



United Nations

Press Release Secretary-General

Department of Public Information - News Coverage and Accreditation Service - New York

UN LIBRARY

SEP 15 2000

UN/DA COLLECTION

SG/SM/7532

5 September 2000

SECRETARY-GENERAL THANKS REPUBLIC OF CROATIA FOR GIFT OF BRONZE SCULPTURE

Following is the text of the statement by Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the occasion of the presentation of a gift from the Republic of Croatia, delivered on his behalf this afternoon by Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations Gilliam Martin Sorensen, in the presence of Croatian President Stjepan Mesic:

I am delighted to join the Government and people of the Republic of Croatia today in celebrating your country's eight years of commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. Let me offer my best wishes and sincere appreciation to you for your active and constructive engagement in the work of the United Nations, and for this wonderful gift.

This bronze figurehead, crafted by the renowned sculptor Ivan Mestrovic, is a treasure of Croatian cultural and artistic heritage. Described as "the greatest phenomenon among the sculptors" of the early twentieth century, Mr. Mestrovic drew inspiration from the rural life and natural beauty in the midst of which he spent his childhood. Because this is something we can all relate to, his work can be found in buildings and squares around the world. His genius and appeal know no barriers of geography, language or culture.

This work, "Girl with Lyre," holds special significance for the United Nations. The lyre is the most classical symbol of music, which itself is a metaphor for peace and unity. This gift is a moving and eloquent expression of the founding principles of our Organization.

But the girl with the lyre also captures the vibrancy of a country rich in history and character. It tells of the strength of a people -- not least its girls and women -- who have withstood years of tension, hardship and conflict to emerge as a new nation, building a peaceful society step-by-step.

This week, as Heads of State and Government gather for the Millennium Summit at the United Nations, I hope they too will be inspired by the music of the lyre. I hope they will resolve to work in harmony to build peace for all the men and women of this earth.

And I hope that in the years to come, this inspiration will live on as Croatia's gift to the United Nations. May we all draw strength from it in our daily work to build a new and peaceful century. If music be the food of peace, let the Girl with Lyre play on. Hvala. Thank you very much.

* * * * *

For information media - not an official record - also available at <http://www.un.org/news>