

Speech ADG/SHS

Event: “International humanitarian action, *Mission of Peace and Friendship*” to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Victory over fascism and the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

5 June 2015 - Room: XIII

#Together4Peace

- On behalf of UNESCO, I extend my warm greetings to the participants of this International Humanitarian Action “Mission of Peace and Friendship” organized on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism and to celebrate the International Day of UN Peacekeepers.
- All UN Agencies are united for a sustainable Peace through the International Day of UN Peacekeepers dedicated to :
 - Honour the memory of the UN peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace, including more than 3,300 “Blue Helmets” and to:
 - Pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage.
- I would like to stress the importance of the slogan that has been used during the preparation of the actions devoted to this anniversary, «Nobody is forgotten, nothing is forgotten» - our memory, people’s memory is hopefully also a life-giving source for our veterans, those who today are our history-bearers.
- We all know the importance of memorial processes in the construction of sustainable peace and its unalienable components of justice and repair in respect of human rights. Just a few days ago (27 May 2015), President François Hollande, led the ceremony of « pantheonisation » of four women and men, who heroically took part in the French resistance movements against the Nazi occupation of France during World War II. These four great figures are Jean Zay, Pierre Brossolette, Geneviève de Gaulle-Anthonioz and Germaine Tillion. They were intellectuals, motivated by the sound foundations of human rights and education. They fought for human dignity and respect.
- Today, as well, we honour the pursuit of freedom in the face of oppression and tyranny, we remember the sacrifices of millions of women and men who paid with their lives for the principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect. We are humbled

by those who survived – reminding us of those dark hours, reinforcing the United Nations’ unwavering determination to build the foundations for peace and the protection of all human beings, their lives and their rights.

- Thus, in its Charter, the United Nations proclaims: “We the peoples of the United Nations are determined:
 - to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
 - to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
 - to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
 - to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

- 70 years later, we are here to celebrate the International Day of UN Peacekeepers and the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and of UNESCO. Tragically, our goals for global peace and harmony remain elusive. We are surrounded by conflicts from unresolved disputes and claims, the fear of the other, rising individualism, intolerance and rejection of cultural diversity, even destruction of cultural heritage – all reminding us that the value of peace needs to be cultivated every day in every woman and man.

- Respect for the dignity and rights of all human beings, non-discrimination, gender equality, and the right to a decent life are the main principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948, and yet, as the multiple consultations leading up to the post-2015 development agenda clearly show, these can never be taken for granted.

- In UNESCO, working for peace means ensuring linkages across all of the domains within UNESCO’s mandate and areas of expertise: education, youth, the media, life-long skills and competences, heritage, natural sciences, ethics, freedom of expression.

- The link is often embodied by intercultural dialogue. Two years ago, we embarked upon the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Decade is, in fact, a call for a response to contemporary crises through the use of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

- 'Rapprochement of cultures' stands for a commitment to the principles of human dignity and solidarity as the cornerstone of living together within and between societies, while at the same time embracing and valuing all sources of diversity. As lead agency for the Decade, UNESCO is exploring new avenues for concrete action that will bring impact.
- There is a need to redouble our efforts and to collectively insist upon a culture of peace through dialogue. Today, this dialogue needs to be reinvented and adapted to present-day harsh realities. New forms of cultural literacy and intercultural competences, between societies and within them, are crucially needed along with new, committed actors who will be our future peace-keepers.
- Let me end by greeting, once again, our courageous veterans for what they have brought to the history of humankind. They say that only those who know war can make peace. So as we honour the sacrifices, we commit to ensuring that we will learn from the lessons of your courage and determination, as you continue to defend the global values of humanity, on behalf of us all.

Thank you.