



UNESCO Message on the Occasion of  
**One-day national training seminar on “the Role of Virtual Science Parks  
in Sustainable Urban Development”**  
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It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here with you today as UNESCO Representative to the I. R. Iran and to address you on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova. I am also speaking on behalf of Dr Mojtabah Shabestari to convey to you his best regards from the United Nations Office on Coordinated Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA).

Firstly allow me to warmly congratulate those of you whose scientific contribution has been accepted at this important seminar. Secondly on behalf of UNESCO and UNOCHA, I wish to applaud Tehran's municipality, the Environment and Peace NGO, Shahid Beheshti University and particularly the Environmental Sciences Research Institute, as well as the Knowledge Age Institute, for taking the initiative of holding this meeting in the mega city of Tehran.

Science has long been recognized as a driver of change. However, the magnitude and complexity of the problems we confront today – from extreme poverty and deepening inequality to environmental degradation and increasing vulnerability to resource scarcity and natural disasters – make the effective mobilization of scientific knowledge more fundamental than ever. Coupled with the fast growth of human population and rapid urbanization, it has become impossible to achieve both social and economic progress and environmental sustainability without a massive reliance on scientific research, knowledge and technical expertise and innovation.

During the past decade, worldwide speaking, science and technology parks have fostered knowledge-based economies by bringing together scientific research, business and governmental organizations in a single physical location. The parks also promote technology innovation and incubation and training, and provide facilities for exhibiting products and market development. I am particularly happy now to see that in this specific seminar on virtual science park development, implying the heavy use of

ICTs for the similar purpose. Virtual Science Parks shall ultimately create a network for fast and widespread access to information and knowledge as well as expertise, which can be quite difficult to obtain by traditional means, especially in a city such as Tehran with its heavy traffic.

Being the specialized agency of United Nations for education, science, culture, communication and information, UNESCO stands committed to promote science for peace, security, human dignity, international cooperation and sustainable development for all. I do hope that this seminar earmarks a new approach for the Mega city of Tehran in providing an enabling environment for the young and eager scientists to develop, foster and share their ideas, initiatives and achievements through ICTs-based platforms.

Once again on behalf of UNESCO and UNOCHA, my sincere thanks to H.E. Mr Ghalibaf, Mayor of Tehran, Ms Ebtekar, Dr Liaghati, Mr Ebadollahi and his wonderful team, and to all experts and participants of the Seminar.

I thank you for your attention.