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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

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Nelson Mandela once said, "sport has the power to change the world".

We need this power more than ever today, to strengthen the grounds for more inclusive and sustainable development and lasting peace, in this year, when States shape a new global sustainable development agenda.

Especially in turbulent times, sport can be a powerful vehicle for social inclusion, gender equality, and youth empowerment, with benefits that extend far beyond the grounds of stadiums. There is nothing like sport to bring women and men from different cultures together around the shared values of fair play, mutual respect and team spirit. Sport and physical education are especially important for young people, for their health and civic engagement.

Sport is a pillar of a healthy society, at ease with itself, united in its diversity, based on human rights and equal dignity. It provides a field for passions to be shared, for communities to come together, for the disadvantaged to be empowered.

This is the importance of the UNESCO *International Charter of Physical Education and Sport*, to bolster the right of access for all to physical education, physical activity, and sport. This same spirit guides UNESCO's action in the fight against doping, through the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport, and the Anti-Doping Convention, which 170 countries have signed. In August 2014, the *World Youth Forum on Sport, Culture, and Peace* was organized by UNESCO and the

Nanjing Municipal Government, bringing young men and woman together from across the world to explore common challenges and solutions.

In every society, sport is a field of dreams and a force for fabulous positive change -
- we must do everything to harness this power. This is UNESCO's message on this
International Day of Sport for Development and Peace.

Irina Bokova