



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organización
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para la Educación,
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of

the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

29 November 2020

“On this International Day of Solidarity, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the rights of the Palestinian people.”¹

These words by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, capture the spirit of the 29 November day of solidarity. It is an opportunity to reaffirm the support of the international community for the Palestinian people in its hopes for a free and peaceful future.

This call for solidarity is even more necessary today because of the terrible effects of the pandemic on the most vulnerable among us. The health crisis has compounded the already harsh economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people, marked by very high poverty and unemployment rates and a fall in per capita GDP for the third consecutive year.²

There is then an urgent need to recall that assistance provided by the international community is still vital for the Palestinians and essential to the setting up of resilient, thriving communities.

As the context is particularly dire for Palestinian youth, who run the risk of falling behind in matters of education and economic opportunities, UNESCO's work is based on a conviction and a commitment.

The conviction is that young Palestinians hold the keys to becoming agents of peace and mutual understanding.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/International-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people>

² <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/09/1076702>

The commitment is that UNESCO will continue to work in Palestine towards the development and civic engagement of its young people through the fostering of creativity and culture.

For UNESCO, this mission finds its full meaning in the promotion of education as the cornerstone of human dignity. We must therefore strengthen the Palestinian education system so as to ensure broader participation of girls and young people from rural areas. Inclusive quality educational programmes, and intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding are the means by which young Palestinians will gain the skills necessary to meet the challenges of today and of the future.

Not only in this crucial area, but also regarding freedom of expression, culture and science, our cooperation with other United Nations agencies must continue and strengthen.

This Day of Solidarity thus affords us the opportunity to underscore our common commitment to accompany the Palestinian people in building a lasting peace.