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联合国教育、
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Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,

Director-General of UNESCO,

on the occasion of World Science Day for Peace and Development

10 November 2020

In a 1951 article published in The UNESCO Courier, anthropologist and ethnologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote: "The efforts of science should not only enable mankind to surpass itself; they must also help those who lag behind to catch up".

It is with this same conviction, despite these tumultuous and trying times, that we celebrate World Science Day for Peace and Development, whose theme this year is "Science for and with society in dealing with COVID-19".

Science will play an important role in overcoming this crisis and will also help to build more just, more compassionate and more sustainable societies.

The current crisis should serve as a wakeup call regarding the urgency for increased financing and support of scientific research and collaboration.

This concerns not only the natural sciences, but also the social and human and sciences.

The virus is an all-encompassing societal issue, irreducible to epidemiological data alone, however fundamental they may be.

Natural sciences help us understand the virus, while social and human sciences enable us to look deep within our societies and reveal their complexities, avoiding sterile over-simplification and false evidence.

Social and human sciences have much to contribute towards the fight against this pandemic, and we can only benefit from better integrating them into public policy.

At UNESCO, we have long been convinced of the potential of science – provided that it is shared within an ethical and humanistic framework.

It is for these reasons that UNESCO is extending its historic commitment to the ethics of science with the drafting of a global recommendation on the ethics of artificial intelligence, aimed at making innovation available to all.

As the world confronts a historic pandemic, and also faces the climate crisis and the collapse of biodiversity, we must not lose sight of the humanist vision of science, just as we must not ignore scientific methodology and rigorous scientific reflection.

Following a decision by its Member States in November 2019, UNESCO is preparing a recommendation on open science, whose goal is to help science unlock its full potential.

The recommendation aims not only to make science more effective and more diverse by enabling anyone to contribute, but also to bring its objectives in line with the needs of society by developing scientific literacy in an informed citizenry who take responsibility and are involved in collective decision-making.

This recommendation is an important step towards transforming all branches of science into a common good, serving the sustainable development of all our societies. On this World Science Day for Peace and Development, we wish to reaffirm this fundamental objective.