

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO CLOSING CEREMONY OF
THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT AND LIGHT-BASED TECHNOLOGIES**
Merida, Mexico, 4 February 2016

I am pleased to send greetings to the closing ceremony of the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, declared by the United Nations General Assembly.

From the dawn of our history, humanity has been fascinated by light. Its magic and beauty has inspired poems, music and art. And with this International Year, we have celebrated our global efforts to understand light and harness its potential.

Light is the driver of photosynthesis and is the main source of energy for most living creatures. It holds the key to major advances in medicine, engineering and communications. By celebrating light, this International Year has celebrated life.

I thank UNESCO and all its partners, as well as the Steering Committee, for their commitment to this International Year. The efforts under this initiative to foster education and communication on this theme have lit a beacon to illuminate our future.

The Year has shown how the science of light, photonics and related technologies can promote sustainable development in many fields, including climate change and energy, agriculture, health and education.

Light, in all its applications, will be essential to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The International Year has catalyzed and strengthened partnerships between the public and private sectors, and among civil society and academic institutions.

It has also provided an opportunity to mark the anniversaries of ground-breaking discoveries – such as Ibn Al-Haytham’s first investigations in optics, Fresnel’s 1815 proposal that light is a wave, Maxwell’s electromagnetic theory of light in 1865, Einstein’s work in photoelectric effect and relativity in 1905 and 1915, and Kao’s 1965 invention of the optical fibre that has enabled the Internet and opened up global communications.

This illustrious history indicates that the science of light will continue to create new knowledge and innovation for the benefit of all humanity.

I thank you all once again for your commitment and wish you a successful gathering.