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联合国教育、
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**Message from the Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Philosophy Day**

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Philosophy is an inspiring discipline as well as an everyday practice that can transform societies. By enabling us to discover the diversity of the intellectual currents in the world, philosophy stimulates intercultural dialogue. By awakening minds to the exercise of thinking and the reasoned confrontation of opinions, philosophy helps to build a more tolerant, more respectful society. For UNESCO, it is also the way to unleash humanity's creative potential and generate new ideas. Philosophy creates the intellectual conditions for change, sustainable development and peace.

The World Humanities Conference held in Belgium in August 2017 set out guidelines for teaching the humanities. UNESCO is striving to share this vision and shed light on the new practices that have revolutionized the subject in recent years, among young people, including outside school, on new media, as well as the way in which philosophers now use drawing, music and visual culture.

Pascal wrote, "Man is but a reed (...) but he is a thinking reed. (...) All our dignity consists, then, in thought". Even today, philosophy is a bastion against the narrowing of opinions, a way to cultivate critical distance in the face of the onslaught of information and simplistic rhetoric that seek to set cultures against one another. There is an urgent need for philosophy. It does not give answers, but enables us to ask the right questions. It invites us, in the words of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, to "come out of the bounds of our sensibility and mental vision into a wider freedom". The opportunity should be seized, and I call upon all Member States to take up this message, which resounds in the heart of UNESCO's mandate.

Audrey Azoulay