

**Video message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the 9th World Environment Education
Congress “Cultural environment: Weaving new
connections”**

Vancouver, 9 to 15 September

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address the *9th World Environment Education Congress*.

I wish to thank David Zandvliet from Simon Fraser University, and Mario Salomone, Secretary General of the *World Environment Education Congress Network*, for their leadership.

To craft a more inclusive, sustainable future for all, we need greener economies, greener legislation.

To succeed, most of all, we need greener societies.

This calls for new ways of seeing the world, new ways of thinking and behaving as global citizens.

This is why sustainability must start on the benches of schools.

This guided UNESCO's leadership of the *United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)*, sponsored by Japan -- this underpins our action today, to spearhead the *Global Action Programme* agreed at the 2014 *UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*, and take forward the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

Education stands at the heart of the new global agenda, as a transformational force for human rights, and as the best way to empower learners to become change-makers.

This calls for new forms of education -- education that connects culture and environment and builds this into pedagogical approaches, to engage schools, youth and the wider community, in advancing environmental protection and more responsible lifestyles.

This is how we will shape the green societies we need for the 21st century, by nurturing the full power of education and culture, to mobilise positive change across the board.

In this spirit, I thank you again for your commitment, which has never been so important, and which UNESCO supports wholeheartedly.