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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 World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and
Development**

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Just as natural diversity is vital to sustain ecosystems, cultural diversity is the lifeblood of vibrant societies. Cultural diversity provides fresh ideas and perspectives that enrich our lives in countless ways, allowing us all to grow and thrive together. A culturally diverse classroom is not only more inclusive, it boosts student learning and achievement. A culturally diverse workplace is not only more innovative, it is also more productive and economically profitable.

Today is an opportunity for us all to celebrate the tremendous benefits of cultural diversity, including humanity's rich intangible heritage, and to reaffirm our commitment to building a more peaceful world, founded on the values of mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

With the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the international community has recognized the essential role of culture as a driver of change and development. Achieving the 17 goals will be impossible without drawing upon the strength and creative potential of humanity's diversity of cultures, without engaging in continuous dialogue to ensure that all members of society benefit from development.

Even as we celebrate cultural diversity today, we must remember that cultural diversity is increasingly under threat. Across the world, violent extremists have targeted cultural minorities and destroyed our shared heritage, to weaken the essential links between people and their history. At another level, unchecked urban development threatens to standardize our cities, depleting their social diversity and identities.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said: *“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.”* In this spirit, I believe that we need a new humanism for the 21st century, to renew the fundamental aspirations to justice, mutual understanding and dignity that guide all women and men.

Building on human rights, UNESCO believes that our differences and diversity make us stronger and that respect for cultural diversity is essential for fostering intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and peace. As we work together to make the 2030 Agenda a reality – and to counter the threats to our cultural diversity – let us be guided by the spirit of this day, knowing that by embracing our cultural diversity, we can weave a brighter “garment of destiny” for us all.

Irina Bokova