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联合国教育、
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**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Philosophy Day**

20 November 2008

This year, World Philosophy Day is dedicated to celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Of eminent philosophical importance, the 1948 Declaration implicitly evokes the universality of human beings and their rights. It also provides an opportunity to revisit today some of the key concepts that underpin our modernity: human dignity, freedom and universality.

Let us see this Day as a shared moment of analysis that will contribute to a wide-ranging and multidimensional discussion on the importance of human rights in what we say and do, and further than that, on their inherently cross-cutting nature – human rights can and should inform the challenges we face today: quality education for all, the fight against discrimination, ethics of science and bioethics, intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity, press freedom and media pluralism.

World Philosophy Day 2008 will be launched in Palermo, Italy on 20 November with a debate on “Rights and Power”. To mark the occasion, numerous meetings are planned in over 80 countries around the world. These meetings are intended to make World Philosophy Day a moment of open and free universal dialogue bringing together philosophers, academics, researchers, students, school pupils and teachers.

I would like to thank international philosophical institutions such as the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS), the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP) the International Institute of Philosophy (IIP), the UNESCO Chairs on Philosophy and the UNESCO International Network

of Women Philosophers (created in 2007) for their invaluable assistance in this common effort.

The universality and indivisibility of human rights, upon which the system enshrined in the United Nations Charter is based, constitute a “common language of humanity”.

I hope this Day will offer the international community the opportunity to engage in informed and enlightened debate about its foundations, values, standards, principles and ideals.

Koïchiro Matsuura