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Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion

of the World Science Day for Peace and Development

10 November 2009

The observance of World Science Day for Peace and Development for 2009 takes place at a moment of unprecedented convergence of economic and environmental crises. Climate change is one of the most threatening aspects of the environmental crisis, but it is not the only one. Reduced biological diversity, reduced water availability and deteriorating water and air quality, at a time of rapid population growth and urbanization, are other crises that will have profound impacts on human health and well-being, including reducing food security and increasing poverty throughout the world.

At this time of global economic and environmental distress, one of the most hopeful signs for the future is the push for a transition to a green economy. Developing a green economic and social system that is environmentally sustainable, that respects the integrity of ecosystems and ensures the resilience of life supporting systems while ensuring to all people access to a decent standard of living and opportunities for personal and social development, is key to ensuring a stable, sustainable and peaceful world.

Science is at the heart of a green economy, which will require scientific knowledge, creativity, innovation, technological expertise to meet the challenges involved. A critical mass of scientists and researchers are fundamental for developing and developed countries alike to fully participate in the global green economy. Through its science programmes, UNESCO is vigorously pursuing its efforts to promote the development of science policies, science education, and public awareness and understanding of science. Particular emphasis is given to encouraging young people and especially young girls to pursue careers in science. Furthermore, as a lead coordinator for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), UNESCO encourages all stakeholders to embrace the

principles, values and practices of sustainable development in order to address present and future social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges.

I strongly believe that the current crises provide a unique opportunity for a fundamental restructuring of values-based systems that support sustainable development. On this World Science Day for Peace and Development, I therefore call on the international community to promote science as a key driver to the global economic recovery, to pursue a green economy through science and technology, and work together to change mindsets, overcome the current economic and environmental challenges and build the foundations for a sustainable and peaceful future.

Koïchiro Matsuura