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la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
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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 Award Ceremony of the UNESCO Avicenna Prize  
for Ethics in Science**

**38<sup>th</sup> General Conference**

**UNESCO, 4 November 2015**

Let me express my thanks to H.E. Mr Mohammad Farhadi, Minister of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to

H.E. Mr Muhammad Baligh ur Rehman, Minister of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan,

Thank you also to H.E. Mr Ahmad Jalali, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO,

Permettez-moi de remercier Madame le Professeur Marie-Hélène Parizeau, présidente du jury,

Monsieur le Professeur Zabta Khan Shinwari,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

et tous les invités présents si nombreux ce soir,

La présence de Son Excellence Mohammad Farhadi, ministre des Sciences, de la Recherche et de la Technologie de la République islamique d'Iran, témoigne du soutien infaillible du gouvernement iranien envers l'UNESCO, et j'en suis profondément reconnaissante.

Je tiens à remercier également l'Ambassadeur Ahmad Jalali, cher ami, Délégué permanent de la République islamique d'Iran auprès de l'UNESCO, qui a inspiré la

création du Prix en 2002 déjà et qui a travaillé sans relâche pour renforcer l'action de l'UNESCO dans ce domaine.

Ce prix, Mesdames et Messieurs, témoigne des valeurs universelles de la science, et de la façon dont l'étude et la recherche de la vérité objective peut rassembler les peuples, dans l'esprit de la Constitution de l'UNESCO, rédigée il y a 70 ans.

Ce prix témoigne aussi de la profondeur et de la richesse de la culture perse et de l'identité iranienne, qui a été un levier incomparable d'innovation scientifique et culturelle au cours des siècles, sous la figure morale du grand Avicenne, qui a contribué à façonner le monde tel que nous le connaissons aujourd'hui.

Sur son lit de mort, Avicenne aurait déclaré :

*« Je préfère une vie courte mais ample, à une vie étroite qui traîne en longueur... »*

Je crois que la vie d'Avicenne est un symbole d'amplitude.

Cet érudit du 11<sup>ème</sup> siècle d'origine persane était à la fois médecin, philosophe et poète, conseiller des princes, et père de la médecine moderne.

Avicenne surtout était un humaniste – et l'un des premiers.

Un homme attaché au dialogue entre les sociétés et les cultures, à travers les âges.

Voilà pourquoi Avicenne reste aujourd'hui synonyme d'autorité morale, de respect de l'éthique de la science.

Tel est l'esprit que nous devons diffuser aujourd'hui.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen,

World leaders agreed on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* last September.

Science stands at the heart of this agenda, holding answers to key questions all societies must address -- to promote equitable growth, to eradicate poverty, to bolster energy, water and food security, to tackle the challenges of climate change, to mitigate the impact of disasters.

We have to put a strong relationship between the two global priorities that are science and education.

For this, we need stronger science -- we need more connected sciences.

We need science that is founded on ethics and human rights.

This spirit underpins the *UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science*.

This is why I am pleased to hold this ceremony in the framework of the UNESCO General Conference, in this year when we celebrate the Organisation's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As we very often say here at UNESCO, the "S" in UNESCO's acronym was introduced during the Organization's constituent conference in London seventy years ago.

Since then, science has taken a place at the heart of all UNESCO's action.

Our position on this issue is quite clear.

Science flourishes through dialogue, through the interaction of peoples and cultures, guided always by human rights.

To move forward, we must combine progress with high standards of responsible research, with scientific integrity, with risk management for societies and nature.

This calls equally for well-informed leaders and public opinion, where all are included in making decisions on vital issues for human life.

This calls for enlightened scientists and scientific educators, working and communicating in a transparent way.

The *UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science* recognizes the unique qualities of a scientist, who combines an outstanding personal ethical commitment with high academic standards.

In this spirit, I wish to congratulate the 2015 Laureate of this *UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science*.

Dear Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari,

You have broken new ground thanks to your leadership in research ethics education.

This Prize pays tribute to the significance of your scientific and educational work, in the fields of biotechnology, biosafety and biosecurity, and your contribution to advancing the social responsibility of science.

The Prize honours your commitment to promoting the participation of indigenous peoples and women in the co-construction of science, including in the defence of their intellectual property rights.

All of this, Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari, has made you a role model for young scientists, men and women, across the world.

Allow me to thank you for the strength of your commitment to ethics in science.

I thank you for carrying this message to women and men everywhere because I do believe that this is, indeed, the spirit of Avicenna.

I am so honoured to award the 2015 *UNESCO Avicenna Prize for Ethics of Science* to Professor Zabta Khan Shinwari, in the shape of the Gold Medal of Avicenna, this Diploma, a financial award and an academic visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thank you.

I wish you every success in your future endeavours.