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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction

“Live to Tell”

13 October 2016

Disasters induced by natural hazards affect millions of people every year worldwide. The resulting loss of life is tragic, highlighting the vulnerabilities all societies share. The impact is also developmental, with disasters leading to estimated annual economic losses of USD\$ 250 to 300 billion -- this will increase with the rising pressures of climate change, overpopulation and urbanization.

In response, 2015 saw historic agreements, with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Paris Climate Agreement*. This includes the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, adopted in Sendai, Japan, that examines global progress on disaster risk reduction and identifies priority actions to be taken.

UNESCO is acting across the board, in advocating for risk awareness, prevention and preparedness, in fostering learning and in building capacity. Operating at the interface between the natural and social sciences, education, culture and communication, UNESCO seeks to bolster the resilience of societies -- through early warning, capacity building, knowledge sharing and networking, and policy advice, working with governments, civil society, research institutions, other UN agencies and international organisations, and all key actors.

This *International Day for Disaster Reduction* is an opportunity to mobilise the world to move forward the new agenda. For this, we must raise new awareness and share experience, to show that every country can reduce risks. To this end, UNESCO is leading regional consultative workshops to enhance understanding of local priorities and needs for disaster risk reduction – we must work from the bottom-up, with

societies across the world, to have a meaningful and lasting impact. This is UNESCO's message on *International Day for Disaster Reduction*.

Irina Bokova