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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message by

Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of International Arts Education Week

21-27 May 2012

Art brings us closer together. It makes us to feel and to understand what unites humanity in the diversity of its cultures and expressions.

As a vector of dialogue in the loftiest sense, art speeds up social inclusion and tolerance in our multicultural, connected societies. A painting, an artefact, a piece of ancestral music speak volumes about the history of civilizations and the ties that bind them. Young people must be taught to love art: it will make them understand each other better.

This awareness of art can be acquired from an early age and maintained throughout life. It is with the conviction that creativity and the arts, and learning about them, contribute to the building of prosperous and peaceful societies that UNESCO encourages its Member States to support arts education, at school and beyond. Arts education is a key to training generations capable of reinventing the world that they have inherited. It supports the vitality of cultural identities by emphasizing their links with other cultures, thus contributing to the construction of a shared heritage. It helps to form tolerant and dynamic citizens for our globalizing world.

The General Conference of UNESCO proclaimed the fourth week of May as International Arts Education Week. It will be marked for the first time from 21 to 27 May 2012 and should highlight the importance and usefulness of arts education. The World Conferences on Arts Education, held in Lisbon in 2006 and Seoul in 2010, identified some strong guiding principles. The Seoul Agenda for the

development of quality arts education added an action plan available to all Member States. The time has now come to speed up implementation.

Now that the world is seeking new paths to peace and development, we can unleash the potential of culture and cultural diversity. Arts education is one of the keys to unlocking this potential, for the benefit of all. Art and creation must take their rightful place at the heart of society. In this International Arts Education Week, I call on UNESCO's partners, governments, educational institutions and members of society to support projects and activities that draw on the force of art for dialogue, social cohesion and peace.

Irina Bokova