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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message by Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO,

**on the occasion of World Day for Cultural Diversity
for Dialogue and Development**

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Each culture leaves its distinctive mark on the vast field of the cultures of the world. Together, they coexist, thus constituting the many facets of a single humanity, shimmering and diverse. Over time, cultures have intermingled and have cross-fertilized and enriched each other. Yet, faced with today's great challenges, and in terms of economic and human development, cultures have unequal opportunities and destinies.

The World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development affords us an opportunity to turn the spotlight on the vitality inherent in the diversity of all cultures, without exception, and on the pressing need to protect diversity and make it the central plank of development strategies. This Day also affords each one of us an opportunity to ponder over ways and means of being humanly and practically involved in building tolerance towards all of the world's cultures.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in 2001, states forcefully that "... cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations".

UNESCO also adopted, in 2005, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which is unique in that it recognizes the dual, concomitantly economic and cultural, nature of cultural goods and activities, promotes freedom of movement for them and thus establishes a genuine international platform for cooperation and development.

This year, the Day bears the hallmark of 2010, International Year for the Approchement of Cultures, which has been set the goal of building up dialogue

among cultures in order to strengthen ties among peoples throughout the world and facilitate the onward march of human civilization. We know perfectly well that the greatest form of progress is peace.

Owing to the growing intensity of exchanges in every corner of the world, we now live in an interconnected and interdependent world. There is still, nonetheless, a gap between mere awareness and actual in-depth understanding of the rights, values and aspirations of others – hence the need for genuine education in cultural diversity, to ensure that the message that all cultures are equal in dignity and in law is clearly received.

There is still one step to be taken: awareness of shared values and of everything that unites and strengthens us must be raised so that we can discharge our shared responsibility in tackling the immense challenges that we must take up hand in hand.

Accordingly, I call on policy-makers, communities and civil society to speak up for cultural diversity and to promote it by every possible means so that it will be recognized more widely and will grow stronger. Concrete strategies in furtherance of cultural diversity placed at the forefront of dialogue and development must be adopted as a matter of urgency. We must aim to achieve the same goal, that is, a world of solidarity whose wealth and strength are at the very heart of its diversity.

We are all partners in this vast undertaking which consists in preserving and stimulating the diversity that we all, together, constitute.

Irina Bokova