



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 new Launch of the UNESCO Courier

Beijing, 13 May 2017

Mr Huang Kun Ming, Executive Vice-Minister of Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China,

Mr Tian Xue Jun, Vice-Minister of Education of China and Chairman of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO

Mr Tan Yue, President of China Publishing Group,

Mr Du Yue, Secretary-General of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here with all of you today – for the relaunch of our dear *UNESCO Courier* and its first publication.

This would not have been possible without the generous support of the People's Republic of China, to which I am deeply grateful.

This reflects the ever-deepening partnership between China and UNESCO -- from safeguarding humanity's cultural intangible and tangible heritage to supporting creative and learning cities... from advancing quality education to enhancing South-South cooperation... from empowering girls and women to bolstering science, technology and innovation.

Our partnership is wide and deep – in recent years, we have organized important gatherings in Hangzhou, in Shanghai, in Qingdao, in Beijing – on culture and

development, technical and vocational education and skills, ICTs and education, learning cities, creative cities and more. Just an hour ago, I signed a new cooperation agreement with Vice Premier Liu Yandong that sets the frame for expanding our work, which stands on such solid ground.

I see the same spirit guiding the *Belt and Road Initiative* – President Xi Jinping's ambitious policy to strengthen partnerships between countries along the Silk Roads, to foster education, development and most importantly, peace.

During his historic visit in 2014 to UNESCO, His Excellency President Xi Jinping declared:

“Since its inception, UNESCO has worked untiringly to enhance trust and understanding among the world's peoples and promote mutual learning among civilizations”.

In these efforts, the *UNESCO Courier* has played a special role, as a wellspring to share information, ideas, knowledge and respect.

Six years ago, the publication of the *UNESCO Courier* had to be suspended, for financial reasons.

Since then, I have visited more than 100 countries -- in so many, I was asked the same question:

“What about The Courier?”

In countries undergoing difficult transitions, *The Courier* shined light a better future for all, carrying a message of hope and unity,

In my region, Eastern Europe, *The Courier* was a true inspiration, holding up essential values of human dignity, human rights and international cooperation.

The UNESCO Courier...

Just the name of this emblematic publication evokes the essence of our Organization, its history, its values.

As its founder and first editor-in-chief, Sandy Koffler, said it:

"Of all the journals published by the United Nations and its specialized institutions, the UNESCO Courier has always occupied first place for the number of its readers and the range of its audience."

From the first issue, published in February 1948, to the one I have in my hands, *The Courier* has remained faithful to its mission -- to promote humanist ideals, to build bridges of dialogue between cultures, to provide a safe space for international debate.

... from all over the world, experts, public figures, artists, journalists contributed their ideas, their aspirations, their visions -- many articles have since become classics, sharing unique witness of their time.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez... Nelson Mandela... Pablo Neruda... Claude Levi Strauss... they all wrote, read, commented in the *Courier*... I think also of journalists and scientists, like Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Mauritius and botanist awarded in 2007 by The L'Oréal-Unesco Prize for Women and Science.

We are deeply honoured that Ms. Peng Liyuan, First Lady of the People's Republic of China and *UNESCO's Special Envoy for the Promotion of Girls' and Women's Education*, has provided an extensive interview in this new issue.

There is also the contribution of a writer who is a landmark in current reflections on Islam, Mahmoud Hussein, a pseudonym behind whom we find our dear Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat, respectively director and editor in chief of the *UNESCO Courier*, from 1988 to 1998.

I am confident this new publication, devoted to the Sustainable Development Goals, will spark debate and new action to take forward the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

To reach everyone, everywhere, the new edition is available both in print and on digital platforms, connected to some 60,000 subscribers online, produced in the six official languages of the Organization, as well as, for the first time, in Portuguese.

The revival of the *Courier* will raise the banner high for the values we share and the goals we pursue in common -- I am confident it will also encourage new players, in the public and private sectors, to cooperate, to partner, on a global scale.

For all this, I wish to express, once again, my deep thanks to the Government of China for its leadership and commitment.

Thank you.