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Organisation
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pour l'éducation,
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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
للترقية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织



Ladies and gentlemen, dear participants,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to share with you a short message at the start of your Education for a Low Carbon Future seminar.

The UN Secretary-General has highlighted the need to address global sustainability challenges: *"We hold the future in our hands, together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences."*

Achieving sustainable development requires a global change of mindsets, beliefs and behaviours, and education is vital to this task. Everyone in the world would like a better life for themselves and their children, and education makes a difference – it can help people to work together to find new solutions to their problems and can lead to new opportunities in an increasingly complex world.

The decision by the UN to focus on education is recognition of the critical role that education plays in human development. Education is one of the most effective forces to bring about the changes in knowledge, values, behaviour and lifestyles required to achieve sustainability and stability within and among countries, and to guarantee democracy, human security and peace.

The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development seeks to mobilize the educational resources of the world to help create a more sustainable future. Many paths to sustainability exist and are mentioned in the 40 chapters of *Agenda 21*, the official document of the 1992 Earth Summit. Education is one of these paths. Education alone cannot achieve a more sustainable future; however, without education and learning for sustainable development, we will not be able to reach that goal.

Everyone should benefit from an education that provides the values, competences, knowledge and skills required to shape the future in line with the demands of sustainable development.

Sustainable development requires fair and inclusive low carbon, green societies. Let me conclude by sharing with you the essence of UNESCO's messages for Rio+20 articulated around 3 points:

- Green societies are necessarily knowledge societies, recognizing the essential role of knowledge in stimulating innovation and building sustainability;
- Greening societies means taking social and cultural dimensions fully into account, alongside environmental and economic aspects; and
- Education for Sustainable Development is an essential tool for shaping the knowledge and values required for sustainability.

Wishing you all a fruitful seminar, and looking forward to hearing of the outcomes of your meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Combes
Information Officer

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014)