

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO,
on the occasion of World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development**

4 March 2024

In Jules Verne's novel, the castaways stranded on *Mysterious Island* regain hope when Cyrus Smith, the group's engineer, is found safe and sound: by identifying the island's resources, and building an oven and tools, he soon makes the island a haven of plenty.

Just as Smith improved life on the island, engineers, men and women, are constantly innovating to meet the challenges of our world.

To build more inclusive growth, to develop renewable energies and to face climate change, to guarantee a fairer and more sustainable world, we need more than ever this scientific creativity at the service of all.

That is what this World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development means, recognizing the magnitude of the contribution engineers make to our world and to the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

However, and this is also the spirit of the *Recommendation on Open Science*, adopted by UNESCO's Member States in November 2021, in order to be effective, engineering must also be open, inclusive and collaborative.

This is why UNESCO is committed to reducing inequalities in engineering: in terms of gender, when only 28% of engineering graduates are women; as well as in terms of geography, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of engineers is lower than in any other region of the world.

We also bring together engineers from all countries around common projects to showcase their innovations. This is the central idea behind the hackathon that the World Federation of Engineering Organizations organizes in collaboration with UNESCO every year for World Engineering Day. During the hackathon, university students from different backgrounds, ethnicities and genders work in groups to provide concrete solutions to real-life problems. The winning projects will be announced during a 24-hour global broadcast on 4 March.

A collective approach to engineering will be essential in the years to come: it will take all of our energy to rebuild more wisely and more sustainably and to meet the challenges of the world. This is the message for the future that UNESCO seeks to convey on World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development.