



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

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the Signing Ceremony

International Institute for Peace

UNESCO, 7 February 2012

Madam President of the General Conference,
Excellency Ambassador David Killion, Permanent Delegate of the United States of
America to UNESCO,
Professor Philip Yeagle, Chancellor of Rutgers University,
Excellency Mr Forest Whitaker, *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and
Reconciliation*, and Chair of the International Institute for Peace,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to welcome you all to UNESCO for this signing ceremony.

It is a beautiful but very cold day, and I thank you all for coming.

The French writer, Albert Camus, once wrote that, "*In the depth of winter, I learned
of the invincible summer that lay within me.*"

The cooperation we launch today shows this to be true.

Summer is born, indeed, in the cold depths of winter, and we have gathered today
to sow seeds for hope, for reconciliation, for peace.

I am very pleased to sign this new partnership between UNESCO and the United
States to launch the International Institute for Peace at Rutgers University.

I am pleased, first, because we were able to act so quickly.

The cycle from idea to action took less than one year!

Those who know our processes know also how much this means!

This pays tribute to the strength of an idea and the will to act.

It pays tribute to the character of particular individuals.

I have in mind Ambassador David Killion, whom I wish to thank for his vision and determination.

I have in mind another United States Ambassador Forest Whitaker, whom I was honoured to designate as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation* on 21 June 2011.

Dear Forest, allow me again to thank you for your leadership, your generosity and, especially, your humanity.

Your participation made the 7th *UNESCO Youth Forum* last October the ground-breaking event that it was.

We have accomplished so much in such a short time – and this is just the beginning!

I wish also to thank Chancellor Philip Yeagle.

I can think of no better place than Rutgers University to take forward this initiative – Rutgers is a place of cutting-edge teaching and research, a place of fabulous diversity, and, most of all, a place for humanism.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased also, because I see this partnership as a model for how we should respond to global challenges today.

I am convinced that tackling complex, global problems requires international organizations to work hand-in-hand with universities, with civil society leaders, with activists across the world.

Alone, we can make a difference – *together*, we can change the world.

I am most pleased, because the idea that underpins this new Category 2 Centre goes to the heart of peace today.

Half of the world's population's today is under the age of 25.

Many suffer from discrimination or conflict.

Millions are unemployed.

Over 200 million young women and men live on less than US\$1 a day.

How can we nurture today the values of tolerance, dialogue and peace in such circumstances of uncertainty?

Conflict resolution and reconciliation must start in schools and universities.

It must start by empowering young women and men in difficult neighbourhoods, in post-conflict settings, in situations of tension.

Young people are already changing the world -- we must help them channel peacefully this impetus for change, by including all, by teaching new skills, by sharing experience.

We must give every young man and woman the confidence to dream of a better world and the skills to shape reality in this direction.

This is the core message we are sending today.

Together, we will take this message to Uganda, to South Sudan, to Colombia, to Mexico, to any part of the world where this message is needed.

This is just a start.

In times of turbulence, we must remain true to a moral compass.

The inherent dignity and rights of every girl and boy must be the starting point for all our action and the measure of our success.

This is the idea that founded UNESCO 66 years ago.

It is the idea at the heart of the International Institute for Peace.

I wish to thank the United States of America for its ongoing leadership today.

In a few minutes, we will hear from Her Excellency Dr Esther Brimmer, United States Assistant Secretary of State, who was here two weeks ago to launch another important initiative, the new *Teaching Respect for All* programme.

UNESCO needs this vision more than ever before today.

Thank you for your support.