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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 Symposium celebrating *International Human Rights*

***Day* organized by the *Kantor Centre for the Study of Contemporary
European Jewry***

Tel Aviv, Israel, 12 December 2013

Professor Daphne Barak-Erez, Honourable Supreme Court Justice,

Excellency Ms Tzipi Livni, Minister of Justice of Israel,

Professor Dina Porat, Head of the *Kantor Centre for the Study of Contemporary
European Jewry*,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every year, on December 10, the world celebrates the *Universal Declaration of
Human Rights* -- the first cornerstone legal instrument recognizing the common
humanity and inherent dignity of every member of the human family.

Much has been achieved since 1948, when this “common standard of achievement
for all peoples and all nations” was adopted by the United Nations sixty-five years
ago. We have seen progress across the world, including in some of the most
challenging situations, thanks to the commitment of peoples, societies,
Governments and the international community to make human rights real
everywhere.

And yet, realising the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* remains a work in
progress.

A life free from poverty is still out of reach for the 2.7 billion people who live in
conditions of extreme poverty. Access to quality education remains an aspiration for
millions of girls and women, as does the enjoyment of cultural rights for both
women and men. The most disadvantaged segments of our societies, including
young people, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, suffer

still from multiple forms of abuse. Freedom of opinion and expression remain under threat, as violence against journalists has increased and impunity remains high. Armed violence and conflict remain far too prevalent across the world.

While violations of human rights take different shapes, the core of these challenges is the same exclusion and inequality, perpetrated by extremism, intolerance, ignorance and discrimination towards others.

Each of us has the responsibility to stand up against these violations -- starting with the international community, which must support the development of more inclusive and just societies, advancing the full realisation of universal human rights, principles and standards. This goal guides all of UNESCO's work to promote human rights through cooperation in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. For UNESCO, these are the foundations for greater respect and mutual understanding between and within societies, on the basis of dialogue, tolerance and non-discrimination. Education has a special role to play in advancing respect for human rights and dignity, including through human rights education, education for global citizenship as well as Holocaust education, where UNESCO has a leading and unique role.

In this spirit, I congratulate the *Kantor Centre for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry* for organising this symposium on the occasion of *International Human Rights Day*. Establishing effective legal frameworks to ensure formal and actual equality is vital for building inclusive societies that are free from discrimination and that respect the inherent dignity and rights of every individual. I am especially pleased that the publication Legislating for Equality – a Multinational Collection of Non-Discrimination Norms, to which I contributed a foreword, will be presented during the symposium. I am confident that this symposium will provide a strong platform to take forward our common efforts of realising a world of dignity and justice for all.



Irina Bokova