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**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,**

**Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of World Oceans Day**

*“One Planet, One Ocean”*

*Together we have the power to protect the ocean*

**8 June 2014**

The importance of the ocean for sustainable development was recognized at the 2012 *International Conference on Sustainable Development*, and it lies at the heart of negotiations within the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. *World Oceans Day* is an opportunity to celebrate the importance of the ocean for life on earth and to stand up for its protection.

At a time of rising threats, ‘business as usual’ is no longer acceptable -- we must change how we understand, manage and use ocean resources and coastal areas. For this, we need to know more about the ocean and draw on stronger science to craft sustainable, ecosystem-based policies for the ocean and coasts.

Through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, drawing on 46 marine World Heritage sites and the implementation of the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*, UNESCO acts at the forefront of intergovernmental efforts to deepen ocean research and policy.

UNESCO works to strengthen the evidence base for sharper decision-making on the ocean and to link science more tightly with policy and society. This includes strong partnerships with civil society. UNESCO is supporting a comprehensive platform of Non-Governmental Organizations to raise the profile of ocean issues in the run-up the Conferences of the Parties to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (COP), in Lima in 2014 and in Paris next year.

Simultaneously, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Oceanography Society and the Fundació Navegació Océanica Barcelona are bringing together ocean science experts to shape international collaboration in marine sciences and technology at the *2<sup>nd</sup> International Ocean Research Conference* that will be held this November in Barcelona, Spain. In collaboration with a variety of UN and other institutional stakeholders, UNESCO is also actively engaged in the World Ocean Assessment and the Global Environment Facility's Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme, to improve knowledge about the ocean and deliver science-based information to decision-makers.

All of these efforts are important for mitigating ocean hazards and the impact of climate change, essential in this *International Year of Small Island Developing States*. UNESCO is fully on-board to help prepare the *3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Small Island Developing States* that will be held this September in Apia, Samoa, with an emphasis on engaging young people.

The ocean is essential to our well-being and the future of our planet, and *World Oceans Day* is a moment for all Governments and all societies to join forces in ensuring its protection.

One Planet, One Ocean – Together, we have the power to protect them both.

Irina Bokova