritage. They serve as the common spiritual identity of all of us...

The current *threats to international peace and security* have never been more *complex*. The increasing danger posed by terrorist and extremist groups requires a global response. We must face up twisted philosophies of ISIL, Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram and others. There is no alternative to combating them upfront. Because it is our obligation to protect and preserve priceless human heritage for many generations to come...

We thus fully support the *Unite4Heritage campaign*. We encourage all Member States to protect past legacy where it is threatened by extremists also by offering voluntary contributions to the Emergency Fund and the Fund of the Second Protocol of the Hague Convention. On our part, we are ready to do it...

The efforts to extend the mandate of the *UN peacekeeping missions to culture* go in the right direction. Because culture has been identified by the UN Security Council as a major component of global security. And it is now generally regarded as one of the key elements of global peace...

2015 is a crucial year to put in place a truly integrated *sustainable global agenda*. It embraces all nations and tackles all aspects of human existence. And UNESCO agenda has so much to offer in this respect. Because it directly copes with poverty, healthcare and education. But it also deals with climate, culture, science, communication and information...

Climate change is a truly defining issue of our time. Bold action is needed today to reduce emissions and build resilience. Paris will soon host the ground-breaking Conference on Climate Change. Slovakia will take part in it fully supporting Paris and France as its hosts. UNESCO is in an extraordinary position to have its say, too. It can address climate change exactly taking advantage of its multidisciplinary mandate...

The newly adopted *Education 2030 Framework for Action* is a milestone. It aims to improve and promote inclusive and high quality education. By taking into account sustainable development, human rights and global citizenship. Inclusive education respecting gender equality is a key element for building a sustainable, tolerant and inclusive society. The youth shall be provided with necessary competencies and the ability to use them. And thus to contribute to building and shaping the societies they live in...

We live in an era of an *unprecedented dissemination of information*. People often struggle to attach value to them or hesitate how to utilize them correctly. We need quality education institutions where people can learn critical thinking. To understand and appreciate our cultural and historical heritage, the fundamental values of freedom, democracy and tolerance. Education is crucial to our progress and sustainability. But it also significantly helps guide us to peace and stability and in the end our civilized future...

The suffering of *migrants, refugees and asylum seekers* calls for concerted efforts, multidimensional approach and long-term strategies. The elimination of root causes rather than dealing with consequences only is a must. UNESCO's "*Management of Social Transformation*" program has good capacity to focus on all such urgent implications...

We will also continue supporting efforts to *mainstream human rights* across the UNESCO agenda. We remain committed to the promotion of gender equality, empowering of women and girls. We will strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls. And encourage equal access to education and employment. Our strong opposition to all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance is unwavering...

Science is what drives our lives to an ever more advanced level. There is a must to invest more in research. We have to attract especially young people who should devote themselves to science. And make use of their talent to contribute to the well-being of future generations. Finally, *the relevance of communication and information is truly unique.* UNESCO's role in promoting universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms is irreplaceable. Specifically the press freedom and freedom of expression need to be reinforced. But the safety of journalists world-wide is worrying. Slovakia therefore acts along with the international community on this front. We back global efforts to end impunity for crimes against journalists...

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I will come back once more to the vision of UNESCO as we see it. We need to have a *UNESCO for all*. This formula very well embodies what we want to achieve. Because we founded this organisation with a vision to serve us all - for a better world .

Thank you!