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**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO**

on the occasion of the International Day of Peace

Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All

21 September 2017

This *International Day of Peace* celebrates the power of global solidarity for building a peaceful and sustainable world.

This has never been so important at a time of unprecedented challenges. New forces of division have emerged, spreading hatred and intolerance. Terrorism is fuelling violence, while violent extremism seek to poison the minds of the vulnerable and young. In the poorest and least-developed parts of the world, climate-related natural disasters are compounding existing fragility, increasing forced migration and heightening the risk of violence.

The barriers to peace are complex and steep -- no one country can solve them alone. Doing so requires new forms of solidarity and joint action, starting as early as possible.

This is the spirit of the call by the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, for a new surge in prevention to sustain peace, bringing together Governments and civil society, along with international and regional bodies.

Change is racing across the world -- our goal must be to embrace it on the basis of human rights, to shape it in positive directions to craft a future that is more just, inclusive, and sustainable.

The culture of peace is a culture of dialogue and prevention, and, in this context, the role of the United Nations has never been so vital. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* affirms that "there can be no sustainable development without peace

and no peace without sustainable development.” The same spirit underpins the Security Council and the General Assembly resolutions in 2016 on ‘sustaining peace.’

We need a new comprehensive approach, to address root causes, strengthen the rule of law and promote sustainable development, on the basis of dialogue and respect. This guides all of UNESCO’s action to build peace through education, freedom of expression, intercultural dialogue, respect for human rights and cultural diversity and scientific cooperation.

On this *International Day of Peace*, we must all renew our commitment to global solidarity. To sustain peace, we must build it every day, in every society, with every woman and man, by working together towards a better common future for all.

Irina Bokova