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**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of World Oceans Day**

Ocean and Climate

8 June 2015

A sustainable planet cannot exist without a healthy ocean.

A few months before the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) and the shaping of a new global sustainable development agenda, this message has never been so important.

Whether landlocked or coastal, every country and every form of life depends on the health and function of the world ocean. The ocean is at the centre of the global climate system, regulating weather and climate, the concentration of gases in the atmosphere -- including the oxygen we breathe, the cycling of nutrients, and providing important food resources.

As ocean scientists deploy new technologies to observe these dynamic processes, we know that the impacts of human activity -- principally CO₂ emissions, over-exploitation of resources and pollution -- have degraded marine ecosystems and placed the ocean's regulatory role in danger. Rising sea level, melting ice sheets, ocean acidification, dead zones, harmful algal blooms, coral bleaching, fish population and ecosystem declines... all of these phenomena reflect harmful consequences experienced at local and global scales.

To better assess the impact of human activity and to propose alternatives, UNESCO works to nurture the power of education, culture, sciences, and communication as development multipliers, to share knowledge with all societies on sustainable development and climate change. Through our Intergovernmental

Oceanographic Commission, we are leading ocean observation systems of unique value for climate research -- mobilizing experts to discuss new findings and trends on ocean warming and acidification and exploring the role of the ocean in mitigating climate change. On the occasion of this *World Oceans Day*, UNESCO with the support of partners, is organising a major event at its Headquarters in Paris on the role of the ocean in the climate system ahead of the global climate change negotiations.

Climate change is intrinsically linked to ocean change and no single country, however powerful, can tackle its challenges. On this *World Oceans Day*, I call on Members States, civil society and the private sector to join forces to raise awareness and to promote global action on the importance of the ocean in the global climate system.

Our future depends on it.

Irina Bokova