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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 1st International  
Inter-Parliamentary Conference "Russia-Africa"**

**Moscow, 15 June 2010**

I send my warm greetings to the participants in the 1st International Inter-Parliamentary Conference "Russia-Africa". I regret that I am unable to be with you in person, however I am pleased to have the opportunity to express my support for this event, which exemplifies the international cooperation that UNESCO seeks to foster.

Moscow has long been a friend to African nations, supporting their own efforts to develop and prosper. This cooperation has resulted in a wealth of exchange on many levels between two very different parts of the world. Such cooperation fosters greater mutual understanding between peoples, a goal we are highlighting in this United Nations International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, for which UNESCO is the lead UN agency.

Action in favour of Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, is one of UNESCO's two main priorities, along with gender, in all of its fields of competence. This action is principally guided by development goals that have been determined by Africa itself, through the African Union (AU) and its programmes, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Parliamentarians have a pivotal role to play in contributing to Africa's development, through good governance and sound democratic institutions.

In the wake of the global economic crisis, the international community needs to stand firmly behind Africa. The crisis is threatening the advancement of international commitments such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. Many countries in Africa have been seriously affected by the

crisis. The speed, the scale and the quality of international assistance will largely determine how much the African leaders will succeed in consolidating the solid progress made over the past decade. The need to forge closer ties between the African continent and its international partners is stronger than ever. I congratulate you once again on this initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova