



Appeal

by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO for the reconstruction of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo

UNESCO, Paris, 13 April 1994

At the time when the force of arms and hatred seems to be giving way to that of reason, it is important that the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity for which UNESCO is working should express itself vigorously

The intellectual isolation imposed for nearly two years on Sarajevo is as dangerous as the shortages of electricity, water or medicines from which this shattered town is suffering. What better symbol to express solidarity and to break the isolation than a library - a national and university institution moreover? A place of teaching and research, of culture, of information and of intellectual exchange, the library furthers access to knowledge and helps to preserve cultural identity while consecrating the local community's participation in universal civilization.

The destruction of the National and University Library of Sarajevo was an act of barbarism perpetrated in the context of a whole series of assaults on the national heritage. This beautiful building in the Moorish style - which was a town hall in the nineteenth century and had become a familiar monument in the centre of Sarajevo - has been severely damaged: the equipment and apparatus necessary for the proper running of a large library are no longer in working order. In addition, countless irreplaceable treasures of Bosnian and world culture have been destroyed by fire.

The Library of Sarajevo must be reconstructed. It must then be given the equipment to enable it to establish its data bases and to have access to European and international information networks. It must finally be provided with reprographic laboratories, audiovisual equipment and the means to restore, conserve and safeguard its collections (those remaining and those needing to be reconstituted) as well as modern facilities for educating and training information specialists.

I therefore call on all States, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, public and private institutions, funding bodies, associations of librarians, archivists and documentalists, and private individuals to participate through voluntary contributions - in the form of funds, equipment or services - in the reconstruction of the National and University Library in Sarajevo and in the reconstitution of its collections.

I call on all intellectuals, artists and writers, historians and scientists, and all those whose business it is to inform, to help focus world public attention on this project.

I express the hope that contributions will be commensurate with the task involved and that all those who are concerned to see the universal documentary heritage preserved and to promote its widest possible utilization by researchers and general public alike will play their part in the reconstruction and equipping of the National and University Library of Sarajevo.

Apel Federica Mayora, generalniog direktora (UNESCO, 13. April 1994)

