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Dear Nikos Fintikakis, Vice-President, Region 2, UIA,

Thank you very much for inviting me to the UIA Region 2 Presidents meeting on the 10th of March 2021. I would like to also thank Mr. Giorgos Stasinou, President of TEE (Technical Chamber of Greece), Mr. Konstantinos Makedos, President of TMEDE (Engineers and Architects Fund) and Mr. Fani Vavili, President of the Greek Section, UIA.

It was a great pleasure to attend the meeting and to listen to all the Presidents of the National Sections of Region 2, Vice-presidents of UIA and distinguished guests. It was my privilege to participate as a candidate from the Mexican Section for the position of President of UIA for the period 2021-2023.

Before my presentation you had asked me three important questions which I answered with pleasure as follows:

1. What do you think about UIA's role in the last decades?

UIA has played a very important role in architecture since it was created in 1948 and has had great leaders from different countries around the world. I have been involved with UIA for 43 years, since I was a young professional serving as General Secretary of International Affairs at the Federation of Mexican Architects and I was member of the organizing committee of the UIA World Congress held in Mexico City in October 1978.

The Congress was an outstanding success, with the participation of more than 10,000 Architects. It was a great experience for me and I came to love UIA. During that time I had the privilege of meeting Architect Pierre Vago, President of UIA, who had a clear vision of UIA. He guided me as my mentor for the organization of the congress. He was widely respected by all. Those were glorious times for UIA.

In the year 2002, when I was Dean of the School of Architecture, I was elected as first Vice-president of UIA in Berlin and I have had the great pleasure of working with Architect Jaime Lerner as President for three years. He was Mayor of the city of Curitiba in Brazil for several terms and Governor of the State of Paraná, with extensive experience as architect, urban planner and politician. We organized many activities and implemented effective programs with the collaboration of all of the National Sections. One of the events was "Celebration of Cities" and many young architects participated. That period was very intense and enriching for me.

After being Vice-president I have been participating for several times as Council Member of UIA, actively engaging in all of the Congresses (Berlin, Istanbul, Torino, Tokyo, Durban and Seoul). I helped create a network for UIA which linked architects with international institutions around the world.

I have been able to see first-hand the development and evolution of UIA over that period and become familiar with every aspect of its role and operations.

In my opinion UIA is a very effective and value-adding organization, well known to architects all over the world. UIA has the mandate to guide the future of architecture and the development of cities. The aim of the creation of UIA was to catalyze and partner with society in the reconstruction and revitalization of cities after the Second World War in order to address problems of housing and habitat environment. That challenge remains today along with many new problems faced by the world today.

2. What do you think of UIA today?

The world today is facing myriad problems related to the built and natural environment including climate change. What should be the role of architects and UIA to be prepared to face this big challenge?

UIA should respond to this important issue in partnership with other international institutions and meet the expectations of architects today and in the future.

As Council member, I believe we have to go deeply into the discussion of this issue. Furthermore, we are now facing one of the worst pandemic and life will not be the same in the future. The consequences on architecture and cities are already evident on the contemporary world and if not addressed in a timely manner, could be devastating in the future. The challenge Post- COVID will be to find strategies for building more responsible architecture and cities.

The perception of architects around the world is that UIA should strengthen integration with society to work together on the understanding of the paradigms of the future in the cultural, ecological and technological development to respond to the needs of the people.

3. What do you think of UIA in the future and what are your main ideas to implement in the event that you become President of UIA for the period 2021-2023?

UIA has to revitalize the approach towards different problems of today around the world and call on the synergies of all resources at its disposal in close collaboration with the Bureau, Council and National Sections. It is important to have a vision of the prospective situation in different parts of the world. One of the most important aspirations in my opinion is Unity – bringing architects around the world on the same page and share responsibility to build a better environment for all. UIA can and should demonstrate to society that good architecture

has the potential to improve the quality and level of living and design Healthy, Sustainable, Resilient, Inclusive, Safe, Human and Beautiful Cities to raise the level of Happiness.

UIA means “ Union of International Architects “ but I believe we have lost the meaning of these words. I want to recover the concept of “ UNION “. I would like to be the **candidate of “UNITY”** We can create good relations all around if we understand the simple truth that people are not difficult, they are different. I would like to encourage the synergy among each person in a democratic way with respect to all cultures, learning from the differences and the diversity of each country.

There are of course many challenges for UIA. One of the most critical is to transform UIA to become a contemporary organization working together in a very efficient way with all the National and Regional Architects organizations in order to improve the quality of Architecture, the preservation of the heritage in general and their historical centers and managing the future of the territory, the urban peripheries and the rural areas, paying close attention to the preservation of the national resources and the built up environment.

Among my key priorities for translating my vision for UIA for the future into action are to strive for:


1. Good Governance with clear structure and strategies.
2. Transparency - informing on a monthly basis of all the activities related to finances, meetings, working groups, competitions and standard operating procedures.
3. Effective Business Plan - have an annual operational business plan with specific goals and targets.
4. Quality and timely support – meet the needs of constituents working closely with the team to give efficient services to all National Sections.
5. More effective integration among the Bureau and Council members.
6. Greater focus on Architecture, Urban Planning, Education, Eco issues and Climate Change.
7. Enhanced contribution to educational institutions to increase the level of education of future generations encouraging National Sections to be close to them and implementing Continuing Educational Programs.
8. Encouraging National Sections to define their plans and priorities and interchanging ideas among them.

9. Draw upon resources of relevant global resources - become close to International Organizations working together on different operational plans and with different governments in line with the local contexts.

10. Enhanced collaboration with the private sector - define jointly with the private sector programs for utilizing sustainable materials, implementing fund raising programs for competitions, publications and the operation of working groups.

I look forward to our meeting in May.

Best regards,



Handwritten signature of José Luis Cortés in black ink, featuring a stylized 'J' and 'L'.

José Luis Cortés