



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the designation of Ms Zarifa Mgoyan (Zara) as a
UNESCO Artist for Peace**

UNESCO, 5 December 2016

The Right Honourable Mr Leonid Slutsky, Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation,

Excellency Ambassador Alexander Kuznetsov, Permanent Delegate of the Russian Federation to UNESCO,

Excellency Ambassador Laurent Stefanini, Permanent Delegate of France to UNESCO,

Excellency Ambassador Eleonora Mitrofanova,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

I am honoured to welcome you this evening to UNESCO on the occasion of the designation of Zarifa Mgoyan as *UNESCO Artist for Peace*.

I know many guests have joined us from far away, and I am grateful to you all, in particular all UNESCO Artists for Peace and Goodwill Ambassadors.

This is an evening to celebrate the passion of Zara, as she is known.

This is an evening to celebrate the power of music.

The great French writer, Victor Hugo, put it this way:

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.”

This is the paradoxical power of music – it touches each of us in different ways, in ways that go beyond words, and it unites us too, bringing us together, reminding us of the ties that bind us as a single humanity, sharing emotions, dreams and aspirations.

The story of Zara's outstanding life and career is the story of a dream come true.

This is a story of dedication to music from the very earliest age.

This is a story of hard work and commitment, combined with incredible talent and passion.

This is the story of success after success -- from being a finalist on the famous Russian television contest, *Morning Star*, at the age of 14 years old, and being awarded the *Grand-Prix of "Hopes of Siberia"*, to receiving seven national music awards *Golden Gramophone* and two diplomas of the *"Song of the Year" Festival*.

In the midst of all this, Zara, I would say you have received the greatest award of all... this is the love of people, of your fans, women and men in Russia and beyond, for your voice, for your talent and your commitment to the sharing the power of music.

You once said:

"Music unites people; it has no nationality. Music is a human soul which is pure. "

You have brought the same commitment beyond music to your life, in your engagements to strengthen the resilience of society, to deepen respect for the human rights and dignity of all women and men... especially children... especially persons with disabilities.

Indeed, you are engaged in a wide range of charitable activities in Russia – as a leader of the *Step Towards Charity Foundation*, supporting children and adults with disabilities, in your involvement with the *By Call of Heart Foundation*, to empower children with visual impairments.

Your career and your life reflect a deep commitment to reaching every woman and man, every girl and boy – especially the most marginalised and the most vulnerable in our societies.

Last Friday, UNESCO commemorated the *International Day of Persons with Disabilities*, to promote the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, through education, through the sciences, through culture, through communication and information.

Last year, the world agreed on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

This is a new vision for poverty eradication, for prosperity, for a healthy planet, for lasting peace.

With this, the world has made the promise to leave no one behind.

Now we must hold the world to account, and to move forward, we must craft new ways to reach everyone, to include every woman and man.

Here lies the importance of art and music, in building bridges, in strengthening common ground, in forging more inclusive, resilient, open and just societies.

And it is a great honour that Ms Mireille Mathieu joined us tonight, a dear friend of UNESCO and of the Russian audience.

Dear Zara, this is why I am so pleased you are joining with UNESCO.

We need your talent, your voice, to reach and include everyone, to take forward the values we share.

In this task, you will become part of a great family of UNESCO Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors, some of whom I see here tonight, who are all so deeply committed to our Organization's objectives.

In this spirit, and in recognition of your dedication and achievements towards our common goals, it gives me great pleasure to officially designate you today as *UNESCO Artist for Peace*.

[Reading of diploma]

I wish you every success in your new mission, and I congratulate you on having joined forces with UNESCO to share our message across the world.

Thank you.