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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

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 Arabic Language Day**

18 December 2016

World Arabic Language Day is a call to promote the cultural and linguistic diversity of the world as a crucial element in the cultural wealth of humanity. The Arabic language, in its classical form and its many dialects, is a global language in which the identities, beliefs and aspiration of peoples across the five continents are expressed. It is a bridge between cultures and a practical way of adding to knowledge, perceptions and mutual understanding for peace.

When we celebrate the Arabic language every year on 18 December, we also acknowledge its immense contribution to science and universal culture, including philosophy and the arts. Each year, the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture pays tribute to individuals, groups or institutions for their dedicated work and outstanding achievements in the diffusion of broad knowledge of Arab art and culture.

This year, World Arabic Language Day is an opportunity to convey a strong message in favour of the dissemination of the Arabic language online, in particular in the fields of higher education and scientific research. UNESCO wishes to recall the importance of multilingualism and knowledge of languages in an increasingly globalized world; greater efforts must be made in schools and universities to diffuse the Arabic language and consolidate its learning with a view to the development of research, scientific innovation and creativity. The dissemination of the Arabic language throughout the world is a source of tremendous energy for cooperation and peace: let us join forces to release its full potential.

Irina Bokova