



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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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
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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 World Book and Copyright Day**

23 April 2019

A window onto our inner lives, books are also the doorway to mutual respect and understanding between people, across all boundaries and differences.

In these turbulent times, books embody the diversity of human ingenuity, giving shape to the wealth of human experience, expressing the search for meaning and expression we all share, that drive all societies forward.

Books help weave humanity together as a single family, holding a past in common, a history and heritage, to craft a destiny that is shared, where all voices are heard in the great chorus of human aspiration. Books are our allies in spreading education, science, culture and information worldwide.

Books are also a form of cultural expression that lives through and as part of a chosen language. Each publication is created in a distinct language and is intended for a language-specific reading audience. A book is thus written, produced, exchanged, used and appreciated in a given linguistic and cultural setting. This year we highlight this important dimension because 2019 marks the International Year of Indigenous Languages, led by UNESCO, to reaffirm the commitment of the international community in supporting indigenous peoples to preserve their cultures, knowledge and rights.

This day provides an opportunity to reflect together on ways to better disseminate the culture of the written word and to allow all individuals, men, women, and children to access it.

This is the same spirit of inclusion and dialogue that is guiding Sharjah (UAE), designated *World Book Capital 2019*. This designation takes effect on *World Book and Copyright Day 2019*. Sharjah was selected in recognition of its programme “Read – you are in Sharjah” that proposes to reach out to its marginalized populations and its creative proposals to involve migrant populations in order to act as a motor for social inclusion, creativity and respect.

With Sharjah, our partners, the International Publishers Association, the International Booksellers Federation and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the entire international community, let us join together to celebrate books as the embodiment of creativity, the desire to share ideas and knowledge, to inspire understanding, dialogue and tolerance. This is UNESCO’s message on World Book and Copyright Day.