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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the inauguration of the XXXth International Festival

Sarajevo “*Sarajevo Winter*”

Sarajevo, 7 February 2014

The International Festival Sarajevo, *Sarajevo Winter*, is an annual celebration of culture and dialogue. For the past three decades -- even during the difficult period of the 1990s – this festival has attracted artists and cultural professionals to Sarajevo every year to explore, exchange and express the universal values of freedom, mutual understanding and reconciliation through art and creativity.

Drawing on its global mandate to promote cultural diversity and dialogue for lasting peace and its commitment to safeguarding the cultural heritage of South East Europe and other regions, UNESCO is pleased to once again be associated with this prestigious international event.

I wish to congratulate the *International Peace Centre* in Sarajevo, along with its director, Mr Ibrahim Spahić, for organizing this 30th edition of the Festival. For decades, Mr Spahić has stimulated and delighted audiences with varied programmes, including memorable performances embodying the creative spirit of humanity and the universal aspiration for mutual understanding. In this respect, let me also pay special tribute to this year's guest countries, Greece and the Republic of Korea.

Born as a cultural counterpart to the Winter Olympic Games, *Sarajevo Winter* has become a major moment for the region, bringing together artists from a wide range of horizons, working in different ways but united by their commitment to artistic creation and its unique contribution to humanity's shared wellbeing.

In this spirit, I wish to extend my warmest thanks to all of the artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina and numerous other countries, who, through their unique talent and vision, have contributed to this Festival as a moment for dialogue, mutual understanding and reconciliation

I wish you a very successful and enjoyable Festival.

Irina Bokova