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

on the occasion of the World Science Day for Peace and Development

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Sciences, Technology and Innovation (STI) provide key answers to build peace and bolster sustainable development. We need more integrated science to strengthen water management, to ensure the sustainable use of the ocean, to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, to tackle climate change and disasters, to foster innovation.

This is why STI stand at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. UNESCO has developed a unique approach to promote global scientific cooperation while encouraging local actions, with two focus: gender equality and Africa. In this spirit, UNESCO launched in 2017 a ground-breaking international symposium and policy forum on *girls' education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics* (STEM), to challenge the gender inequalities in STEM.

Today, the complexity of the world's issues goes beyond the framework of a single discipline. Hence, UNESCO has made trans-disciplinarity the cornerstone of its work for sustainability; building networks with multiple stakeholders such as museums, universities, private and public actors, governments and NGOs. This year's theme for the World Science Day for Peace and Development, *Science for global understanding*, encompasses UNESCO's approach to develop scientific cooperation between and within societies, combining global sustainability and local actions and knowledge.

There is today an urgent need to promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation to foster STI for sustainable development and to encourage mutual understanding and peace. In this context, science diplomacy will be a powerful instrument for the use of science as a foundation for a culture of cooperation. Investment in science education will be equally crucial. We need to grant equal access to enrolment in sciences all persons, starting at an early age, with a strong focus on girls.

In this spirit, I call upon all stakeholders, well beyond scientific circles, to mobilise in order to release the full potential of sciences for development and peace.

Irina Bokova