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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY
FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT**

21 May 2011

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly declared 21 May as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development to highlight the importance of the values of peace and solidarity. The Day is meant as a signal to those who seek to sow divisions among human beings that such attempts will always be resisted by those who believe in the far greater forces of tolerance and mutual understanding.

In many ways, the cause of global harmony remains precariously poised. Global economic activity and advances in communications both illustrate humanity's growing inter-connectedness, yet barriers, mistrust and animosity persist between people and cultures. Increasing contact has also generated fears – imagined and real – of the loss of cherished customs, languages and identities.

A world of peace and solidarity can only be accomplished by acknowledging and celebrating our diversity. For this year's observance of World Day for Cultural Diversity, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and UNESCO are partnering with others – from the grassroots to big businesses – on a campaign to “Do ONE Thing” for diversity and inclusion on May 21.

The campaign calls on all people – from youth to policy-makers, from religious leaders to journalists, entrepreneurs and others who shape opinions and trends – to speak up for the spiritual, social and economic wealth we derive from cultural diversity. On this day, and throughout our lives, let us take steps – small and large, with families and friends, old and new – that will strengthen bonds, deepen our understanding of the value of cultural diversity and help us to live together better.