



UNESCO'S PERSPECTIVE ON UZBEKISTAN: A CROSSROADS OF CULTURES AND HUMAN WARMTH

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Abstract: *This article explores the impressions of UNESCO delegates regarding Uzbekistan during the author's participation in an international program. It highlights the remarks of Madam Ramata Bakayoko Nee Ly, UNESCO's Permanent Representative of Western Africa, who emphasized the importance of preserving Uzbekistan's cultural identity and promoting its national heritage globally. Insights from diplomats from Côte d'Ivoire and France further illustrate Uzbekistan's hospitality, cultural richness, and strong international appeal.*

Keywords: *UNESCO, Uzbek culture, Ramata Bakayoko Nee Ly, international diplomacy, national identity, hospitality, tourism, cultural heritage.*

INTRODUCTION.

Uzbekistan has long been recognized as a historic crossroads of civilizations, where diverse cultures, religions, and ethnic groups have coexisted for centuries. My recent participation in a UNESCO program reaffirmed this truth through direct encounters with international delegates who viewed Uzbekistan not only as a land of ancient heritage but also as a modern example of openness, hospitality, and cultural continuity.

One of the distinguished guests assigned to me was Madam Ramata Bakayoko Nee Ly, the Permanent Representative of Western Africa to UNESCO and Ambassador for Women. From the very first moment, she demonstrated sincere kindness, warmth, and genuine appreciation for the Uzbek people. During our joint visits to various sacred and historical sites, she warmly expressed her deep appreciation for Uzbekistan's cultural spirit and human values. During one of our conversations, she shared a message that left a lasting impression on me:

“Do not change. Do not imitate Europe. Stay who you are. Your people are unbelievably kind, open-hearted, and authentic.”

These words carried a profound meaning - the importance of safeguarding cultural identity in a rapidly globalizing world. Madam Bakayoko emphasized that Uzbekistan's national attire, arts, traditions, and craftsmanship possess a unique charm that the international market is deeply in need of. According to her, the world is searching for authenticity, and Uzbekistan is one of the few countries that still embodies it fully. Throughout the visit, I witnessed how representatives from different continents - Africa, Europe, and Asia - found emotional and intellectual connection with Uzbekistan. UNESCO's platform enabled a form of cultural dialogue that transcended national borders. The feedback shared by the guests pointed to a common understanding: Uzbekistan is not only preserving its heritage but is capable of becoming a global cultural brand. This experience revealed that the international community deeply respects Uzbekistan's model of tolerance, its historical sites, its people's openness, and its ability to maintain centuries-old traditions in a fast-changing world. In essence, UNESCO's view of Uzbekistan reflects a nation confidently standing at the crossroads of ancient civilizations and contemporary global communication - a country whose cultural voice deserves to be heard worldwide.

Alongside her were two additional diplomats assigned to me: Mr. Outtara from Cote d'Ivoire and Philip



from France. Both demonstrated remarkable respect, politeness, and intellectual curiosity. Their genuine admiration for Uzbekistan's architecture, sacred sites, and warm hospitality reflected a consistent pattern among all foreign delegates: Uzbekistan is viewed not only as a country with a rich past, but as a nation with a bright cultural future. Throughout the visit, these international representatives repeatedly expressed how impressed they were by the openness, generosity, and sincerity of the Uzbek people. Their reflections showed that the values we often consider ordinary - hospitality, respect for guests, and cultural pride - are in fact extraordinary qualities on the global stage. The UNESCO platform allowed for a powerful exchange of cultural perspectives. Delegates from Africa, Europe, and Asia found meaningful connections with Uzbekistan, each drawing inspiration from its history, its spiritual heritage, and its people's warmth. Their strong interest reinforced a clear message: Uzbekistan's cultural identity is its greatest strength and should be confidently represented to the world. Ultimately, this experience revealed that Uzbekistan stands as a vivid example of cultural continuity and human connection. Rooted in ancient civilization yet engaged with modern global dialogue, the country holds a unique place in the international community - a place defined by heritage, humanity, and hope.

1. Encounters with UNESCO Delegates

During the program, one of the prominent guests assigned to me was Madam Ramata Bakayoko Nee Ly, the Permanent Representative of Western Africa to UNESCO and Ambassador for Women. From the very beginning, she exhibited sincerity, warmth, and intellectual depth. Our visits to various sacred sites and historical monuments allowed her to closely observe the essence of Uzbek culture.

2. Appreciation of Cultural Identity

Throughout our conversations, Madam Bakayoko repeatedly emphasized the importance of preserving Uzbekistan's national identity. Her powerful message remains unforgettable: "Do not change. Do not imitate Europe. Stay who you are. Your people are incredibly open-hearted and kind."

She noted that Uzbekistan's national clothing, craftsmanship, and cultural heritage possess enormous potential for the global market. According to her, the world increasingly seeks authenticity, and Uzbekistan stands out as a nation where traditions are preserved with dignity and pride.

3. Diplomats' Impressions of Uzbekistan

In addition to Madam Bakayoko, two diplomats were assigned to accompany me: Mr. Outtara from Côte d'Ivoire, and Filip from France.

Both were remarkably polite, respectful, and deeply interested in Uzbekistan's architecture, cultural sites, and historical narratives. Their reflections confirmed a shared observation among all delegates: in Uzbekistan, hospitality is not merely a gesture - it is a way of life.

4. Uzbekistan as a Model of Cultural Harmony

The delegates' reactions highlighted how Uzbekistan represents a peaceful environment where various religions, ethnicities, and traditions coexist harmoniously. Such impressions demonstrate that Uzbekistan has significant potential not only as a tourist destination but also as a model of cultural dialogue and tolerance. The UNESCO platform served as a powerful space for these cross-cultural connections, strengthening Uzbekistan's international image.

The UNESCO experience reaffirmed that Uzbekistan holds a special place on the global cultural map. The admiration expressed by representatives from Western Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, and France underscored the value of Uzbekistan's timeless hospitality, authentic traditions, and cultural depth. Their heartfelt appreciation proves that Uzbekistan does not need to imitate others; its strength lies in its heritage, humanity, and originality. As the world searches for genuine cultural expression, Uzbekistan's identity stands out as a powerful and marketable treasure. Strengthening these international ties will further elevate the country's role in global cultural diplomacy.

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