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联合国教育、
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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

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on the occasion of the International Day of Peace

21 September 2016

These are turbulent times, for humanity, for the planet.

Poverty remains enduring, just as inequalities are deepening. Conflicts continue to tear societies apart, exposing millions of women and men to immense suffering. Violent extremism is on the rise – barbarous acts of terror strike at communities in every region. The world is facing the most important refugee and displacement crisis of our time, with 65.3 million individuals forcibly displaced in 2015. Humanity's cultural heritage and diversity are under attack. World Heritage sites are destroyed to eradicate the message of tolerance and dialogue that they embody. At the same time, the planet faces rising pressures from the consequences of climate change.

All of this weakens the foundations for peace – more than anything, all of this highlights the vital importance of global action, guided by the values and principles of the United Nations.

This is the spirit of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Paris Climate Change Agreement*. These embody a new agenda for peace – for human rights and dignity, for justice and prosperity, for sustainability and protecting our planet.

The 2030 Agenda states that “*there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development*”. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals set forth a new transformative vision of how to build peace -- where UNESCO playing a key role at every level, to strengthen, in the words of SDG

16, “peaceful, just and inclusive societies,” on the basis of good governance, inclusive institutions, accountability and justice for all.

To move forward, we need new ways of acting across the board, we need new partnerships between Governments, civil society and the private sector, we need ways of empowering women and men.

This must be our starting point – the individual rights and dignity of every woman and man. The UNESCO Constitution states that the defenses of peace must be built in the minds of women and men – through education, through freedom of expression, through intercultural dialogue, through respect for human rights and cultural diversity, through scientific cooperation. Drafted in 1945 after a terrible and devastating war, this message has never been so vital in societies that are transforming and are ever more diverse.

Keeping the peace means building it every day, in every society, with every woman and man. It means living together, and working towards a better common future for all.

Irina Bokova