OPENING SESSION AND SESSION ONE OF THE INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP ON CULTURAL RIGHTS AND THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

H.E. Mr. George KASOULIDES, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations office in Geneva and other International Organisations in Switzerland

Geneva, 14 June 2021, 15:00-17:00 (CEST)

**OPENING SESSION**

Thank you.

Excellencies,

Distinguished panellists,

Dear participants,

It is my great pleasure to Chair today’s Opening Session of the Intersessional Workshop on Cultural Rights and the Protection of Cultural Heritage. This workshop was mandated by the March 2018 resolution on Cultural Rights and the Protection of Cultural Heritage and had been postponed “owing to the […] liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations Secretariat and the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic”.

However, not least due to the efforts by Special Rapporteur Bennoune -- who shortly will be giving the keynote speech and moderating the first panel and partaking in the third -- as well as OHCHR, we are now delighted to convene the two-day workshop. The short presentations by the expert panellists, as well as the questions and observations posed by participants will be used to “develop appropriate tools for the dissemination of an approach to the protection, restoration and preservation of cultural heritage that promotes universal respect for cultural rights by all”.

It is thus a great honour that UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Nada Al-Nashif will commence the proceedings. She will be followed by H.E. Ambassador Abdul-Karim Hashim Mostafa, the Permanent Representative of Iraq, on behalf of the eleven-member core group of the resolution. We are also delighted to have with us UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr. Enersto Ottone Ramirez. Finally, Professor Karima Bennoune, the UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, will deliver her keynote address.

Madam Deputy High Commissioner, the floor is yours.