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联合国教育、
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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of World Philosophy Day

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The conviction that philosophy can make an essential contribution to human well-being, to addressing complexity, to advancing peace stands at the heart of *World Philosophy Day*.

The historian Henry Brooks Adams once joked: "*Philosophy: unintelligible answers to insoluble problems.*"

Against this, UNESCO puts philosophy forward as a force for individual and collective emancipation. For to think, while reflecting on what it is to think, is to philosophize, and all of us do it constantly, driven by the truest motor of all human ingenuity – wonder.

Philosophy is dialogue of wonder, across the ages, with art and literature, in social debates, on political questions, practiced by all, without specialized training, far beyond the classroom.

This is UNESCO's message today – we must raise the flag for philosophy as high as possible, to engage every woman and man, and especially every girl and boy. We need to share the wonder of philosophy more widely and differently.

This is the goal of the new UNESCO Chair on Philosophy with Children, at the University of Nantes in France, the result of long-standing cooperation between UNESCO and networks of philosophy teachers.

We are working to make philosophy, the most ancient of disciplines, reach broader audiences thanks to cutting-edge technologies – for instance, through online teaching tools based on the 2015 *UNESCO South-South Philosophical Manual*.

All activities celebrating this year's *World Philosophy Day* will, for the first time, emphasize the use of new communication technologies to engage global audiences.

In September, world leaders agreed on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. This is a new vision for people, prosperity, peace, and the planet, for the next fifteen years.

Taking this to fruition requires all the skills philosophy can hone, including rigour, creativity and critical thinking. Sustainability calls for new ways of thinking about ourselves and the planet. It requires new ways of acting, producing and behaving. Here again, philosophy and all the humanities will be essential.

UNESCO was created seventy years ago in a world rebuilding after a devastating war, inspired by a new vision of peace, drawing on the intellectual and moral solidarity of peoples. Philosophy has always been at the core of this mandate, to provide women and men with openings for self-discovery and the discovery of others, to understand change in order to shape it towards a better future for all.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: *“All our philosophy is dry as dust if it is not immediately translated into some act of living service”*.

This has always been UNESCO's message, and it has never been so important.

Irina Bokova