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Organización  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Ms Irina Bokova,**

**Director-General of UNESCO**

**on the occasion of the conference “International Science, Technology and  
Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC) Return Home to  
UNESCO”**

**UNESCO, 27 September 2013**

Excellency Mr Mohd Zulkifli Mohammed, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Malaysia to UNESCO,

Dato' Dr Lee Yee Cheong, Chairman of the Governing Board of the *International Centre for South-South Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address this Seminar on the *International Centre for South-South Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation Returning Home to UNESCO*.

It is a special pleasure for me, because I visited ISTIC earlier this year, on 22 May, and I saw for myself its strengths in action.

*ISTIC is a small organization, with a very big footprint.*

These are the words of Dato' Dr Zakri Abdul-Hamid, Joint Chairman of the *Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology*, and they say almost everything we need to know.

On this 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I wish to express my thanks to the Government of Malaysia for hosting this leading Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO.

Inspired by the 2005 *Doha Plan of Action*, adopted during the *Second South Summit of the Group of 77 and China* in Qatar, ISTIC was launched in May 2008, as an international platform for South-South cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

In record time, the Centre has started to make a real difference, including on UNESCO's two Global Priorities, Africa and Gender Equality.

ISTIC has organized the *International Forum on Women in Science and Technology*, and the Centre has become a key player in assisting STI policy formulation and review, mobilizing intellectual resources and highlighting best practices from the South.

Last April, with UNESCO and the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, ISTIC organised an international workshop on *Sustainability Science -- A Science-based Approach to Realise the Future We Want for All*.

This workshop set out recommendations to strengthen South-South cooperation in developing sustainability science –

All of this is cutting-edge work...

...and it has taken place within five years.

I believe this is essential work, in a world where the role of science for sustainable development is increasing, at a time when the map of science is changing quickly.

We are seeing the rise of a more multi-polar and inter-connected world of science.

This is creating a more competitive environment and opening vast opportunities for collaboration.

At the same time, disparities remain deep, between countries and within them.

The place of women in science is still far too low.

Least Developed Countries contribute only marginally to global science – and they still derive marginal benefits from its development.

At the same time, actors in the South are moving to the front of the international stage -- thanks to the transfer of technology, thanks also to home-grown innovative solutions.

This reflects the strong commitment of countries like Malaysia to supporting Research and Development – standing at 1 percent of GDP spending, Malaysia is one of ASEAN's leaders in this area.

This is why South-South cooperation, especially in STI, is so important, and I wish to commend the Government of Malaysia for its leadership.

We see this commitment in Malaysia's *Vision 2020* and its work to promote cooperation across the ASEAN countries.

South-South cooperation stands at the heart of UNESCO's partnership with Malaysia.

This is embodied in our *Funds-in-Trust Agreement* under the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme -- this focusses on South-South cooperation for capacity-building in education, culture and the sciences, for Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States, and especially African countries.

These same principles guide all of UNESCO's work to embed STI into national development strategies in the South – by supporting STI policy formulation, evaluation and implementation, by building human and institutional capacity, and by promoting innovation ecosystems.

This work takes in UNESCO's Category 1 and 2 centres, along with the UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN network of universities-- all of these work together to amplify UNESCO's impact and visibility.

In this family, ISTOC plays an especially proactive role, for which the Organization is deeply grateful, and in this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Dr Lee Yee Cheong, for his passion and commitment.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

J'étais la semaine dernière à New York où l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies examinait les progrès accomplis dans la réalisation des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement.

Toutes les discussions tournent autour d'un même sujet : l'importance vitale des savoirs, et notamment de la science, de la technologie et de l'innovation - pour éradiquer la pauvreté, améliorer la sécurité alimentaire, promouvoir l'énergie durable, améliorer la gestion de l'eau et des ressources environnementales, soigner les maladies...

Il faut des politiques plus solides...

Des professionnels, des ingénieurs mieux formés,

Des réseaux mieux connectés pour le partage des savoirs.

La science, la technologie et l'innovation sont des accélérateurs de développement et nous devons les mobiliser davantage, pour nous rapprocher au maximum des objectifs d'ici 2015.

Nous devons les mettre au cœur de l'agenda post- 2015.

C'est la vision de l'UNESCO, et la coopération Sud-Sud est au cœur de cette vision – et nous avons besoin de l'engagement continu de l'ISTIC, et d'autres initiatives de même nature.

C'est donc avec beaucoup de gratitude et d'enthousiasme que je salue tous les professionnels du Centre international pour les sciences, la technologie et l'innovation et le Gouvernement de la Malaisie pour leur action et leur leadership.

Je vous souhaite un très joyeux anniversaire et un séminaire productif.