



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration
in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust**

27 January 2009

In December 2007, UNESCO launched a year-long commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a text that was developed following the ravages of the second world war and the atrocities that were committed during that period. Today, 60 years on, we stand in honour of the victims and the survivors of those years, when the Holocaust violated the basic human rights of millions of men, women and children. This date, the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, provides a time and a space for collective reflection and remembrance of this tragic episode of world history.

Yet even when today we bow our heads to those who lost their lives or their loved ones, we recognize that the human spirit endures and that by remembering the horrors of what happened we can, and indeed should, come together to actively prevent such devastation from ever occurring again. For it is from the seeds of ignorance that hatred is grown and we have, in the international community, a collective moral responsibility to ensure that such hatred is not allowed to prosper.

With the adoption of the Resolution on education for Holocaust remembrance by UNESCO's General Conference in 2007, the Organization has commenced various efforts that contribute to this goal. Throughout 2008, UNESCO has forged partnerships with various actors both within and outside of the United Nations on this matter. In addition, the Organization continues to contribute to raising awareness on all forms of discrimination, which includes the fight against anti-Semitism, and all actions and words which might be interpreted as Holocaust denial.

Holocaust education should recognize no boundaries in terms of curricular subject, location, and age and group of learners. It should inspire our young to challenge anti-Semitism, racism, and extremism rather than to remain silent. Through our networks of schools and universities such as the UNESCO's Associated Schools and UNESCO Chairs, as well as through the work of our educational institutes such as the International Bureau of Education (IBE), UNESCO will ensure that the memory of the Holocaust is not lost on future generations. For it is only by taking action to promote remembrance that the pain and suffering caused to the whole of humanity by this tragic event may be translated into a positive set of actions to ensure that it will never happen again.

Koïchiro Matsuura