

**Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin
Muhridin at the UNESCO General Conference**

Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Director-General of UNESCO Ms. Audrey Azoulay and the President of the General Conference Mr. Santiago Irazabal Murao on their election to high positions. Availing this occasion, I express my gratitude for the excellent arrangement of today's conference to its organizers.

I am convinced that this Conference will be particularly useful to further strengthen international cooperation in education, sciences and culture.

Today, in the context of globalization, it is particularly important to focus on national history and values, including language, culture, customs and traditions, as well as political and cultural independence.

Tajikistan as an active member of UNESCO develops and promotes various projects in the fields of culture, science and education, and makes a

valuable contribution to the protection and promotion of the world cultural and natural heritage.

UNESCO as the key organization in the most difficult and complicated times for the world community, calls for unity and solidarity through culture, science and education.

It is worth mentioning that one of the historical sites of Tajikistan, which is inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, is the ancient town of Sarazm. Particularly, I would like to highlight that the Exhibition of historical items titled "Tajikistan - the land of golden rivers" also presents the findings of the ancient town of Sarazm.

Last month this exhibition was inaugurated at the Guimet Museum of Asian Arts in Paris with the participation of the Presidents of Tajikistan and France.

About 300 artifacts from the antiquity history of the Tajik people, and also valuable items of the history of our ancestors from the British Museum, known as the "Amu Darya Treasure", are displayed at the exhibition.

Along with this, with the participation of the President of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon and the UNESCO Director-General Ms. Audrey Azoulay, we once again held the Tajik Cultural Day at UNESCO headquarters.

It is very symbolic that these events coincide with the celebration of the 30th anniversary of state independence of the Republic of Tajikistan.

I would also like to mention that Tajikistan celebrated the 5500th anniversary of the ancient town of Sarazm and the 700th anniversary of Kamoli Khujandi, which were inscribed in the UNESCO List of anniversaries for 2020-2021.

Our people, from ancient times to the present day, cherish their national customs and traditions and ancestral values, and constantly strive to revive and enrich them and to spread their ancient rituals and celebrations among the public.

The natural site “**National Park of Tajikistan**”, ancient town of **Sarazm**, national music “**Shashmaqom**”, International Day of **Navruz**, national dish “**Oshi Palov**” and “**Chakan, the art of embroidery in Tajikistan**” are outstanding examples of rich cultural and historical heritage of the Tajik people, which are recognized by UNESCO and inscribed into the World Heritage List.

In 2017, the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan were included for the third time into the list of "100 best tourist destinations" in the world. The National Park of Tajikistan, which is inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage List, is the business card of Tajikistan in terms of eco-tourism and mountaineering opportunities.

Government of Tajikistan has also prepared its unique landscapes as a universal natural heritage to be included into the brand new Global Geoparks Nomination of UNESCO.

Government of Tajikistan, in order to preserve and pass on to future generations the art of Falak singing, which has long existed in the culture of mountainous Tajiks, has submitted a request to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage to inscribe it into the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Distinguished participants,

As you are aware, Tajikistan is a country that proactively promotes global water and climate issues. One of the alarming global challenges is the fast melting of glaciers. This process can be observed in the example of melting of glaciers of Tajikistan that over several past decades from among 13 thousand glaciers of Tajikistan more than one thousand of them have completely melted down, while their general volume has reduced by 30%.

Given the serious consequences of this ongoing process, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan previously proposed to declare 2025 the **International Year of Glacier Protection** and set a specific date for the **World Glacier Day**, as well as

to establish the **International Fund for Glacier Preservation** to take practical steps in protecting glaciers as the main source of clean water.

In this context, we welcome the project "Reducing vulnerabilities of populations in the Central Asia region from glacier lake outburst floods in a changing climate" (GLOF), which began in April 2021. I am confident that such projects will play a significant role in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the background of climate change, preservation of safe drinking water sources has become one of the major issues of the planet.

Tajikistan as an initiator of global water initiatives within the United Nations expresses its thanks for extensive cooperation with countries and international organizations.

In June 2022, in the framework of Dushanbe Water Process, we will host the High-Level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade of Action "Water for Sustainable Development" in cooperation with the UN and other partners.

The Dushanbe Conference will be pivotal in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on the Mid-Term Comprehensive

Review of the Implementation of the Water Decade in 2023 in New York, co-chaired by Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite all of you to attend the Dushanbe Conference.

Tajikistan, as the initiator of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028" and as Chair of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, reiterates its intention to further prioritize the climate change and water agenda in cooperation with all partners.

Mr. President,

Tajikistan considers important the UNESCO goals on strengthening international peace, stability and security through the expansion of cooperation of states in various humanitarian and cultural fields, as well as in ensuring justice and respect of human rights and freedoms.

Intricate and complicated situation in Afghanistan has become nowadays the source of our and world community's grave concern. We cannot be indifferent toward the destiny of this neighboring country and its people. Moreover, due to the existing situation Afghanistan is presently exposed to serious humanitarian crisis – massive starvation.

In this regard, Tajikistan appeals to the world community, including the concerned states not to be

indifferent with regard to tragic and grave situation in Afghanistan and to take urgent practical measures to render targeted humanitarian assistance to its people through the international and humanitarian organizations.

We also call upon UNESCO to mobilize all resources and opportunities to promote the fields of science and education, culture and preservation of genuine values of all ethnic groups in this country.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to appreciate once again the organizers of this conference.

I thank you for your attention.