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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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

on the occasion of the 96th World Esperanto Congress

Copenhagen, 23 July 2011

I am delighted to extend my greetings to all of the participants of the 96th World Esperanto Congress.

By focusing on “dialogue and mutual understanding”, the theme chosen for the current UN International Year of Youth, you are contributing to promoting the ideals of peace, freedom, progress and solidarity that are essential for empowering youth and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

These noble goals are shared by UNESCO whose Member States are “determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives”, to quote our Constitution.

As a distinctive characteristic of human existence encompassing the full range of human emotions, views and values, languages serve as the indispensable vehicles for dialogue, tolerance, understanding and respect between peoples, social groups, and generations.

The Esperanto movement, founded over one century ago, has steadfastly advocated equality between the world's languages, cultures and peoples. Similarly, UNESCO is convinced that multilingualism has become crucial for preserving the wonderful diversity that characterizes humankind, particularly in the present era of ever-expanding globalization. Moreover, as an integral part of our identities, multilingualism has gained wide acceptance as a strategic factor for peace and sustainable development.

UNESCO therefore applauds the tremendous efforts of the Esperantists throughout the world in recent decades. In this regard, the 96th World Esperanto Congress constitutes a valuable contribution to the combat to preserve and promote linguistic diversity and mutual understanding.

To the Universal Esperanto Association and to all the participants of this 96th World Congress, I would like to express my best wishes for fruitful and stimulating deliberations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irina Bokova". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Irina Bokova

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