UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Opening of the exhibition

‘Dispersed Poland.
The programme of protecting Polish archival heritage abroad’

Talking points

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4 April 2011 at 1p.m.
I wish to express the honour and pleasure I feel at being here today at the opening of this exhibition ‘Dispersed Poland. The programme of protecting Polish archival heritage abroad’.

Poland has suffered more than many other countries through the loss of its documentary heritage either to destruction or having it dispersed.

Therefore efforts such as this exhibition which contributes to the action of protecting heritage are welcome.

Equally, establishing a network of archival holdings ensuring the preservation and access of the archival, historical and political memory and culture of Poles for present and future generations is of major importance. It could even be considered a duty for humankind and Poland has never shirked this duty.

Mr Ambassador, your country's efforts attest to a strong awareness of the importance of heritage and memory as contributors to knowledge. This mirrors UNESCO's concern about the disappearance of the world's memory and knowledge.
To this end, it created its Memory of the World Programme and launched a global campaign to raise awareness of the issues at stake. The Memory of the World Register is one of the methods used to raise awareness of the treasures that sometimes lie hidden in libraries and archives. These precious items can take many formats: films, stone tablets, photos, archives, manuscripts, many of which are to be seen in this exhibition.

Poland remains one of major contributors to the Memory of the World Programme and its hosting of the 4th International Memory of the World Conference in Warsaw in May serves to confirm the importance it attaches to heritage.

I therefore offer my congratulations to all those who helped to organize this exhibition and invite other countries to showcase their invaluable items as well as to contribute to a better understanding of the role that memory plays in development and knowledge.

Thank you.