What is it that attracts us so to this form, that we ourselves give life to? Is it the inanimate becoming animate, and thus being able to say a thousand words, in a way no human actor may be able to, or have license to do so, or is it that we see ourselves as creators manipulating our subjects? Whatever be the case, puppets the world over have been expressing, playing, fighting, loving and linking our many past memories to our present. We are teaching a new generation that we must hold on to our past values and traditions while being steadfastly open to new ideas.

Let us celebrate then this love not only for the art of puppetry, but above all to try to understand the differences that exist between nations and cultures, which need to be brought closer and wiped away, with a celebration of this kind today. This organization and art form allows us to promote the noblest human values such as peace and mutual understanding between people regardless of their origin, political or religious convictions and differences in culture, in accordance with the respect for fundamental human rights as defined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Present in more than 90 countries, UNIMA is a platform to exchange and to share between people who practice puppetry, research, history and who are passionate about this art form.

On World Puppet Day - I am delighted to see that as an organization we have reached so many people and so many communities worldwide, particularly in disadvantaged areas for whom the opportunity to experience puppet theatre would have otherwise been non-existent. It is an honor and a privilege to work with all of you as President of UNIMA. Throughout my travels and associations as President, I have encountered a great feeling of togetherness amongst puppeteers around the world; there is a flame in all of you, that keeps us going no matter what the situation; and there is always a smile when we meet each other and exchange thoughts and ideas. I have been able to cultivate great friendships and build a wonderful family across the world, and that is what will stay with me for the rest of my days.

Thank you.