



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

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 Poetry Day 2009**

21 March 2009

Linguistic diversity is one of the most valuable forms of cultural diversity. Languages, by their ability to seize the boundless diversity of the world and because they are amenable to translation, can link things that are unique and universal together. Such linkage is nowhere more powerful than in poetry. Every language has its poetry.

This Day affords an opportunity to call to mind the message, conveyed by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) that cultural diversity is an evolving process of expression and creation.

Poetry contributes to creative diversity, by questioning anew our use of words and things, our modes of perception and understanding of the world.

Through its associations, its metaphors and its own grammar, poetic language is thus conceivably another facet of the dialogue among cultures.

Diversity in dialogue, free flow of ideas by word, creativity and innovation: World Poetry Day is thus also an invitation to reflect on the power of language and the full development of each person's creative abilities.

Although we have just concluded the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, let us ensure that this Day will also attest to the universal aspiration to a world reconciled around the values of freedom and diversity.

Koïchiro Matsuura