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de las Naciones Unidas  
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Объединенных Наций по  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,**

**Director-General of UNESCO,**

**on the occasion of World Philosophy Day**

**18 November 2010**

Each year, World Philosophy Day is a unique opportunity to bring the international philosophy community together and encourage thought-provoking discussions on contemporary issues.

In accordance with its Constitution, UNESCO endeavours to promote free thinking and dialogue through its activities in the fields of education, culture, science and communication. As the defences of peace must be constructed in people's minds, it is our duty to work to strengthen those minds through critical thought and mutual understanding.

In 2010, World Philosophy Day will also be marked in connection with the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and is therefore of heightened relevance. Philosophy actually teaches diversity lessons through its numerous schools of thought in all eras and on all continents.

In view of the intricacies of current issues, we should tap into that wealth in order to build our capacity to analyse reality. The intensification of exchanges of all kinds holds out great promise for opportunities to share but also entails the risk of misunderstanding and tension. We must together step up efforts to provide everyone with quality education and an enabling environment in which every man and woman can express his or her ideas and enrich public debate in furtherance of justice and peace.

The international organizations, and above all UNESCO, have a major role to play to that end, with the support of all academic, scientific and cultural stakeholders and the involvement of universities, the media, civil society and governments.

Philosophy is one of the requirements of our time and its consolidation is one of the main thrusts of my commitment to the new humanism.

On the occasion of this World Philosophy Day, UNESCO will bring philosophers, enlightened citizens and, quite simply, people with enquiring minds together in round tables, conferences and symposia in order to improve understanding of contemporary issues: How can the universality of values be reconciled with the diversity of cultures? What role can philosophy play in the rapprochement of peoples? Eighty international events are being held worldwide with the support of our partners, UNESCO Chairs, the National Commissions and expert networks, such as the International Network of Women Philosophers, so that questioning, the first step towards wisdom, can become as widespread an exercise as possible.

Irina Bokova