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**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the World Oceans Day**

Healthy Ocean, Healthy Planet

8 June 2016

2016 is the year when the world starts to implement the promises made in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*.

UNESCO's message on *World Oceans Day* is clear – the ocean is essential to moving forward.

Despite the increasing impacts of human activities on the marine environment, the ocean remains an important driver in eradicating the greatest global challenge facing the world today: extreme poverty. The ocean is an integral part of our planet, and an absolutely essential component of human lives, livelihoods and the environment that sustains us. From fisheries and tourism to transportation and climate regulation, the ocean is key to implementing the new global agenda.

Especially for developing countries, coasts and the ocean provide multiple economic opportunities to ensure that no one will be left behind in the pursuit of a more equitable, sustainable development. Whether on the coast or in the high seas far away from all, safeguarding biodiverse marine sites is vital for ensuring the sustainable long-term use of precious natural resources.

UNESCO, through its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, is working across the board to support its Member States in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14 on ocean, and all other relevant objectives and targets in ways that are inclusive and based on an integrated scientific approach. The development of national capacities in marine scientific research is a precondition for understanding and preserving the ocean, its environment and the many resources it provides. The

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission is committed to fostering the development of national policies that promote environmentally-aware, ocean-based sustainable growth.

Our message is that a healthy ocean is a healthy planet, and a healthy planet is absolutely vital for the well-being of generations to come.

Whether in eradicating poverty or regulating the climate, the bottom line is that the ocean matters. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Paris Agreement, negotiations on protecting marine biodiversity in the high seas and other global policy frameworks have all cleared paths for preserving and healing our planet's crown jewel.

World Oceans Day is our opportunity -- as decision-makers, industry, civil society, science, and you and me -- to tip the balance and move from agreement to meaningful action.

This is why at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and in many places around the world, we will be mobilizing on 8 June for a healthy ocean and a healthy planet – join us!

Irina Bokova