



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of World Environment Day

Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care.

5 June 2015

We live in a world transforming deeply, rocked by multiple crises, on a planet facing rising pressure.

Environmental change has never been so deeply interconnected with our societies as it is today, in this era that many scientists call the Anthropocene, when human activity is the major force shaping the planetary system. The impact that individual women and men are having on the sustainability of the planet may not always be visible -- but consider the impact of seven billion women and men, and it becomes clear that daily choices matter.

Environmental change is not just about carbon – it is, fundamentally, about women and men, it is about how we produce and consume in society. The environment is intertwined with human values and behaviour, directly linked to our livelihoods, urban development and nature conservation as well as migration patterns, affecting also the use of water and land, impacting on species survival.

Sustainability cannot be crafted through technological or economic solutions alone. We need green societies to build green economies. We must act in a holistic manner, across the board, starting with individual women and men.

This year, the international community has an historic opportunity to adopt a new sustainable development agenda and to reach a global agreement on climate change. UNESCO is bringing the full force of its mandate and experience to make both a success. We are promoting education for sustainable development to shape

the new values, skills and knowledge that all societies need today. Sustainability will be built on the benches of schools, starting as early as possible. We work also to harness the power of science, technology and innovation to strengthen knowledge, to safeguard biodiversity through Biosphere Reserves, and to strengthen the links between the sciences and policy.

This is one goal of the Scientific Advisory Board, an initiative of the United Nations Secretary General for which UNESCO is the Secretariat, to craft a new unity among all sciences and catalyze new synergies across disciplines, policy lines and borders, including to inform the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) that will be held in Paris later this year.

There is strong global momentum – we need to act on this promise and make a new one, for development that is sustainable, in harmony with the planet. This responsibility cannot wait -- we must act now.

Irina Bokova