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ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

President Momir Durović, Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (CANU)
President Felix Unger (European Academy of Sciences and Arts-EASA)
Vice-President Ed Noort, European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA – All European Academies)
Jirí Benes, International Union of Academies, Union Académique Internationale (IUA/UAI)

Dear WAAS Fellows, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I wish to express warm congratulations and many thanks to President Momir Durović and his colleagues of the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts, for their vision and their real accomplishments, organizing this very important Conference, here in Podgorica, under the Patronage of the Prime Minister of Montenegro, HE Milo Dukanović.

But I am also very happy and proud to see that, about a third of those that will be presenting papers here, during the next days, are active Members of our World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS).

So, about 2/3 of those here in our audience, may not know enough about our Academy – therefore allow me to make a very small commercial.

WAAS, now composed of 650 Fellows from countries all around the world, was established in 1960, by distinguished individuals concerned by the impact of the explosive growth of knowledge, and its activities seek to address global issues related to the social consequences and policy implications of knowledge. WAAS was founded on faith in the power of original and creative ideas – real ideas with effective power – to change the world. And its motto is: “Leadership in thought that leads to action”. The spirit of the Academy can be best expressed in the words of Albert Einstein: “The creations of our mind shall be a blessing and not a curse to mankind”. One of the aims of the Academy’s founders was that it would function as “an informal WORLD UNIVERSITY, at the highest scientific and ethical lev-

el, in which deep human understanding and the fullest sense of responsibility will meet”. Another fundamental aim of the Academy is to rediscover the language of mutual understanding. The leadership of the Academy has guided its work and activities, within these basic guidelines throughout its history.

Last December, our Fellow colleagues have elected me – an already old brazilian – as its new President and elected our younger distinguished colleague – Dr. Winston Nagan, as Chairman of our Board of Trustees. We have succeeded both Ivo Slaus, now our Honorary President and Garry Jacobs, our CEO, who have done a really fantastic and very impressive work, during their active period in office. But, the new team, clearly pointed out to them – we accept this honour and big challenge, on condition that you both continue working with us, in the Executive Committee of WAAS, together with our other distinguished colleague Dr. Alberto Zucconi. So, in reality, we have just enlarged the working team in the leadership of our Academy and with the continued support of our Board of Trustees, we’ll continue to work on a few priority areas. One of them, the Search for a “New paradigm in human development”, has been well described by both Garry Jacobs and Ivo Slaus, as: “a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them. New, creative, out-of-the-box ideas and concepts are required. The new paradigm in human development must be founded upon a new paradigm in education” and finally, “systematic, structured systems of generating and testing such thinking is provided by Higher Education”. So, if one of the aims of the founding fathers of WAAS, not possible to implement in the 60’s – a WORLD UNIVERSITY – with the ICT’s currently available, we believe, can be materialized today. So, let’s all also work together for that – it will not be an easy task – we really need your valuable collaboration, your ideas, your suggestions, and also your criticism. Please, look at the site: www.wunicon.org to see what has been already done to help us in the creation and implementation of a World University Consortium (WUC), as agreed, last February, at a meeting we had, hosted by the Library of Alexandria, in Egypt.

This development has the potential to really benefit a large number of young people, especially in developing regions of the world, that presently have no possibilities of access to existing Higher Education Institutions in their countries or in their regions. We expect to be able to report more to you, on this important new development, in the coming months. We are planning to organize meetings and Conferences in different regions of the world and, through our Journals *Cadmus* and *e-Eruditio*, and also in our WAAS Newsletters, you’ll be able to closely follow these efforts.

Now, let me share with you, a dream I already have, for quite some time. A few weeks ago I received from the Club of Rome a document entitled: “Addressing Systemic Issues”. Its first paragraph reads as follows: “It is becoming more and more evident that the various challenges humanity faces are in fact, aspects of the systemic crisis that can be related to our current economic paradigm. Unemployment, inequality, the financial crisis, biodiversity depletion, degradation of ecosystems, climate change – you name it. If we want to change the world for the better we will have

to find ways of addressing these systemic issues. We have to understand what they are, how they can be addressed and devise operations to do so. What stops us from trying to tackle systemic issues? Would this not be the most sensible thing to do?" Next week, hosted by the Club of Rome, 15 International NGO's, Academies, like WAAS, Foundations, corporations and also individuals, will meet near Barcelona, Spain, "to work together to address these systemic issues". Some of us will be there and we can later tell you the main conclusions of the meeting. Two years ago I wrote a small article in *Cadmus*, under the title: "Call for United Action" – a dream of mine that I see becoming a reality, only two years later !!

Let me conclude, by making reference to an article by Richard Hames, published in the last issue of *e-Erudition*, under the leadership of Dr. Winston Nagan, entitled: "To touch Eternity". He points out how we are today and the need we have to find a good "transition to a new society". I am quite sure that the many presentations we'll hear in the next few days, will indicate the best ways for this transition to take place, attaining the expectations of our wonderful and visionary hosts of this excellent international Conference here in Podgorica. WAAS wishes again to congratulate President Momir Durović and to express our deep appreciation for this great initiative.

Thank you for your kind attention.

