



**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of first extraordinary session
of the Intergovernmental Committee
for the Protection and Promotion
of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**

UNESCO, 24 June 2008

Mr Chair of the Executive Board,
Mr Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Committee,
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be with you today for the first extraordinary session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, six months after your first ordinary session in Ottawa.

Regrettably, I was unable to join you at that session for it coincided with another

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Lastly, I should like to pay a particular tribute to your Chairperson, Ambassador Gilbert Laurin, who was able to create a favourable working environment for handling the complex and somewhat difficult agenda during your first session. He is among those who spare no effort in a wholehearted commitment to achieve consensus and reconcile disagreements. I am delighted that the first operational guidelines will be examined under his guidance and that he will continue as Chairperson until the end of the second ordinary session in December 2008.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your first session was widely acclaimed as a success. It laid the groundwork for discussions on the draft operational guidelines, which shall be continued during this extraordinary session.

The particularly rapid entry into force of the Convention, in March 2007, and the sustained pace of its ratification – two and a half years after its adoption, it has been signed by 84 Parties – bear witness to the significant interest and hopes that the international community places in this Convention.

It is therefore vital that we establish the guidelines that will enable us to deliver all the promises of this Convention.

The geographical distribution of Parties is steadily improving, which is a good sign: there are now eight Parties in the Asia and the Pacific region and six in the Arab region.

This is a true reflection of the efforts of the international community, particularly of the International Organization of the Francophonie, the Commonwealth and, of course, the International Network on Cultural Policy, as well as a number of other civil society coalitions.

on the Latin American and European approaches in this respect will undeniably provide you with food for thought.

The second substantive document focuses on partnerships. We are all aware of the strategic importance of synergies between and within the public and private sectors and non-profit organizations. We must now learn to better understand how these synergies can help towards attaining the aims of the Convention. I trust that the information document on the UNESCO Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity will also be a source of inspiration for you.

The third document focuses on the role and participation of civil society, whose importance is explicitly outlined in the Convention. As I mentioned earlier, the session of exchange held yesterday will certainly have given you an idea of the best approaches possible.

The fourth document concerns the International Fund for Cultural Diversity. It is an interim report based on the Parties' contributions with regard to the priorities and the use of the resources of the Fund. An essential tool for the implementation of the Convention, the Fund consists of voluntary contributions specifically intended to support cultural industries in developing countries.

For 2007-2008, the contributions paid by Andorra, Brazil, Finland, France, Monaco, Saint Lucia and Quebec amount to approximately \$440,000 and pledged contributions – from Cameroon, Canada, China, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, South Africa, Spain and Uruguay – should exceed \$1 million.

Lastly, you will be asked to examine an interim report on the selection of experts and terms of reference for the reports on preferential treatment, presented by the Chairperson.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last six months, the Secretariat has worked tirelessly despite the modest human resources at its disposal. I must, in this respect, thank France for having kindly made available an expert for two years; Spain, which already funds an Associate Expert post; and Germany, which has opened recruitment for an Associate Expert post. With this added expertise, the Section will better be able to fulfil its far-reaching mandate.

