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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 the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

9 August 2016

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 has set an ambitious new agenda to build a world of dignity for all, in respect of the planet.

This agenda recognizes, for the first time at this level, indigenous peoples as distinct groups, and their role in global efforts to build a better future for all.

On this occasion, we pay tribute to the world's 370 million indigenous people, and we reaffirm UNESCO's determination to safeguard and promote their identities, languages and knowledge systems. Indigenous peoples are custodians to rich cultural diversity, carrying unique wisdom of sustainable living and respect for biodiversity. Nurturing and harnessing this potential calls for inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Too many indigenous peoples are still denied the full right to quality education. Children of indigenous people remain less likely to be enrolled in school and more likely to underperform than non-indigenous children. Linked with socio-economic and cultural barriers, this marginalization often creates a vicious circle of disadvantage. This moral and development gap undermines humanity as a whole.

The right to education is fundamental, as stipulated in UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960). Indigenous knowledge systems hold many answers to mitigating the consequences of climate change, and UNESCO will continue to draw on these to bolster scientific cooperation for biodiversity as well as education for sustainable

development. Our key challenge is to bring this wealth of knowledge and culture together for the benefit of all, in full respect of human rights. This is UNESCO's mandate, and this is our renewed pledge on this International Day.

Irina Bokova