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科学及文化组织

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,**

**Director-General of UNESCO,**

**on the occasion of**

**World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development**

**4 March 2020**

The Pont du Gard in southern France, the Parthenon in Athens, the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Giza at Memphis: four sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List which are masterpieces of engineering and which still inspire awe today.

Today, we consider these sites to serve an aesthetic purpose. However, we must not forget that at the time of their construction, they were works of engineering whose function was a practical one, like that of the Roman aqueducts, which were essential to water supply and sanitation in cities.

Engineering has helped to shape the world for millennia and now more than ever, the world needs engineering.

For these reasons, and with the support of over 40 Member States and more than 80 engineers' organizations, the General Conference of UNESCO, at its 40th session, proclaimed 4 March World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development.

First and foremost, engineering can play a major role in both reducing global warming and helping us adapt to the phenomenon. It can help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create water treatment and sanitation technology, better prepare for natural disasters, and develop more productive and more sustainable agricultural practices. In future, the innovations fostered by engineering will be crucial, particularly for the countries most vulnerable to climate change, small island developing States (SIDS).

Engineering is also needed to help humanity deal with the second major change of our time, that of technological disruption. The tech revolution has given rise to new opportunities, but it also poses new ethical dilemmas in the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics, for example.

In this connection, it bears noting that UNESCO is the only agency of the United Nations whose mandate specifically supports the training of engineers.

On this special day, UNESCO feels it especially appropriate to call attention to the need to encourage more young women to pursue a career in engineering. Although great women, such as Caroline Haslett and Marie Curie, have made their mark throughout the history of engineering, today, women are generally underrepresented in the field. This inequality is a weakness and it is unjust.

This is why UNESCO sets out to promote women's involvement in the engineering and science sectors by combating gender stereotypes, for example. Engineering and the possibilities it offers will be critical in the coming years. We need to mobilize all available resources in order to respond to the challenges we face.

These issues will be highlighted by the international celebrations marking the day, which are being led by UNESCO and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), along with more than 75 institutions including several networks of women engineers.

Engineering is one of the keys to sustainable development, and in order to unlock all its potential, there needs to be more equality in the world. This is the twofold message which UNESCO seeks to convey on the first edition of World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development.

Audrey Azoulay