



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the Opening of the 4th Meeting of the Scientific
Advisory Board**

St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14 December, 2015

Professor Vladimir Fortov, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Members of the *Scientific Advisory Board of the United Nations
Secretary-General*,

Let me thank the Italian authorities, represented here by Mr Fabrizio Urlano, for
hosting the next *Scientific Advisory Board*,

Thank you for coming to this 4th meeting of the *Scientific Advisory Board of the
United Nations Secretary-General*, Mr Ban Ki-moon.

It is a special honour to hold this meeting here, in St Petersburg.

St Petersburg is a world city, a city embodying the concept of “*outstanding universal
significance*” at the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage programme.

It reminds me of genius the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who had something like this
in mind when he called St Petersburg “*the most international city of the world.*”

One year ago exactly, I was honoured to attend the 250th anniversary of the State
Hermitage Museum, and this was a deeply moving moment.

St Petersburg is a city of great writers – it is also a city of great scientists, scientists who have changed the way we see and understand the world.

The city's founder, Peter the Great, was a passionate advocate of scientific discovery and technological advancement, and this city has nurtured the world's best minds, catalysing progress at the forefront of change.

Think of Mikhail Lomonosov.

Think of Dmitri Mendeleev.

We should draw inspiration from these great Russians.

I am deeply grateful to the Russian Academy of Sciences, and its President, Professor Vladimir Fortov, for their leadership.

I have just come from the *Paris Climate Change Conference*, where UNESCO worked to place science at the heart of the discussions on mitigating and adapting to the impact of global change.

This is an ambition agreement and we will need more science – more science to monitor the progress and to confirm that we have the technologies to make the ambitions true.

The COP21 took place two months after world leaders agreed on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

I see these as the same agenda.

The most important work for UNESCO is to bring these two agendas together.

An agenda for human rights and dignity, for poverty eradication, for sustainability.

Science is essential to taking this agenda forward.

But not just any science.

We need stronger science, more connected science.

We need science that is more deeply integrated into policy-making.

The complexity of challenges we face today calls for an ever greater expansion of human knowledge, for a new unity across the sciences, for enhanced connections between scientific and traditional knowledge, for stronger linkages between science, policy and society.

This is the importance of the Scientific Advisory Board.

Your contribution as promoters of science is critical.

We need a new bond of unity between all sciences and science policy.

Like never before, I believe we need a new paradigm for science, technology and innovation, science for poverty alleviation and for the protection of the environment.

'Progress' has no meaning if it only benefits the few – if it doesn't eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities, protect the world we live in.

This is why your ideas and vision, your experience, are so important.

Science has been at the heart of 2015 – the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, the *Sendai Framework for Action*, the *Paris Climate Change Conference*.

We must build on these foundations, there is no time to lose, to support the ability of every society to create and share knowledge, to nurture every source of innovation and creativity, to craft a more inclusive, sustainable and just path to the future.

The message of the United Nations Secretary General is clear.

He needs the Scientific Advisory Board to help him and the United Nations system, identify, mobilize and harness the best science, technology and innovation for transformative change.

In this light, I look forward to our discussions on the science requirements for the *2030 Agenda*, on emerging trends and on overall recommendations to the Secretary-General – with a view to producing a full report by July 2016.

This calls for ambitious thinking and strong organisation, and, for this, you may on the full support of UNESCO as Secretariat.

Thank you.