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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the International Jazz Day

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Jazz is more than music – it is a universal message of peace, harmonising rhythm and meaning, carrying values significant for every woman and man, providing unique opportunities for mutual understanding, through listening, playing, improvisation. This spirit has inspired musicians, as well as poets, painters and writers all over the world, reminding us that culture is far more than entertainment – culture is a window onto the soul, culture is the shape we give to that which we most cherish.

This is why UNESCO created *International Jazz Day*.

Jazz tells of the power of music to build peace and bring together people of all cultures and backgrounds. The history of jazz draws from a great mix of peoples and cultures -- from Africa, Europe, and the Caribbean. Jazz gave music to the courage that drove the civil rights movement in the United States, and it continues to provide inspiration to millions of people across the world, seeking freedom, fighting for respect and human dignity.

This year, *International Jazz Day* is celebrated in Washington, DC, hometown of the great Duke Ellington, featuring a unique All Star Concert at the White House, hosted by United States President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. After travelling the world, jazz returns home. This kicks off a celebration that will take over hundreds of cities across the globe. Once again, this shows the power of Jazz to bring the world together as one.

Irina Bokova