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联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,**

**Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy**

**15 September 2016**

Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* calls on all States to “*promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.*”

This must start with the human rights and dignity of every woman and man. This is the foundation for including all voices and empowering society through freedom of expression and freedom of information. This is the basis for transparent institutions that are accountable and representative. This is a driver for policies that are effective because they are just. This lays the ground for living together in societies that are ever more diverse. This gives women and men the power to act today to craft a better future for all tomorrow.

The 2030 Agenda includes 17 goals -- democracy, human rights and dignity are a thread tying them together.

Taking this forward must be the commitment of Governments and citizens everywhere – to defend shared values, to deepen the rule of law and good governance, to open ever wider space for civil society.

These goals underpin all of UNESCO’s work to build the defences of peace in the minds of women and men through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information, as the basis for a vibrant democratic culture.

In 1993, on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Nelson Mandela said:

*“This must be a world of democracy and respect for human rights, a world freed from the horrors of poverty, hunger, deprivation and ignorance, relieved of the threat and the scourge of civil wars and external aggression and unburdened of the great tragedy of millions forced to become refugees.”*

Today, in a world of turbulence, this vision has never been so urgent. We need a new commitment by all to a strong democratic culture, to new forms of global solidarity and citizenship, to a vision of humanity and the world as one. This is UNESCO’s message on this *International Day of Democracy*.