

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,  
Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the International Day  
of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**

**29 November 2021**

Each and every year, on this International Day, the international community reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinian people in its hopes for a future imbued with peace and freedom.

After more than one and a half years of the pandemic, the full import of that solidarity is clear to see. The health crisis has indeed compounded the existing difficulties of economic and social life for the Palestinian people, as characterized by very high rates of unemployment and poverty and the heightened risk of increased numbers of out-of-school children due to COVID-19.

It is urgent, therefore, to reaffirm that solidarity so as not to be deprived of the resources of youth and their potential to foster mutual understanding and build peace.

Such is the commitment that UNESCO has upheld in the field, with support of its Office in Ramallah, particularly in its actions in favour of education for Palestinian people.

Our Organization, in the face of the pandemic, has joined forces with the Ministry of Education to ensure educational continuity through distance learning. It has also stepped in to support and monitor the children of Gaza and the West Bank with a view to stemming the risk of them dropping out of school.

The diversity of such actions adds to the conviction, at the heart of our common action, that the Palestinian education system must be strengthened so as to enable more girls and young people from rural areas to have access to a quality education.

That active solidarity with the Palestinian people is also reflected in UNESCO's commitment to promoting and supporting both their culture and the people that produce it.

The ongoing renovation of the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem and the work under way to create a national film institute demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of cultural expressions and interactions and to fostering mutual understanding through culture.

Designing inclusive quality education programmes, fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding and protecting freedoms of expression, therefore, are what will enable Palestinian youth to equip themselves with the skills needed to meet present and future challenges.