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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity
for Dialogue and Development**

21 May, 2009

The annual celebration of 21 May as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development provides an opportunity to reaffirm UNESCO's constitutional mandate to preserve "the independence, integrity and fruitful diversity of the cultures" of its Member States and promote the "democratic principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect" through education, the sciences, culture and communication.

UNESCO believes that cultures are not monolithic but interdependent, resulting from mutual exchanges and borrowings, and that this diversity is a source of strength and unity. This belief is powerfully expressed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, which proclaims that cultural diversity, "widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, moral and spiritual existence."

Yet, we see daily evidence of the destabilizing forces of ignorance and mistrust and of the magnitude of the task ahead of us. The management of cultural diversity is undoubtedly one of the central challenges facing many societies today as they work to build inclusive and pluralistic knowledge societies.

The International Festival of Cultural Diversity, being organized by UNESCO at its headquarters in Paris and in many countries around the world from 11 to 22 May 2009, aims to raise awareness of the messages of diversity, freedom and human dignity, to open hearts and minds, and to rekindle hope all around the world.

On World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development 2009, let us all commit to promoting and protecting the world's cultural diversity, fostering dialogue and building a sustainable future for everyone.

Koïchiro Matsuura