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Message from Ms Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the *International Conference on Intellectual Capital
Management***

Zanjan, Islamic Republic of Iran, 12 September 2013

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to send a message of support to this *International Conference on Intellectual Capital Management*, organised by the Zanjan Science and Technology Park, in cooperation with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO.

This theme is timely. We are living today in a new age of limits – in terms of resources and in terms of the boundaries of the planet. This means we must make far more of the ultimate renewable energy that is human ingenuity. Creativity and innovation have perhaps never been so important for enhancing economic growth and competitiveness – as well as for deepening social cohesion, equality and poverty eradication.

In this spirit, UNESCO acts at three levels to promote cultures of innovation – by facilitating innovation systems, by supporting science parks and technology business incubators, and by mobilising grassroots innovation for sustainable development with particular attention to encouraging the participation of women and youth..

In our approach, science park and technology business incubators have a special place for the catalytic role they play across a wide range of fields of innovation. Many have created self-sustaining innovation ecosystems, by fostering conditions that enable companies to decrease the cost of innovation and accelerate learning cycles and the diversity of innovators. Experience shows that science park and

technology incubators are crucial instruments for nurturing knowledge-based small- and medium-sized enterprises.

To these ends, UNESCO provides technical assistance and capacity building, working especially closely with developing countries -- since 2002, more than 750 managers and future managers of science parks and technology business incubators from across the world have benefited from UNESCO training. Technical assistance has included the preparation of feasibility studies, the elaboration of development plans, advice on networking, funding and park establishment, as well as activities to attract foreign investment.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of UNESCO's major partners in this work. In 2009, in cooperation with the Iranian Government, we established a Category 2 *Centre for the Development of Science Parks and Technology Incubators* in Isfahan. This Centre facilitates the integration of a developmental approach into science, technology and innovation -- by organizing capacity building, providing policy advice, facilitating the exchange of experience and best practices, and conducting research in science park and technology incubator development.

This International Conference will explore questions that are essential for developing innovative ecosystems in science and technology parks – regarding intellectual capital management, entrepreneurship, small and medium size enterprises, and links to higher education. Effective governance of science and technology parks requires persuasive answers to each of these concerns. This is why sharing experience and best practices is so important. For this initiative, I wish to thank the Zanzan Science and Technology Park and the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, along with all partners involved. I wish all participants fruitful deliberations, and I look forward to their results.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova