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

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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,  
on the occasion of the Award Ceremony  
for the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2008**

**UNESCO, 18 September 2008**

President of the General Conference  
President of the International Jury,  
Eminent Representative of the Laureate of the UNESCO Prize  
for Peace Education 2008,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome you all to UNESCO Headquarters for the award of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2008.

Allow me first to extend my warmest greetings to the President of the Prize's International Jury, Mr Mohammed Arkoun, from Algeria, Emeritus Professor of Arab Language and Literature at the Sorbonne, and visiting Professor at the Institute of Ismailî Studies in London. Let me also welcome another Member of the Jury, our dear friend H. E. Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Peru to UNESCO.

Finally but not least, I wish to reiterate UNESCO's deepest gratitude to the Nippon Foundation – formerly the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation – whose generous donation established the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1981.

The aim of the Prize is 'to promote all forms of action designed to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men' by both individuals and institutions. It is bestowed every two years within the framework of the celebrations of the

International Day of Peace, in recognition of outstanding activities in the cause of peace, and in the spirit of UNESCO's Constitution and the United Nations Charter.

This year's ceremony has heightened political resonance, falling as it does during the commemorations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ignorance, lack of justice, discrimination, inequality, intolerance and exclusion provide fertile ground for violence, aggression and conflict.

UNESCO's commitment to peace, dialogue and universal values is thus more needed than ever. So is the necessity to reaffirm the essential role of those values in bringing about a world of greater tolerance and of mutual understanding, respect and support in the observance of human rights.

As lead agency of the 2001-2010 International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, UNESCO plays a key role in the implementation of the 'Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations', adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 2001. Within this framework, the Organization is called upon to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and to promote it in the various activities of the United Nations. It is only through genuine dialogue that we can overcome ignorance - ignorance of the other, ignorance of the other's history, culture, values, religion and way of life. In so doing, we can come to understand and appreciate different cultures. This is a sine qua non for peace.

The increased tensions and insecurity in today's world demonstrate the need for educational initiatives that allow different communities to 'learn to live together'. In this regard, a key concern for UNESCO is the promotion of lifelong Peace Education, encompassing all aspects of human development.

Peace education is fundamental to developing respect for human rights and democracy. It eschews violence, prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination, and instils a spirit of tolerance and international understanding that allows us to move from a culture of war to a culture of peace.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to introduce the laureate of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2008, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation from South Africa.

The Institute, whose nomination was presented by the Department of Education of South Africa, was founded in 2000, as a registered non-profit organization located in Cape Town. It was established to foster reconciliation in post Apartheid South Africa and to advocate peace through rigorous socio-political analysis.

Education for Reconciliation has been a core programme of the Institute's work to build and strengthen reconciliation processes in South Africa, and several other African countries, including Rwanda, Sudan and Burundi.

The Institute cooperates with governments, civil society and academics of countries in transition to improve justice, development and human security through policy research and analysis, and capacity-building. It is a leading provider of transitional justice through its manifold projects, among which is the publication of the annual 'Transformation Audit' which assesses social, economic and educational developments necessary for sustainable peace.

Following the recommendations of the International Jury, I now have the great pleasure of presenting the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2008 to the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, in recognition of "its outstanding efforts in building sustainable reconciliation through education, and in addressing systemic injustice in Africa". I congratulate the Institute for its crucial action towards peace and reconciliation and, through its Executive Director, Mr Fanie Du Toit, I extend our best wishes to all his team.

[DG gives diploma, statuette and cheque to Mr Du Toit.]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now give the floor to Mr Fanie Du Toit, Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

Thank you.