UAE support to human fraternity is 'incredibly important': Irina Bokova

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ABU DHABI, 3rd February, 2020 (WAM) -- Irina Bokova, former Director-General of UNESCO, and member of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, has said that the strong support by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, and the leadership of the UAE to the initiative of the human fraternity is "incredibly important".

"It is important, because what we see in the world today, unfortunately, alarmed us," she added.

"I am alarmed by the hate speech, by conflicts and by lack of empathy solidarity among people," she said in an interview with the Emirates News Agency, WAM, on the margins of Media Briefing Celebration of Human Fraternity, in Abu Dhabi.

The historical document on human fraternity signed in Abu Dhabi last year, "gives different vision for the future, different understanding to imparting the young people the values of humanity.

"I would say humanism," she added.

Bokova who served two 4-year terms as Director-General of UNESCO (2009-2017), was the first woman and the first Eastern European to lead the organisation. She also served as Bulgaria's first Secretary of State for European Integration, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador to France and Monaco, and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, among other distinguished positions.

Irina Bokova said that as a former director-general of UNESCO she had "a very deep and fruitful experience" with cooperation between UNESCO and the UAE in many areas.

"The UAE has been very supportive in the area of culture protection," she said, and referred to the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas, ALIPH, a global initiative led by the UAE and France. The idea for ALIPH came about following an international conference on the protection of endangered heritage held in Abu Dhabi in December 2016.

"ALIPH is still strongly supported by the United Arab Emirates," she said, adding, "We received a lot of support into the intangible heritage. All our activities in education and the idea about dialogue among cultures, among civilizations."
Irina Bokova, who attended the conference on human fraternity in Abu Dhabi in February 2019, said that she had very high respect for all the activities the UAE is making in the area of tolerance, mutual respect, and spreading a message around the world.

She concluded by saying that we are humans, with different religion, ethnicity, colour of skin, but, "we all are just one family living on one planet and I think this is a very important message".