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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 Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO,**

**on the occasion of International Day
of the World's Indigenous Peoples**

9 August 2015

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is the perfect opportunity to emphasize indigenous peoples' vital contribution to the implementation of sustainable solutions for tackling development challenges, from the management of natural resources to the fight against climate change.

Promoting the cultures, the languages and the knowledge of indigenous peoples is an essential part of UNESCO's action. We know that respecting knowledge systems and local languages – including those of indigenous peoples – is one of the conditions for successful inclusive, equitable school systems, in which everyone can learn and show their potential. It is central to achieving the implementation of the quality education for all (EFA) goals and is fully integrated into the declaration adopted at the World Education Forum held in May 2015, in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The declaration advocates inclusive and equitable, quality education and life-long learning opportunities for all by 2030.

We must better transmit and promote indigenous peoples' cultural diversity and scientific knowledge, which are forces for renewal and innovation for the whole world. UNESCO is thus working to have culture fully recognized as an enabler and a driver of inclusive and sustainable development. The cultural diversity of indigenous peoples, be it artistic traditions, music, craftsmanship or contemporary art, represents an infinite source of dignity, identity and cohesion, whose full potential we are far from having unleashed. Local and indigenous knowledge also plays a crucial role in the fight against environmental risks. We must further integrate this knowledge into the world's scientific corpus, warning systems and our

collective environmental conscience. Such is the goal of UNESCO's programmes for the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems and the respect for indigenous peoples' rights to maintain, control, protect and develop their traditional knowledge.

This reservoir of know-how and expertise contributes to the world's beauty and wealth and can make all the difference in our attempts to safeguard it. Prior to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in December 2015, UNESCO will host a conference devoted to indigenous peoples' lessons in resilience to climate change. By listening to how indigenous peoples mobilize and adapt, all of humanity can be strengthened.

Irina Bokova