



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

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
للربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Message from
Ms Pilar Alvarez Laso,
Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences,
UNESCO,
to the participants of the
Twenty-Second Conference of the
Kopaonik School of Natural Law on
"Law and Space – Harmonization and the Right to Difference"
(Mt. Kopaonik, Republic of Serbia,
13 - 17 December 2010)**

On behalf of UNESCO, I am very pleased to extend my warm greetings to the participants of the Twenty Third Conference of the Kopaonik School of Natural Law. I commend Professor Slobodan Perović, Founder and President of the Kopaonik School of Natural Law, for his tireless efforts in organizing this conference which is held with the support of the national Commission of the Republic of Serbia for UNESCO.

The Kopaonik conferences on human rights, organized over the last two decades, have become increasingly important international gatherings. These conferences have acquired particular significance because they bring together representatives of the many legal professions who, by virtue of their responsibilities, have the duty to defend human rights and human dignity.

The topic of the 23rd Annual Kopaonik Conference "Law and Space – Harmonization and the Right to Difference" is very timely as the Conference is taking place during the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a platform for promoting tolerance, mutual respect and dialogue among cultures, and for which UNESCO has been designated lead agency. In our increasingly globalised societies the questions of harmonization and diversity are of crucial importance for all of us. UNESCO appreciates that the participants of this meeting will reflect on how to move from building the rule of law to building the rule of cultures in which universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, peace and mutual understanding constitute the foundation for living together in multicultural societies. This is fully in line with UNESCO's Strategy on Human Rights aimed at fostering a universal culture of human rights as an antidote to violence, discrimination and intolerance

It is symbolic that the annual conferences in Kopaonik are organized around 10 December, Human Rights Day. On this day, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations. Human Rights Day serves as a yearly landmark to remember the victories won in the long struggle to respect the dignity of all human beings. But its main purpose is to mobilize against major threats to human rights, namely poverty, discrimination, gender inequality, climate change and terrorism.

UNESCO whose constitutional mandate is to "...further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms..." considers the Kopaonik School of Natural Law its natural ally in the common efforts to promote fundamental principles of respect for human rights and human dignity as well as the principles of indivisibility, interrelatedness, interdependence and equal importance of all human rights. We believe that human rights policies should be developed on the basis of scientific research and for this very reason we commend the efforts made in Kopaonik for so many years to reflect on challenges and obstacles to the implementation of human rights.

Please accept my best wishes for a very successful conference, in the noble pursuit of ensuring dignity and justice for all.

Thank you.