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Organización
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the International Day
for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition**

23 August 2009

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition provides the international community with a unique opportunity to reconcile the duty of remembrance and the duty of history.

Since the launching of the Slave Route project in 1994, UNESCO has sought to open the field of scientific cooperation on the study of slavery and the slave trade to the diversity of memories, cultures and perceptions. Such respect for the diversity of memories is a democratic requirement that should cater for social demand and be accompanied by the search for shared references.

We can achieve this through quality education, that is multi-disciplinary, and integrates, in a scientific and rigorous way, into the school textbooks and curricula the issues of remembrance and the transmission of memory that are linked to the history of the slave trade.

We can also achieve this through policies for safeguarding the cultural heritage that portray the diversity and complexity of this history: the opening of interdisciplinary museums; digitization of maps and archives; collection and preservation of oral traditions; identification of places of memory as sites accorded universal value; promotion of a sustainable tourism that respects individuals and socio-cultural environments.

Lastly, and this is a policy that UNESCO now promotes, methodology should be suited to individual geo-cultural areas, and the history of slavery and the slave trade put in the context of a global history that covers both the Atlantic Slave Trade and what are known as the "Eastern" trades.

A lasting intercultural dialogue can only thrive in an interchange that is at peace with history and remembrance. To avoid making memory sacred in any way and

ward off the devastating effects of competing memories, we must foster a researching and teaching of history that explains and induces understanding, reconstructs the plot of conflictive narratives, and provides silences with answers.

By coming together around a shared vision of the history of the slave trade and slavery, we can build a shared history and lay the foundations of an intercultural dialogue that can deliver a universal message of knowledge and tolerance.

Koïchiro Matsuura