

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,  
Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of  
International Day for Tolerance  
16 November 2022**

“Tolerance is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is, above all, an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others.”

It was in these words that 27 years ago, in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, UNESCO’s Member States defined the beautiful idea of tolerance – an idea at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate.

However, our Organization, whose mission is to build the “intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity”, also knows that tolerance cannot be decreed; it must be built.

It is built first and foremost by an uncompromising fight against all forms of racism and discrimination. To strengthen our actions in this area, and to further mobilize our Member States and civil society, UNESCO is organizing, in Mexico City and with the Government of Mexico, the second Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination, to be held at the end of this month.

Tolerance is also built through education – particularly peace education, through which tomorrow’s citizens learn to respect difference in others.

Tolerance is also built through the diversity of cultures and heritage – revealing to all, across borders, our common humanity. This is the purpose of the UNESCO conventions for world heritage, cultural diversity and intangible heritage: not only to protect these treasures of humanity, but also to show their universal value as a basis for peace.

Since the United Nations Year for Tolerance in 1995, UNESCO has awarded the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence to significant activities in the scientific, artistic, cultural and communication fields aimed at promoting a spirit of tolerance and non-violence.

On this Day, let us remember that tolerance and diversity are a strength, and that in today’s globalized world, it is no longer simply an ethical imperative, it is a practical, political and legal necessity.

Let us make this 16 November a day of commitment and action for tolerance, following the advice of Claude Lévi-Strauss:<sup>1</sup> “Tolerance is not a contemplative attitude [...]. It is a dynamic attitude, consisting in the anticipation, understanding and promotion of what is struggling into being.”

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<sup>1</sup> Race and History, 1952.