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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion
of World Science Day for Peace and Development**

10 November 2007

Advances in science and technology (S&T) have always been closely linked to economic and social development. In turn, economic and social development leads to stability and peace. In this sense it can be said that S&T advances help to lay the groundwork both for development and for peace.

The long-term impact of S&T investments on economic development is significant. Increased life expectancy and quality of life, poverty reduction, increased employment and enhanced scientific and technological expertise are some of the major benefits of investing in S&T. Furthermore, many studies have shown that while returns to a company from investing in S&T are high, the returns to society are even higher as new ideas are often applied to areas far beyond those the innovator initially imagined.

Indeed, the benefits of science are immense. However, many countries are still excluded from scientific research, and consequently from the benefits of scientific knowledge. Sustained political commitment and efficient international cooperation are required to stop the widening gap between the “have” and the “have nots”.

This is one area where UNESCO can play an important role. UNESCO assists its Member States, notably in the developing world, to develop scientific capacity, in particular through its two international category I science centres, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy, and the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education in Delft, The Netherlands. Both ICTP, which trains physicists, and UNESCO-IHE, which trains water specialists, focus on training students from developing countries. Both have developed over time a large

network of alumni throughout the world that are helping their home countries develop appropriate science and technology policy, and contributing to the overall development and well being of their populations.

The challenges and priorities of investment in science differ from one geographical region to another. However, as a general rule, although increased financial investments in science are a clear priority for development, this is not sufficient. Peace, well performing and accessible education systems, quality institutions, sound infrastructure and support from the private sector are also necessary to ensure high levels of development.

Institutions are particularly important in providing good governance and macroeconomic stability. Improving the policy environment therefore entails adopting a broad policy framework that places investment in science, technology, and innovation at the centre of the development process. In other words, the real challenge lies in embedding science in all spheres of government policy, and introducing educational, regulatory and fiscal measures to enable innovation to flourish across the economy. Scientific investment is first and foremost a political rather than an economic choice.

Today we know that while economic development is a priority, it must be done in ways that do not overly stress our globe's resources. It may take a dramatic change in our collective thinking, but we must realize that sustainable human development depends upon the resources and environmental functions provided by nature. It is my conviction that science and technology are essential for us to learn new ways to develop sustainably.

It is in this spirit that, on this World Science Day for Peace and Development, I call on all relevant stakeholders and development partners to mobilize human and financial resources for science. We must all participate in forging a future of peace and sustainable development in which science plays its vital role. Let us invest in a new future based on shared advances and benefits of science.



Koïchiro Matsuura