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Организация  
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联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

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

**on the occasion of the *International Day of the World's Indigenous  
Peoples***

**9 August 2013**

In 2013, the *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples* celebrates the importance of constructive alliances, agreements and arrangements to protect the rights of indigenous peoples.

In a world undergoing rapid environmental change and societies experiencing deep transformation, solidarity must be our guiding principle – solidarity embodied in alliances amongst indigenous groups and with non-indigenous partners -- to safeguard and promote unique identities, languages, knowledge systems and worldviews. This is especially important as we shape the contours of a new global development agenda to follow 2015.

For UNESCO, global sustainability must build on foundations that are local, that reflect the views and needs of local communities, including those of indigenous peoples. This is why we seek to integrate culture at the heart of all development efforts – as a wellspring of identity and cohesion and a source of creativity and innovation. No society can flourish without culture -- no development can be sustainable without it. Indigenous peoples know this better than most, as custodians to rich linguistic and cultural diversity, carrying unique knowledge of sustainable living and respect for biodiversity.

We need new alliances to take this vision forward – across the United Nations system, with Member States, within and between societies. This is why the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is actively seeking engagement with indigenous peoples and local communities. Through our Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme, UNESCO is leading inter-agency efforts to include indigenous knowledge, alongside science, in the IPCC's *5th Assessment Report Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, to be released in 2014. Similarly, the newly-established Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES) recognizes the importance of biodiversity to indigenous peoples and their vital contribution to its conservation. On behalf of the IPBES Secretariat, UNESCO is leading the work to develop constructive and mutually-beneficial arrangements with indigenous peoples and local communities.

The United Nations 2007 *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* recognized that “respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment.” To build on this vision, and to protect the rights of all indigenous peoples, we need new alliances, agreements and arrangements for global sustainability. This is UNESCO's pledge on *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples*.

Irina Bokova