



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 Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the *International Day Against Homophobia and
Transphobia (IDAHO)***

17 May 2013

I am pleased to see the growing momentum of commitment and efforts across the world to address homophobia and transphobia. Within the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has shown extraordinary leadership in condemning homophobia and transphobia and in promoting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

As part of these efforts, UNESCO launched a global initiative in 2011 to prevent and combat homophobic and transphobic bullying in education -- to ensure that educational settings are safe places, free of discrimination and violence against LGBT students and educators, where all students have internalised the principle that all human beings, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, are equal in dignity and rights. This initiative has been praised by many Governments, educators, students, parents and communities, including LGBT people themselves. UNESCO's 2012 booklet on *Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying* has already been translated into seven languages at the request of Member States.

This is just a beginning. On this *International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO)*, I reconfirm my deep personal commitment to strengthening UNESCO's work to promote universal human rights for all, including the right to education and safety for LGBT people.

Building on its leadership of the global Education for All campaign, UNESCO will seek to mobilise partnerships and resources at global, regional and country levels, to collect solid evidence on the nature, scope and consequences of homophobic bullying in educational institutions in countries where there is little or no data

available. On this basis, we can document and share best practices, raise awareness and build new coalitions -- all with the goal to support country-level action to prevent and address homophobic bullying in educational institutions.

Human rights are universal. We must take a firm stand against all forms of discrimination and violence, including homophobic bullying, and make our schools, communities and societies safer for everyone.

Irina Bokova