

**Message from Ms Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of International Mother Language Day**

21 February 2016

The theme of the 2016 International Mother Language Day is “Quality education, language(s) of instruction and learning outcomes.”

This underlines the importance of mother languages for quality education and linguistic diversity, to take forward the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In Sustainable Development Goal 4, the 2030 Agenda focuses on quality education and lifelong learning for all, to enable every woman and man to acquire skills, knowledge, and values to become everything they wish and participate fully in their societies. This is especially important for girls and women, as well as minorities, indigenous peoples, and rural populations. This is reflected in UNESCO’s Education 2030 Framework for Action, a road-map to implement the 2030 Agenda, encouraging full respect for the use of mother language in teaching and learning, and the promotion and

preservation of linguistic diversity.

Multilingualism is essential to drive these objectives forward – it is vital for success across the 2030 Agenda, regarding growth, employment and health, as well as sustainable consumption and production, and climate change.

UNESCO brings the same focus to advancing linguistic diversity on the Internet, through support to relevant local content as well as media and information literacy. Through the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme, UNESCO is highlighting the importance of mother and local languages as channels

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for safeguarding and sharing indigenous cultures and knowledge, which are vast reservoirs of wisdom.

Mother languages in a multilingual approach are essential components of quality education, which is itself the foundation