

**Opening address of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Mr Tigran  
Sargsian At the World Congress of Sociology**

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government I welcome the participants in the World Congress.

We are proud that an event of this caliber is being held in these pivotal times at the foot of Mount Ararat, where Noah's Ark has found refuge. In a certain sense this symbolizes a new beginning.

The issues that trouble us are many. I shall submit several assertions to your judgment:

**1. There exist at least two hypotheses about the processes currently underway in this world:**

**\* The first is: we are dealing here with just another economic crisis, and it is common knowledge that crises are cyclical. Therefore one needs to undertake anti-cyclical measures, and every natural pattern of the market economy shall be redeemed, since a part thereof is currently dysfunctional.**

**\* The second: in reality this is not just another economic crisis; we are facing the emergence of the new world, which means that this crisis may be overcome only through revealing the new patterns that will characterize this new world.**

Since the level of uncertainty is very high, the search has to proceed in both plains in parallel: pursuant to the logic of the construction of both the industrial society, and the post-industrial one.

**2. Today the predominant majority of states, Armenia being no exception, address the crisis under logic of the industrial society, adopting expansionary, stimulus oriented monetary and fiscal policies.**

It may be much harder to grasp what is this new world going to look like, and what measures should be taken today, so that tomorrow we enjoy the chance to be among the winners.

**3. The methodology of our assertions derives from the following five pillars, which characterize the essence of contemporary processes:**

**\* pillar one** The speed of change in the modern world. This acceleration affects all aspects of human endeavor.

**\* pillar two** The world as we know it is getting smaller. The shrinking world significantly increases the degree of correlation and interdependence in it.

**\* pillar three** Intellectual work is increasingly becoming the core process of the changing world, replacing the production of goods and services.

**\* pillar four** The preservation of spiritual and cultural values becomes the safeguard for the survival of nations. The coexistence of states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century embarks on the plain of a dialogue and rivalry of cultures.

**\* pillar five** Self-cognizance and self-realization become a conscious need for the modern man. A broad framework for the enjoyment of liberties is called upon to assure this.

**4. The current crisis bolstered a debate between the following two vectors:**

**UNIFICATION**

**ORIGINALITY**

**Convergence around uniform criteria      Discovery of modes of coexistence  
for specificities**

**\* Unification is characterized by:**

- i. governance from a unified centre under uniform ideology, defining common rules and enforcing them;**
- ii. subjection of the masses to uniform rules.**

**\* Originality is characterized by:**

- i. the emergence of a multipolar and multinetworked world;**
- ii. the possibility to build one's own world, introduce indigenous rules;**
- iii. the striving of an individual to shape his/her own world.**

**5. The fifth premise is that the modern world is full of dissimilar, distinct, and diverse societies, at various stages of development. The diversity is determined by underlying core processes as well as differences in the systems of values (cultures). Nevertheless, the forms of self-organization of these societies do not enjoy the same degree of variety. Self-organization formats often fail to accommodate the substance of social turnover and, therefore, impede with the natural course of development for the societies in question. There is a need to bring about a new paradigm for society's organization: acknowledging, on the one hand, the need for its diverse incarnations and, on the other, setting forth new rules of coexistence.**

**6. What shall become of nation-states in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? On the one hand we observe the accumulation of the potential for self-cognizance and self-organization among certain nations at the stage of industrial development, which drives them towards the struggle for their own nation-state, an inevitable phase in their natural progression. On the other hand, in societies developing by the post-industrial logic, we see the emergence of new entities expanding beyond the boundaries of state. Given these trends, a need arises to define the rules of coexistence between the organizational forms of pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial societies. So we are talking not only of the dialogue of civilizations,**

but also of institutional relations between various modes and formats of self-organization.

7. The seventh premise is that all societies, regardless of their level of development, are being permeated by the spirit of freedom. This is determined by the fact that intellectual activity is now the mainstay process in post-industrial society, and the bearer of intellect is the individual who, above everything else, needs a plain for self-realization.

The quest for identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century boils down to constructing one's own world. In this context freedom represents the possibility to create and enjoy values. That is: contemporary man is in a continual quest, eager to perceive new ideas, thriving in a rapidly changing and ever shrinking world. The virus of freethinking knows no borders, and it turns up everywhere where there is a thinking man.

Dear colleagues, in conclusion I would like to emphasize that the current phase in the history of mankind requires a professional analysis of its social phenomena. We hope that the Congress will be instrumental in approaching the answers to the following thorny questions:

- \* Is the current crisis a social or a financial/economic one?
- \* Is it possible to outline a new framework of coexistence (the formation of the post-industrial world)?
- \* What changes shall transpire between the format and substance of self-organization of nations?
- \* Is there a new paradigm that could ensure a coexistence of diversities in solidarity?
- \* What are the formulae of the quest for identity in the age of the open mind?

Dear friends,

I hope that the atmosphere forged by the efforts of the organizers of the Congress, coupled with the high professionalism of the participants, are good prerequisites for this Congress to generate new, progressive ideas and expand the Weltanschauung of every participant.

I wish the Congress productive work.

Thank you for your attention.