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**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,  
Director-General of UNESCO  
on the occasion of the Human Rights Day**

**10 December 2017**

In the wake of the Second World War, humanity, together, resolved to uphold human dignity everywhere and always. In this spirit, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as “*a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.*”

The Universal Declaration embodies common human aspirations, rooted in different cultures, put clearly in its first words: “*the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.*”

Today, the Universal Declaration enters its 70<sup>th</sup> year of existence at a time of rising challenge. Hatred, discrimination and violence remain rife. Hundreds of millions of women and men are destitute, deprived of basic livelihoods and opportunities. Forced population movements are violating rights on unprecedented scale. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* promises to leave no one behind -- human rights must be the bedrock for all progress moving forward.

This must start as early as possible, on the benches of schools. UNESCO is leading human rights education today, to ensure all girls and boys know their rights and those of others. This is the spirit of UNESCO's work for global citizenship education, to strengthen respect for cultural diversity on the basis of solidarity and shared rights. This is why UNESCO is launching today its Global Education Monitoring Report on Youth and a campaign encouraging youth to hold governments accountable for ensuring everyone's right to education (#WhosAccountable).

In December 1948, UNESCO was the first United Nations agency to place the Universal Declaration at the heart of all its action, to promote it across the world through education and the media.

Today, and all through the anniversary year ahead, UNESCO will call for all to renew their commitment to the rights and dignity that bind humanity as a single family, to defend the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in every society, in all instances.

The first article of the Universal Declaration says: "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*"

This rang across the world in 1948 -- it still does today.

Audrey Azoulay