

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of
World Philosophy Day
17 November 2022**

On World Philosophy Day, UNESCO invites us to celebrate the diversity of human thought and to take a philosophical look at the world.

Philosophy is not only a thousand-year-old science, nourished by traditions from all over the world; it is a living exercise in questioning and conceiving the world, not only as it is, but also as it could or should be.

In order to build a better world, to move towards an ideal of peace, we know that we must adopt a philosophical approach – namely, we must question the flaws of our world, beyond the tumult of crises.

Philosophy is therefore essential when it comes to defining the ethical principles that should guide humanity, as UNESCO did years ago with the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and, more recently, with the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, adopted by our 193 Member States at the last General Conference.

It is just as irreplaceable if we want to sustainably rebuild our relationship with living beings, confronted with the urgency of climate change and the collapse of biodiversity – whether with Bruno Latour, who passed away last month and who reminded us of the interdependence of humans and the planet, or with Achille Mbembe, who calls upon us to reflect on the fundamental vulnerability of humans.

In view of the magnitude of contemporary challenges, it is indeed our very conception of humanity that must be reexamined, in order to reflect upon “the human of the future”, in accordance with the theme of this year’s World Philosophy Day.

This reflection must be open. Open to all eyes, first of all, by measuring in particular, in this International Decade of Indigenous Languages, how indigenous philosophies can change the way we look at the world, as well as our way of living in it.

Open, also, to all types of knowledge, particularly to other human sciences, in order to grasp the world in all its complexity and to be able to translate reflection into action.

Open, finally, to our societies, because the science of philosophy is not isolated from the world; it is not the mere prerogative of scholars in their ivory towers. Everyone must have the tools of philosophy to reinvent a common world, and from the youngest age. This is also the purpose of World Philosophy Day.

On this Day, UNESCO calls upon all of our societies to take a moment to step back and think collectively about the future of humanity, and to conceive a better world.