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Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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Organización
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para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

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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 World Science Day for Peace and Development

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What kind of society do we need for a sustainable future?

This question is raised every day by a world that is changing quickly. Natural disasters remind us of the vulnerability of our communities. Climate change is impacting on our societies. The loss of biodiversity is increasing at the fastest rate known in geological history, mainly due to human activity. The pressures of the global economic crisis are rising.

This is the question that the *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development* must address in Rio next year — Rio+20.

Science lies at the heart of the answer. It is a core part of the roadmap that UNESCO will bring to Rio to make the most of the transformative power of education, the sciences, culture and media. Our position is clear – for a sustainable future, we must build inclusive and equitable ‘green societies’ along with ‘green economies.’ The two must go together. This is our message for this *2011 World Science Day for Peace and Development*, which comes under the theme: “Towards Green Societies: Equity, Inclusiveness, Participation.”

Green societies must be knowledge societies, which harness science to identify emerging challenges and to respond in innovative ways. For this, science must be mobilized and it must be inclusive.

These goals guide UNESCO in all its action. We are working with countries to build capacity in science, technology and engineering and to create international networks. We cooperate with Governments across the world, especially in Africa, to strengthen national policy frameworks for science, technology and innovation. We lead the international community in marine and freshwater sciences, through the unique contributions of our Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and International Hydrological Programme.

Green societies must be inclusive. We must draw on all voices and sources of experience, including local and indigenous knowledge. UNESCO works to empower girls and women in the creation of scientific knowledge. We lead the *United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)* to foster the attitudes and behaviours necessary for a new culture of sustainability. Small Island Developing States are a special focus of our work. We are committed to capturing the knowledge of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves and our World Heritage Sites. We must identify the links between cultural and biological diversity and build on them.

We must build a greener society also at the global level. This calls for democratizing the creation and achievements of science for the benefit of all. It means tackling the disparities that exist between countries in the development and use of scientific knowledge.

UNESCO will bring all of this to Rio+20. 2012 must be a turning point towards green societies, built on the inclusive and equitable development of science to the benefit of all. This is our message for the *2011 World Science Day for Peace and Development*.

Irina Bokova