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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit of the World

Crafts Council

Dongyang, Zhejiang province, 18-22 October 2014

Over the last fifty years, UNESCO and the *World Crafts Council* have worked together to promote creativity through the development of crafts and to raise awareness about its importance as a force for reducing poverty and advancing sustainable development.

This *Golden Jubilee Celebration Summit* marks five decades of outstanding work. This is an opportunity to highlight the contribution of crafts in shaping the new creative economy emerging across the world. Investments in creativity and innovation lead to new products – they foster also new ways of life and empowerment, especially for women, as well as new approaches to organizing and perceiving our societies and their environment. This is the core message of the *2013 World Creative Economy Report*, published by UNESCO.

Embodying some of the richest expressions of cultural diversity, crafts are a wellspring of creativity, a source of employment, and a bulwark for identities, contributing to social cohesion and resilience in a globalising world. This is the conviction shared by UNESCO and the *World Crafts Council*. On this basis, I believe we must do more to unleash the power of crafts for social inclusion and sustainable development. This is why UNESCO works to safeguard and promote arts and crafts, through effective policy design and capacity-building, as well as such normative frameworks as the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. All of this work reflects UNESCO's vision of culture as a key enabler of sustainability and poverty

eradication. Together, we must join forces to ensure this is recognized in the new global sustainable development agenda being shaped by States to follow 2015.

Guided by the same spirit, UNESCO entrusted the *World Crafts Council* with the management of the prestigious Award of Excellence for Handicrafts programme, established in 2001. By bringing together talented people from many different horizons, with complementary experiences, I am confident that this event will encourage rich, cross-cutting and original reflection on promoting and preserving the arts and crafts.

I congratulate the *World Crafts Council* once again for its leadership and commitment, and I wish you all a stimulating summit.

Irina Bokova