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联合国教育、
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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the 28th Khwarizmi International Award

Iran, 3 March 2015

The Khwarizmi International Award is one of those unique occasions where we can highlight the contributions of outstanding scientists who shape our understanding of the universe.

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi lived 12 centuries ago but his algebra is still regarded as one of the cornerstones of basic science. His marvellous works in mathematics, astronomy and geography were the result of the efforts of a curious mind, and carry a strong universal message. It reminds us of the constant quest for knowledge throughout history, a quest we shall pursue today. It strengthens our conviction in the power of science to shed a light on the fundamental unity of the human family, regardless of culture, religion, and origin. It inspires us and sets a standard of excellence to which everyone aspires.

Al-Khwarizmi spent part of his life as a scholar at the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, rescuing Greek scientific manuscripts from oblivion, and therefore connecting knowledge of different places and times. This resonates with the core of UNESCO's work, which is to mobilize science as a force for dialogue and peace, and as a tool to strengthen the moral and intellectual solidarity of humanity. It also bears witness to the great contribution made by scientists of the Islamic Golden Age to the advancement of science. A period of an incredible blossoming of creativity, the Islamic Golden Age is one of the key-themes of the 2015 International Year of Light.

For all these reasons, the legacy of Al-Khwarizmi is more than just the word "algorithm", which is derived from his name. Al-Khwarizmi is a source of inspiration for youth in science today. The International Khwarizmi Award is a call to action, to

celebrate the power of science for peace and development, and make sure that open access to knowledge remains a guiding principle of scientific collaboration.

I extend my congratulations to the laureates and to the organizers of this great initiative, and I wish everyone a very joyous and fruitful celebration.

Irina Bokova