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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of

World Science Day for Peace and Development

10 November 2018

This year, the theme of World Science Day for Peace and Development is “Science: a human right”. The celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an ideal opportunity to reaffirm the essential right of universal access to science and to gauge how much remains to be done to achieve this.

The astonishing progress made by science in recent decades has changed our lives. Science and its countless applications now condition all aspects of human life. The resulting innovations are an opportunity for the development of our societies. They are improving our well-being, facilitating daily life and pushing back borders that seemed immutable in the fields of medicine, transportation, communication and knowledge-sharing. They are an engine of growth and wealth.

However, because science today is the beneficiary of the human intellect which has been seeking, exploring and inventing for centuries and millennia, it belongs to all humankind, it is a common good whose fruits must be of benefit to all. The Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers published in 2017 by UNESCO reminded States and all those concerned of the conditions that need to be met so that science might be a factor of peace and sustainable development, which include ensuring excellent training for researchers, enabling the free flow of knowledge and fostering international cooperation.

Issues of inclusion and ethics also lie at the heart of the Recommendation. Public policies should foster greater inclusion of groups of persons currently in the minority in the scientific community. Women in particular are under-represented in what are known as the STEM fields – science, technology, engineering and mathematics - and account for only 30% of researchers in the world today.

With regard to ethical considerations, they are essential in order to try to manage the frenetic advances of science. The technological revolution is currently redrawing the borders of what it means to be human. *Homo sapiens*, characterized by faculties of intelligence, stands at the threshold of a new era, where those faculties, now partially externalized, will attain hitherto unimaginable capacities. It is our responsibility to ensure that the promises we glimpse of this new technological order are in harmony with the universal rights we have given ourselves.