



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

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

16 November 2020

Tunisian essayist Albert Memmi, who passed away this year, wrote that “tolerance is an exercise and a victory over ourselves”. His words teach us that tolerance, far from being a passive attitude tantamount to complacency or indifference, is a dynamic, daily effort, made both individually and collectively.

On this International Day for Tolerance we are celebrating the teaching of diversity and lifelong learning of openness.

At a time when the pandemic has intensified the divisions that fracture and disfigure our societies, sometimes leading to a reawakening of racism, fanaticism and extremism, it is more than ever necessary to reaffirm the founding values of our humanity. Dignity, justice, curiosity and diversity are intrinsic values of tolerance which UNESCO defends in its principles and through its actions.

Within all the fields of its mandate – education, culture, science and information – our Organization has been working since its very inception to combat infamy and hatred.

Through global citizenship education programmes, the defence and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, and a commitment to the ethics of science and artificial intelligence, UNESCO endeavours to promote a culture of peace which is fundamentally based on tolerance. This is also at the heart of our work with the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, which mobilizes local partners and stakeholders to fight racism at its roots.

It is in this spirit that every year our Organization awards the UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence to significant initiatives to promote mutual understanding among cultures and peoples.

Teaching tolerance involves teaching diversity, decentering, and the discovery of others and their cultures. As we read in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance signed on 16 November 1995, by the Member States of UNESCO, "tolerance is harmony in difference".

On this International Day for Tolerance, UNESCO calls upon everyone to celebrate diversity and the irreducible right to difference, which underpins the richness of our societies and anchors peace in our minds.