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Organización
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
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Message from Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of Human Rights Day

10 December 2015

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on 10 December 1948, is one of the most profound works of human civilization. It asserts, for the first time in history, the equality of all human beings, without distinction, in law and in dignity.

This “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” must be defended today more forcefully than ever. Despite the considerable progress made in more than half a century, the global scandal of poverty and inequality and the violence of racism, discrimination and conflict are massive and unacceptable violations of fundamental rights. Today in the Middle East and elsewhere millions of women and men are being forced into exile, risking their lives to escape persecution: thousands are dying on the way, and others face rejection, suspicion and hatred. Millions of people are forced to flee the consequences of climate change in which they have no hand. It is the poorest and most vulnerable everywhere who are suffering the most.

There is also a temptation, in order to counter violence and given the need to combat the threat of terrorism, to deny the fundamental rights and essential freedoms that are the foundation of life in society. Respect for rights is not an abstract commitment enshrined in a charter, it is a daily fight and every day we must renew the practical means of waging that fight. The adoption by the United Nations of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the steps, practical and political, to advancing human rights. UNESCO is mobilized in all its fields of competence to build this future of dignity for all. The full realization of human rights requires access for all to quality education. It requires freedom of expression and press freedom, the protection of journalists and the media. It

includes the right of everyone to take part in cultural life and to draw on the cultures of others so as to live better together. It involves the equitable sharing of progress in scientific research. This is UNESCO's mission, and it has never been more relevant than now, 70 years after its foundation.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UNESCO is joining the campaign to be launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights with the watchword *Our Rights. Our Freedom. Always.* Let us together give fresh impetus to respect for rights, and let us draw inspiration from the example of all those who are committed to defending them, thereby consolidating our shared humanity.

Irina Bokova