



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

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 High Level Discussion – Second SAB Speech

St Petersburg, Russian Federation, 14 December, 2015

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

His Excellency Mr Georgy Poltavchenko, Governor of Saint Petersburg,

Mr Vladimir Litvinenko, President of the University "Gornyi",

Mr Andrey Guryev, Chairman of *PhosAgro*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to hold the 4th meeting of the *Scientific Advisory Board of the United Nations Secretary-General*, Mr Ban Ki-moon, here, in St Petersburg, in the Russian Federation.

St Petersburg is a city of great writers – Fyodor Dostoyevsky once called St Petersburg "*the most international city of the world.*"

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

I thank the Government of the Russian Federation for its support to the Scientific Advisory Board.

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.

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

Science is essential to taking this agenda forward.

The scale and the complexity of challenges we face today calls for a new unity among all sciences.

It calls for better governance among the rich array of scientific tools existing in the United Nations.

It calls for a new approach, across disciplines, across political borders, across sectoral lines.

This is why the Scientific Advisory Board was launched in 2014, with UNESCO as the Secretariat – to ensure at the highest level of the United Nations system that decisions are informed, enabled and accompanied by the best available knowledge, brought together in a holistic manner.

I believe we need a new vision for science, technology and innovation today, for the benefit of all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

This is the goal of the Scientific Advisory Board – to integrate cutting edge science into policy, to link science, policy and society, at a time when this has never been so necessary.

The Scientific Advisory Board is about health -- it is about improving agriculture and the livelihoods of millions of people -- it is about risk reduction, food security, poverty eradication -- it is, fundamentally, about human rights and dignity.

I believe the message we have just heard from 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.

All this is guided by a clear conviction.

This is the conviction that science holds answers to key questions we must address over the next century – questions about equitable and inclusive growth, about sustainable development, about the resilience of our societies.

For seventy years, UNESCO's role has been to help States answer these questions, together.

The "S" in our acronym was a latecomer to our mandate – introduced during the Organization's constituent conference in London in November 1945.

Since then, science has taken a place at the very heart of UNESCO's work to build new forms of international cooperation for peace and development.

Our position is clear.

Science flourishes through dialogue, through the interaction of peoples and cultures and through the meeting of minds.

It prospers in a soil rich in diversity and a climate that favours exchange.

Science cooperation – indeed, science diplomacy – lies at the heart of our project to build a more just and equitable world.

This same spirit is the inspiration driving the Russian Academy of Sciences – as well as the University "Gornyi", and our partnership with PhosAgro, and I wish to thank you all for your support.