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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the International Day of Peace

Partnerships for Peace – Dignity for All

21 September 2015

In 2015, we commemorate *International Day of Peace* along with the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.

For seventy years, our message has been the same. Peace must be built in the minds of women and men, on the basis of human rights and dignity, through cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. Solidarity and dialogue are the strongest foundations for peace, guided by equality, respect and mutual understanding.

In turbulent times, when all societies are transforming and culture is under attack, this message has never been so important. This is turning point year for the world, when States will define a new global sustainable development agenda. This must be an agenda for peace, through partnership across the globe and at all levels of society. Today, I believe each of us has a shared responsibility to shape a better future for all through peacebuilding in our own lives, every day.

Peace is more than the absence of armed conflict between and within States. The UNESCO 1989 *International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men*, held in Yamoussoukro, was clear – promoting a culture of peace calls for building mutual understanding between communities, social groups and individuals. Today, more than ever, human rights and dignity must be our starting point, and dialogue must be our most powerful tool. The *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)*, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, is being spearheaded by UNESCO to these ends, promoting the wealth of cultural diversity and building new bridges of dialogue. The same spirit guides UNESCO's new

Integrated Framework for Action, *Empowering Youth to Build Peace*, which seeks to equip young women and men with knowledge, skills and values that empower them to live peaceful, constructive and productive lives and to engage as responsible global citizens.

No State, no matter how powerful, can ensure peace alone. Together, in partnership, we can build the defences of peace in the minds of every woman and man – *especially young minds* -- to foster new relations of harmony and compassion with others and the world.

Irina Bokova