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联合国教育、
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**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity
for Dialogue and Development**

21 May 2008

The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, proclaimed in 2001 by UNESCO, has been celebrated each year for six years by a World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

The recurrence of this major event affords us an opportunity to gauge our capacity to promote, on the basis of what is now a coherent standard-setting foundation, an integrated vision of culture in the complex problem areas of development, innovation, dialogue and social cohesion.

Of the seven international conventions promoted by UNESCO to strengthen cultural diversity throughout the world, the most recent, now ratified and in force, are entering in their turn an operational phase. This is the case, in particular, of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which thus supplement the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

We find ourselves, therefore, at the end of one cycle and the start of another which is more practical, more concrete. This new joined-up activity, moving from laws to deeds, puts us in a position to prove, on the basis of the universal principles enshrined in our standard-setting instruments, that cultural diversity is indeed an engine of sustainable development and, as such, a decisive weapon in the fight against poverty.

There is a critical issue at stake here for the international community: for culture, unlike education, does not itself feature among the Millennium Goals, though it is essential if they are to be achieved, as the Millennium Declaration rightly says.

Cultural diversity is not decreed, it is observed and practised. The aim of this Day is thus to nurture the experience of this diversity in a spirit of curiosity, engaging in dialogue and listening to one another, and so, to test out the practical possibilities of development offered by cultural enterprises, creative industries, cultural tourism and the safeguarding of cultural heritage, not least within the framework of national development plans and the common country programming of the United Nations system.

We must now give greater recognition to culture as a contributor to truly sustainable development that respects people and environments, and serves the cause of dialogue and peace. In this way we shall be able to recover the sense of our joint commitment to promoting “the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”.

Koïchiro Matsuura