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Organización
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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 *World Environment Day*

"Think.Eat.Save"

5 June 2013

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted every year, while 870 million people remain under-nourished. Such waste is unacceptable at a time when millions go hungry. With a rising impact on our environment, we must develop more sustainable methods of food production. We need to think about what we eat in order to save our planet.

This is the Think.Eat.Save message of *World Environment Day*. This must start with each of us, with the way we think and act, and this is why education is so important.

As lead agency for the *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* (2005-2014), UNESCO works to empower learners with new attitudes and values, to change their behaviours and lifestyles. Sustainability is a responsibility that we all share, and this includes eating wisely and saving food. Schools are the frontline in the struggle against waste, hunger and malnutrition. With UNEP, UNESCO's *YouthXchange* initiative is a concrete example of our commitment to promote sustainability with young people.

Agriculture is deeply embedded in local environments – this is where we must act to develop sustainable practices that are meaningful to local communities. Across the world, UNESCO has designated 600 biosphere reserves as learning sites for sustainable development. Many of these cultivate organically-produced food and textiles, which help to conserve biological diversity and promote rural employment. From the Luberon-Lure Biosphere Reserve in France and the Aya Biosphere Reserve in Japan to the Dana Biosphere Reserve in Jordan, local communities are

developing bio-products that meet both local and global needs, and in ways that contribute to a healthy environment and reduce waste.

There is nothing more cultural or social than food. Through its work to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, UNESCO promotes food practices that enhance the quality of nutrition and draw on local traditions. From the Mediterranean diet to traditional Mexican cuisine, eating local means better quality, less waste and a smaller footprint. It means taking part in traditional and vibrant cultural practices. This is also why it is so important to share local and traditional knowledge systems and to learn sustainability from traditional hunting, fishing and agricultural techniques.

From production, transport and storage to sales and consumption, we need to stop food waste at every step of the way. Each of us must rethink our eating habits to have an impact throughout the food chain. This is how we will lay the foundations for greater sustainability, and this is UNESCO's message on this *World Environment Day*.

Irina Bokova