

Remarks by

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Chairperson of the Executive Board

## **Master Yoga**

14 June 2024

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His Excellency Ambassador Sharma,  
Madam Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences,  
Dear Ambassadors,  
Dear friends,

Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to His Excellency Ambassador Vishal Sharma, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO, for inviting me to participate and speak at this event that is organized in cooperation with the Heartfulness Foundation and its Yoga4Unity partners.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the UNESCO Artists for Peace who are with us today.

Ten years ago, the United Nations proclaimed June 21 “*International Day of Yoga*”.

In 10 years, the practice of yoga has grown exponentially around the world. Very widely popularized in its physical aspects which are the postures and breathing, familiar to those who practice *hatha yoga*, its benefits however go much further, touching on the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions, the latter being specific to *raja yoga*.

Yoga leaves no one behind. Everyone, whatever their level, has the opportunity to participate and enjoy its benefits.

I took my first lesson of Yoga with the wife of Ambassador Sharma. She was so inspiring and convincing that I ended up continuing, when time allowed it.

The word Yoga has long evoked for me unachievable acrobatics. It may appear that way in the beginning, but by starting to practice it I discovered a universe of possibilities.

Yoga, as we all know, comes from the Sanskrit word "Yuj," which means "to unite". This unity signifies the ultimate union of the body with consciousness and thus attaining definitive inner-peace.

I am sure we have all had that moment in a yoga class where the instructor tells you to "relax and clear your mind."

Easier said than done, right?

I'm lying there thinking about my grocery list, the Board agenda that's too long, and the number of emails I forgot to answer.

Inner peace? I have not reached this stage yet. To be honest I am still closer to the level of inner chaos!

But this is just because I am a beginner.

Our lives today are extremely stressful with a lot of work pressure which causes mental stress, and most certainly yoga is effective in reducing this stress.

Therefore, dear friends, I invite all of you to make yoga a part of your daily routine, this will not only help us all remain healthy both in body and mind, but *it may also greatly contribute to making our working relations more relaxed and pleasant.*

In fact, *maybe we should propose 15 minutes of yoga exercises before each of our Executive Board meetings!* We could end up having such harmonious and calm sessions.

The Master Yoga exhibition offers you a route that is historical, thematic and fun. Everyone will find something to interest them, question themselves and explore. Some may wish to go further, as yoga is multidimensional in nature and has infinite potential for deepening.

And if we only retained two of its promises: peace of mind and union, would we not have a magnificent road map for life in a turbulent world full of uncertainties?

Namasté.

Thank you.