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Message from Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the World Science Day for Peace and Development

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Science cannot develop in isolation. It flourishes through the dialogue of individuals, through the interaction of cultures and communities and through the meeting of minds. It prospers in a soil that is rich in diversity and in a climate that favours diffusion and cross-fertilisation. Ideas must migrate to develop, they must be shared to take root, and they must be accessible for all to benefit.

The theme of this year's World Science Day for Peace and Development, "Science for the rapprochement of peoples and cultures," could not be better chosen, especially as UNESCO has been designated to lead the 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Harnessing the power of science to bring peoples and cultures together, to make the most of the great diversity of humanity, and to foster peaceful development lies at the core of UNESCO's mandate.

The global landscape of science is changing rapidly. New hubs for science and technology are emerging across the world. Innovative forms of cooperation are developing, including between countries of the South. Stronger emphasis is emerging on green technologies. As the *UNESCO 2010 Science Report* that is launched today shows, the playing field is becoming more transparent and more level -- thanks to the revolution in information and communication technologies and the strengthening of global institutional frameworks. These are positive trends.

But we are not there yet. Deep disparities remain between countries and, increasingly, within them. The creation of patents is not evenly distributed. National and global governance of science and technology development is becoming far more complex. Governments and international organizations need to respond to this situation -- to address shortfalls and to support positive trends. UNESCO is

playing its role. We seek to mobilize science knowledge and policy for sustainable development with three goals in mind – to leverage scientific knowledge for the benefit of the environment and the management of natural resources, to foster policies and capacity-building in science, technology and innovation, and to contribute to disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Our focus this year falls on science as a force for bringing peoples and cultures together. At a time of rapid change, it is vital that we recognise this power as a force for development and dialogue. History can help us. No past civilization has ever stood on its own. Knowledge has always developed through exchange and interaction. The cities of Greece innovated from African and Asian cultures of knowledge. The great science of Baghdad benefitted from the influence of India and China. The history of science in Persia tells an equally diverse story. Asia and Africa have been fountains of knowledge for millennia and have helped to shape the world as we know it today. The pre-Columbian Americas tell another rich tale of intellectual and material achievement – in such fields as astronomy, architecture and engineering. The history of science is, therefore, not singular; it is plural.

The same is true today. I believe that we must build on the power of science as a force for the rapprochement of peoples and cultures at three levels.

First, at the global level. No people, community or state can face climate change alone. It is vital that we find the will necessary to make the UN Climate Change Conference in Mexico ending on 10 December a success. UNESCO will contribute to this endeavour through its Climate Change Initiative, drawing on our multi-disciplinary and profoundly humanist approach. This will lay the groundwork for a productive UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. Sustainable development must be green and it must be for all; or it will not happen.

Second, we must act at the regional level to make the most of science as a platform to bring cultures and peoples together. UNESCO's support to the intergovernmental science centre known as SESAME and based in Jordan is a perfect example. Modelled on the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Geneva, this major international research centre brings together nine members from the wider region – namely, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Pakistan, the Palestinian Authority and Turkey. The Centre is supported by a group of eleven

countries, including France, Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States. This is peace-building through science.

Finally, we must act at the local level. I am convinced that local and indigenous knowledge systems have a vital role to play in proposing inclusive solutions to collective problems – especially for the promotion of biological and cultural diversity. Local knowledge systems are foundation pillars also for genuine sustainable development.

Science policy today is as much cultural diplomacy as it is development policy. This World Science Day for Peace and Development is an excellent opportunity to recognise this and to build on it – guided always by the aim of developing a single community of humanity, founded on human dignity and the culture of peace.

Irina Bokova