



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Organización  
de las Naciones Unidas  
para la Educación,  
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

## Message from

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

**on the occasion of the International Day of Peace**

**21 September 2013**

International Day of Peace, which we celebrate on 21 September, is devoted this year to peace education.

This message embodies UNESCO's founding values: since wars begin in the minds of women and men, it in the minds of women and men that the defences of peace must be constructed. Education is the foundation of any lasting peace. It is the driving force behind freedom and tolerance. It stems the tide of ignorance and mutual misunderstanding, the means by which disagreements all too often degenerate into violence. Education fosters the culture of dialogue that is necessary to resolve conflicts.

That is why UNESCO campaigns for quality education for all going further than the basics of reading and writing. Education must encompass the teaching of human rights, living together and respect for others. Peace education is one of its key components. Every child in the world should know their rights, and learn their own history and that of other peoples, so as to be able to understand the equal dignity of cultures and draw lessons from the crimes and violence of the past. This vision is the key to tolerant citizenship in a globalized world. It requires a widespread effort to train teachers and design suitable school curricula. These principles inspire all of UNESCO's work, in particular through the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), adopted by UNESCO's General Conference and the United Nations General Assembly.

Education is a fundamental human right, and there can be no justification for depriving anybody of that right. As we mobilize the potential of education to prevent war, we must ensure the quality and continuity of teaching, even in the event of conflict. This is the purpose of UNESCO's work to protect schools and teachers,

and to bring education to refugees and displaced persons. It is also, for UNESCO, the way to lay the foundations of future peace.

With this hope in mind, I call upon all Member States of UNESCO, governments and civil society organizations to join their forces, and to join us to make education a force for peace. We must give to future generations a culture of dialogue and build, through education, a world that is not only more connected, but also more compassionate.

Irina Bokova