

Wystąpienie szefa delegacji podczas 41. Konferencji Generalnej UNESCO

(Paryż, 12 listopada 2021 roku)

Mister President of the General Conference,

Madam Director-General,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your appointment and wish you every success. I also express our appreciation for the outstanding work of the UNESCO Director General, Madam Audrey Azoulay.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The core mission of UNESCO is to prevent war through culture, science and education cooperation. We have created numerous normative acts, standard-setting documents, programs, and initiatives to foster cultural heritage and promote cultural diversity. We have worked hard to advance the concept of mutually beneficial cooperation in culture, science and education. UNESCO facilitated communication between peoples and sustained human solidarity. We have kept pace with dynamic changes of the world.

Today UNESCO's ultimate goal is to do everything possible to protect timeless value of mankind's unique cultural heritage, create opportunities for sustainable development of future generations, for scientific and educational advancement, while ensuring protection of basic human rights and dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

COVID-19 has aggravated inequalities and created new challenges. UNESCO also had to adapt to new realities and to respond to this situation. Such issues as vaccine distribution, access to health care, the right to quality education, knowledge fragmentation, freedom of expression, the safety of journalists, mobilization of scientific cooperation, or proliferating threats to cultural heritage have all made us realize how important our work here at UNESCO is. The Medium-Term Strategy, the Programme and budget with their transdisciplinary and intersectoral approach should guide UNESCO in facing these new global challenges.

Despite the international community's resolve, we continue to see violations of fundamental human rights across the world. It is our obligation to react appropriately. Poland welcomes UNESCO's decision to continue monitoring the

situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine), a task which stems from the core mandate of the Organization.

Special attention has to be paid to the fundamental freedom of expression, safety of journalists, and the right to information. We call upon the Belarusian authorities to immediately release all journalists and media workers imprisoned on political grounds, including Andrzej Poczobut, Kaciaryna Andrejewa and Daria Czulcowa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Synergic international cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and adaptation to climate change is indispensable. The role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in leading the Ocean Decade is invaluable. Poland is an active participant in these efforts. In February 2022, in Sopot, the Institute of Oceanology, will be hosting a conference in collaboration with UNESCO.

New opportunities for awareness rising of general public and for scientific formal and non-formal education are provided by the initiatives of the International Days of Geodiversity and Biosphere Reserves, which Poland fully supports. We are very proud by the recent inclusion of Świętokrzyski Geopark on the UNESCO Global Geoparks List.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The protection of cultural heritage must be carried out according to the fundamental principles of objectivity, equality and transparency.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the review of the Memory of the World Programme, resulting in its full operationality. We declare our commitment to this programme of great importance for documentary heritage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, let me paraphrase the Polish philosopher and writer, Stanisław Lem:

„Science explains the world, but only culture can reconcile it.”

Thank you