

National declaration of Montenegro

by ambassador Zoran Jankovic, acting State Secretary for Political Affairs in the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head of the Delegation

Paris, 3rd November 2017

Honored President of the General Conference,

President of the Executive Board,

Dear Ms. Director General,

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honor to address you at the 39th General Conference as the Head of the Delegation of Montenegro. The General Conference is a unique opportunity to define the directions of our joint action within the Organization, with the intention of preserving the principles that UNESCO has developed and cherish for more than 70 years.

The noble mission of preserving and promoting these principles today, so often and seriously challenged, demands our full commitment and joint action. It seems that humanity has never been so vigilant in order to recall the importance of the culture of peace and dialogue, which is our primary goal. Mutual respect and understanding is a civilization value that, through numerous conventions and other standards, represents the leading idea of UNESCO and our common platform for action.

The Universal Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, obliges us to devoted and decisive struggle to address the key problems we are facing today, from building peace and eradicating poverty, gender inequality, unequal opportunities for education, to climate change and ensuring a healthy environment. Montenegro strongly supports the principles of a new long-term Strategy and gives its full contribution to the implementation and achievement of its key objectives.

We remind here UNESCO's precious support in the activities related to the natural and cultural-historical area of Kotor, a World Heritage Site, since its inscription, which coincides with the devastating earthquake that in 1979 happened in Montenegro. Thanks to UNESCO-funded experts who have offered immensely important assistance and support, the consequences of a natural disaster have been successfully remedied, so the authenticity and integrity of Kotor have been preserved.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to point out that, since the last General Conference, two other extremely important cultural assets of Montenegro have been added to the UNESCO's World Heritage List: Stećci - Medieval graveyards (two localities in Zabljak and one in Plužine) and Kotor's Fortress as a part of the system of Venetian fortifications from the 16th to the 17th centuries, both as serial and multinational nominations. Stećci - Medieval graveyards are a joint inscription of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia, while the Venetian fortifications are a joint initiative of Italy, Montenegro and Croatia. We do believe that these enrichments increase the UNESCO's World Heritage, as the UNESCO's presence in those sites will be an incentive to the prosperity of local communities and their society. And we are particularly pleased with the possibility of joining the Forte Mare Fortress in Herceg Novi to the Venetian fortifications already inscribed, as announced through the Decision of the World Heritage Committee.

Preserving nature and providing a healthy environment is an equally important contribution to the UNESCO's policies in Montenegro. Montenegro has recently ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, expressing so unambiguously responsibility for the environment as agreed on the international level. The Durmitor National Park is not only a unique natural phenomenon that is on the UNESCO's World Heritage List, but also the area in which there are newly inscribed sites – Stećci - Medieval graveyards and, at the same time, a part of Biosphere Reserve - Tara River Basin, defined within the special program of UNESCO - Man and Biosphere. In this program Montenegro has made significant progress during this year, thanks to the continuous cooperation with

the UNESCO's Office in Venice, which is our reliable and long term partner in all areas.

We hope that in the upcoming period UNESCO's World Heritage List will be enriched with some other sites from Montenegro's Tentative List.

Montenegro is truly committed to development goals and significant attention is devoted to the programs in education and science. The acquisition of quality education, based on equal opportunities for all, as well as the enhancement of scientific knowledge, infrastructure and policies in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development, is our common priority. It is necessary to make additional efforts to reduce the number of children and young people who do not have access to education, and, particularly, to improve the position of young people and achieve gender equality. Montenegro, as a part of the UNESCO's system *asp.net* school, is dedicated to climate change challenges and sustainable development through education.

The UNESCO's Conventions in all areas represent the key principles on which the Montenegrin public policies are based on. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the Convention on Cultural Diversity - an international conference held in March this year in Podgorica was dedicated to - but also to the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Heritage, within which we are preparing the first nomination of Montenegro for UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Montenegro remains committed to implementing UNESCO's standards and promoting the mission and values of the Organization, with full contribution to regional and international initiatives.

Finally, I would like to address our sincere thanks and appreciations to Madame Irina Bokova for her leadership and contribution for the last eight years. Also, our congratulations to Madame Audrey Azoulay, strongly confirming our readiness to work together for a strong, diverse and committed Organisation.

Thank you for your attention.