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## Message from

**Ms Irina Bokova,  
Director-General of UNESCO,**

**on the occasion of World Philosophy Day**

***Inclusive Societies, Sustainable Planet***

**21 November 2013**

This year, World Philosophy Day is guided by the theme "*Inclusive Societies, Sustainable Planet*". This day is an invitation to rethink the conditions for inclusion and sustainability in societies that are increasingly diverse and ever more interconnected, between themselves and with their environment.

Globalization, human activity, the rapid development of new technologies, and biotechnologies are blurring the boundaries between the social, human and natural orders. Human action is becoming the main driver of evolution in the planetary system – opening what has been called the age of the "Anthropocene". The environment is no longer completely outside us – our actions shape it. In turn, environmental damage weighs on the fabric of our societies, migration patterns and cooperation.

In this world of many ramifications, sustainable development depends first on prosperity shared between States and within societies. In a world of diversity, inclusion comes more than ever from dialogue and respect for justice, human dignity and human rights. This was the message of Swami Vivekananda, whose 150th anniversary we are celebrating: "Rise at the expense of another! I did not come to earth for that!"

We are increasingly connected to our natural environments, which are themselves interlinked. This recognition must inspire new public policies, including social policies. This intuition was expressed by Paul Ricoeur, born a century ago: "*If we did not talk about the world, what would we talk about?*" In response to this radical

interdependency, the Rio+20 Summit called for building more integrated policies that are capable of addressing the economic, social and environmental aspects of development.

Answers to these challenges will not come solely from technical developments or political or economic arrangements. The more complex the stakes, the greater the need to ensure that through schools and the media, every individual cultivates critical thinking and a community spirit from the earliest age. These challenges are at the heart of the World Science Forum, which is meeting in Rio in 2013, and UNESCO's World Social Science Report on "Changing Global Environments". In this world of multiple fractures, philosophy plays an indispensable role to think and to act for human dignity and harmony. Philosophy reminds us that the resources of the mind are the only real renewable resources we have. Today, through the UNESCO network, I appeal to every professional, author and teacher worldwide to unleash this power.

Irina Bokova