



**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,  
Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the first Conference of Parties to  
the Convention on the Protection and Promotion  
of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**

**UNESCO, 18 June 2007**

Mr President of the General Conference,



The finishing touch to the standard-setting foundation built by UNESCO in the field of culture over the last few decades, the Convention consolidates the legal framework formed by the seven conventions which now embrace cultural diversity's founding principles: the heritage and contemporary creation.

Together with two other instruments – the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage – it is a key element of that framework.

In view of the importance that the international community as a whole attaches to cultural diversity, I am particularly proud that UNESCO is now equipped with a solid and complementary standard-setting framework covering all aspects of cultural diversity. The Convention which brings you here today, and that of 2003 on the intangible heritage, will in particular have to function harmoniously and synergistically.

Today, 57 of you are Parties to the Convention: 56 States and the European Community as a regional economic integration organization. These are the States among you that deposited their instrument of ratification with UNESCO before 20 March 2007, or three months before the closure of the present meeting. They are therefore participating in the meeting as Parties, with full voting rights.

States which deposited their instrument of ratification later on, and there are six of them, are naturally present as observers.

A total of 62 States and one regional economic integration organization, the European Community, have thus deposited their instrument of ratification with UNESCO.

As I have just said, the rate of ratification was exceptionally rapid, a fact which gives me great satisfaction. Nevertheless, the geographical distribution of the States Parties is unfortunately not yet entirely balanced.

In order to achieve the Convention's aims in full, it is vital that the various regions of the world be represented by the States Parties in a balanced manner. At present, only three States from the Asia and Pacific region and three States from the Arab region have ratified the Convention. I hope therefore that other countries from these two regions will be joining you shortly.

International solidarity, which is at the heart of the Convention, will be fully developed when that objective is attained.

The implementation of the Convention also implies defining a role for civil society. Diverse, fragmented and stimulating, civil society has enthusiastically endorsed the Convention and endeavoured to have it ratified on all continents. Your task will be to outline the shape of future cooperation, define criteria for obtaining observer status and decide on the structures that should be set up to facilitate exchanges.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The first Conference's agenda is full.

After having elected your Chairperson and your Bureau, and adopted the agenda for this session, your first task will be to adopt the rules of procedure and to decide on the dates and place of the next session of the Conference of Parties.

You will also have the weighty task of electing the 24 members of the Intergovernmental Committee, which will operate under your authority and guidance. You will also have to decide on the dates and place of the Committee's first meeting.



In addition to the conditions governing the use of the resources of the