

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board of the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation” and our staff in the Athens office, we would like to thank you for joining us here today. During these current global socio-economic difficult times, being part of a not-for-profit institution engaging in philanthropy around the globe, gives all of us involved with the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation” a sense of promise, hope and pride. More specifically, being able to help our home country, Greece, makes everything even more rewarding. We, at the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation”, the Board, the staff, and the advisors in our various offices, feel that we can contribute to the Greek State’s efforts in providing our people and our country with additional resources with which to strengthen our ability to face today’s challenging world. The challenges are great and no one, either in the public or private domain can solve alone all of the issues and challenges we are facing as individuals, as Nations, as the world at large.

Our mission, since our inception back in 1996 when our Founder, Stavros Niarchos (whom we thank for the opportunity he has provided for us to offer much needed support around the globe), passed away, is focused on supporting the areas of the Arts and Culture, Education, Health, and Social Welfare. During the last fourteen years, which happen to be our first fourteen years, we have provided numerous grants around the globe, but our focus has, and will always be, in our home country, Greece, as it is evident from the fact that approx. 2/3ds of our total grant-making activities has taken place in Greece itself or through not-for-profit organizations and causes promoting Hellenism around the world. There is a more detailed presentation of our activities at our web-site at www.SNF.org.

Our grant for the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center will be our largest individual grant up to now. It will include the new state of the art facilities of the Greek National Opera, the National Library of Greece, as well as approximately 150,000 sq m of green, the Stavros Niarchos Educational and Cultural Park (similar in size to the National Garden) all together embracing the SNFCC. We are glad that we have chosen Renzo Piano, the internationally acclaimed architect coming from our neighboring Genova, and his team to design and create the SNFCC. Piano’s professional commitment, experience and imagination, his integrity, his respect for the environment, and for our country’s history, and also his belief in our country’s positive role in the future of our world, makes it a real pleasure to work together. We, the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation” at large and especially our amazing staff and advisors in our

Athens office, Renzo Piano and his team in Paris, the Greek State, are all collaborating in the best possible way with a common mission of building for the Greek people a Cultural Center that will make us all Greeks, without exception, very proud. We hope and plan to have the project completed by 2015, at which time we will be donating the whole Center to the Greek State which will “run” it for the benefit of all Greeks and more.

Today’s event is dedicated to the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center” and in particular to all those who are helping materialize its dream. Today’s event is dedicated to our Founder Stavros Niarchos, to our people in all our offices, and to Renzo Piano and his associates. We hope you like what you see and hear today, and more than anything, we hope, not only as the SNF, but as Greeks, that you will all embrace the vision of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation as your own asset and will, in any and every way you can, help make it a success in all respects. This Cultural Center belongs to all of us, and we all owe it to our children to make it an absolute success!