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联合国教育、
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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

on the occasion of the International Women's Day

8 March 2016

2015 saw countries across the world agree on the new *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Paris Climate Change Agreement*.

For UNESCO, these are a single agenda for advancing human rights and dignity, for eradicating poverty, for protecting the planet.

Promoting gender equality stands at the heart of this agenda, as a basic human right and a transformational force for more just, inclusive and sustainable development. This is why the theme for the 2016 *International Women's Day* is 'Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality.'

Promoting gender equality is a Global Priority guiding all of UNESCO action in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. These objectives underpin UNESCO's efforts to widen new opportunities, especially through education, on the basis of such initiatives as the *Global Partnership for Girls and Women's Education*, and the activities supported by the *Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education*

UNESCO's work is one of partnership, across the United Nations system, working ever more closely with UN Women, as well as with the private sector, reflected in the longstanding *L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science* programme, to support girls and women into scientific careers.

We have seen progress across the world – but steep obstacles remain before genuine equality for all girls and women. The new global agenda will succeed only if

every country advances the rights, ingenuity and innovation of every one of its citizens, starting with girls and women.

This will be addressed in the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, coming under the theme of 'Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development'. This topic is especially timely in the context of the twenty-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, and the adoption of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* and *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Taking this forward means accelerating momentum towards gender equality and the empowerment of every girl and woman. 2016 is a pivotal year, when we must implement a new vision that builds on lessons learned and outlines new actions to tackle new and remaining challenges.

In this spirit, I call on Member States and all partners to join forces to advance gender equality in every society. There is simply no greater force for justice, sustainable development and lasting peace.

Irina Bokova