

Dialogue among Civilizations

The Political Aspects of the Dialogue of Civilizations

Kyoto, 3 August 2001

Organized by UNESCO
in cooperation with the United Nations University *

* The proceedings of the entire conference "Dialogue of Civilizations", held in Tokyo and Kyoto 31 July – 3 August 2001, will be forthcoming in a separate publication by the United Nations University.

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Foreword

The International Conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations, held in Tokyo and Kyoto from 31 July to 3 August 2001, was a major event in the international celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Co-organized by UNU and UNESCO, the Conference gathered more than forty academics, leaders and experts from 23 different countries, with the overall aim of defining the prerequisites of a meaningful dialogue and identifying the means for achieving it.

The Conference explored the Dialogue of Civilizations from various perspectives, including the “Political Aspects of the Dialogue among Civilizations”, which was the theme of a Special Session I chaired in Kyoto on 3 August 2001. Eminent leaders and experts examined - from different viewpoints and angles - the pivotal role played by political will, at all levels of politics, in fostering inter-cultural dialogue on a sustained basis. They concluded that political will is expressed in the determination to preserve cultural diversity and the resolve to counter ignorance, intolerance and discrimination on racial, political or social grounds.

In the period since the Conference, these interventions have only gained in topicality and pertinence. I am therefore pleased to be able to present them to a wider public in this booklet - the fourth in UNESCO's Dialogue Series. The events of 11 September 2001 and subsequent developments have brought the need for dialogue to a high point on the international agenda. In addition, they have shown with crystal clarity that the defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative inseparable from the respect for human dignity. The safeguarding of cultural diversity implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms and calls for policies that strengthen social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace.

The unanimous adoption by UNESCO's General Conference of the “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity” in November 2001 has provided the international community with a unique standard-setting instrument in this regard. The Declaration has quickly reached the status of a founding text and an outstanding tool for development, as was

recognized at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002. The Summit's Plan of Implementation places explicit emphasis on the importance of respect for diversity as one of the essential elements for achieving sustainable development.

As globalization continues to generate new and disquieting asymmetries, dialogue among civilizations is acquiring an ever sharper political profile. Shifting balances of power, exclusion and poverty impact on the conditions for dialogue in numerous parts of the world. Increasingly, "otherness" is being stigmatized and stereotyped in ways many thought were long past. And, while the "cultural" has acquired an unprecedented prominence in international affairs, it is also becoming a convergence point for new ignorances. These trends are worrying and call for the very idea of "Dialogue among Civilizations" to be subjected to critical review so that it may broaden its scope and adapt itself to different contexts and situations.

Dialogue is often the last link between peoples in conflict and the first step towards reconciliation and peace. It is a vehicle for linking past, present and future in the affairs of humankind. And it is a source of creativity that can release the new and the unexpected. Thus, the fundamental principles of dialogue are as valuable and meaningful as ever. They can, and must, be put to work through renewed, constructive approaches - and must permeate our common political will.



Koïchiro Matsuura

*Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)*

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Introduction

Koïchiro Matsuura

*Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*

The topic that brings us together today is an unusual one: we are hardly in the habit of associating civilizations and politics. But while it is unusual, it is nonetheless profoundly necessary. It reminds us that the dialogue of civilizations not only concerns the intellectual and cultural sphere but also has a profoundly political dimension, in the noblest sense of the term – that is to say, it promotes living together, not only within communities and States but also at the subregional, regional and world levels.

The dialogue of civilizations, indeed, calls for strong political will, at the highest level, in all regions and cultural areas of the world. This will, which in certain parts of the world can involve a measure of courage, is essential to the success of this dialogue. Those of us who attended the Round Table, organized on the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to mark the launching of this International Year witnessed this at first hand.

I am therefore particularly gratified that the heads of organizations representing extensive geographical and cultural areas should have accepted our invitation, thereby enabling us to benefit from the accumulated wisdom of the African, French-speaking, Arab and Islamic communities.

Let me begin by underlining what seems to me to be one of the most fundamental dimensions of the dialogue of civilizations, and one with major political implications: I refer to ethics.

The dialogue of civilizations restores to the centre of our concerns the fundamental ethical intuition at the heart of the United Nations system, according to which peace is our most precious common possession. The necessity for the dialogue of civilizations rests on this requirement, which is nothing less than the awareness of the impossibility of people and cultures to exist in isolation. Without dialogue, cultures and civilizations decline and are condemned to disappear. This was the truth enunciated with remarkable lucidity in the aftermath of the First World War by the great French intellectual Paul Valéry when he said: "We civilizations now know that we are mortal". This warning, which was addressed above all to the European civilizations, could be directed with even greater relevance today to all cultures and all civilizations: at a time of accelerating globalization and increased interdependence, civilizations and cultures have a vital need for contact, innovation, interaction, exchange and dialogue, founded on equality of dignity and thus on tolerance.

But let us not deceive ourselves. This dialogue of civilizations entails responsibilities and the observance of certain rules, not only at the interpersonal level but also in the public domain and political life. It must be based on the voluntary commitment of individuals and societies to respect, reciprocally and in their common interest, a set of essential principles and rights. It is consequently a fundamentally democratic and pluralist process that presupposes a respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The dialogue of civilizations requires that we reconcile, in the new realm created by globalization, the universality of rights and the diversity of the human condition.

Nor can we forget that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations can and should be established within societies themselves, which are increasingly composite and diversified. It therefore calls for the participation of all, particularly women and young people, and of all the active forces of civil society. It is also a political act, whose significance is not always understood in all countries.

It was stressed that "dialogue begins at home" by the Heads of State and intellectuals assembled for the launching of the Year at United Nations Headquarters on 5 December last year, at the invitation of UNESCO and the Islamic Republic of Iran. In practice, this should be in each community, each State, each sub-region, each continent, and between men and women. All continents of the world – from Africa to Europe and including Asia and

the Middle East – are frequently affected by savage conflicts, which are fuelled by the mutual intolerance and ignorance of cultures and communities, by discrimination in all its forms, by xenophobia and by racism. In a word, by the absence or failure of dialogue and consultation.

Promoting the dialogue of civilizations seems to me in these circumstances very relevant to the promotion of peace, not only globally but also regionally and subregionally. I am convinced that it is an indispensable condition for the genuine resolution of conflicts and the establishment of lasting peace between peoples and communities divided by misunderstandings, animosities or even deep hatreds. Based on a willingness to listen to others' views, on understanding and mutual respect, such a dialogue becomes a profoundly political act.

Personally – and I have made a point of repeating it throughout this International Year – I believe that learning to know the cultures of other people, and listening to what they have to say, is a way of dispelling hatred, ignorance and mutual distrust and helps to build peace. We should therefore learn what each culture owes to other cultures. We should at the same time recognize that civilizations are not immutable, that they continuously change and redefine themselves according to circumstances and new interactions.

This is an undertaking that can only yield full and lasting results in the long term, through a long and patient effort of accommodation and reconciliation. Whether it concerns the domestic politics of states or international politics, it is an action that we should pursue with determination. It is one to which we all wish to commit ourselves.

This is not, however, self-evidently the case. Historically, the term “civilization” is charged with stereotypes and false notions: the supposed “civilization” of some has often been contrasted with the supposed “barbarism” of others. It has often led to a ranking of civilizations and an antagonism between “dominant” and “dominated” civilizations, which have throughout history been the source of numerous conflicts and bloody wars. The term has in particular served as the ideological justification for colonization and policies of forced assimilation equivalent, in this sense, to a rejection of the civilization of others, of the intrinsic dignity of the human person, and of the very notion of dialogue. We must combat this archaic vision of civilizations, which may be seen as synonymous with exclusion, whereas civilization requires what Jacques Delors, in his report to UNESCO on education in the twenty-first century, has called “learning to live together”.

Ethical considerations should therefore govern our approach. They should extend beyond culture into the realm of science and technology. UNESCO intends to give strong impetus to action in this crucial domain, which remains poorly understood.

UNESCO is also convinced that the dialogue between civilizations likewise requires the recognition and promotion of expressions of cultural diversity. In a world of growing interdependence, and in the era of globalization, we must seek to ensure that one culture does not tend to dominate the others. The promotion of cultural diversity (what the report of the Commission chaired by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar calls our “creative diversity”), especially on behalf of the least represented cultures and with particular regard to the exchange of cultural goods and services, constitutes a profoundly political act, at the national, regional and global levels. Globalization should allow the free expression of such diversity, which represents a precious component of our common human heritage.

As you know, UNESCO is currently preparing a Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which should provide the necessary basis for such a reconciliation and should help to promote the cultural heritage in all parts of the world, particularly within the developing countries.*

UNESCO’s action for the preservation of the world heritage, through the 1970 Convention, is now very widely known and appreciated. Preserving the heritage obviously means preserving its diversity; it means giving each of us the chance to go in search of others, through the monuments they have constructed, the landscapes they have shaped, and the material traces they have left behind them. It means fostering a dialogue between civilizations. But the languages, oral literature, music, dance, games, mythologies, rituals, customs, craft skills and architecture, as well as the traditional forms of communication, are also splendid testimonies to the diversity of cultures and are equally deserving of our attention. It is with the aim of expanding the instrument, in existence now for over 30 years, that UNESCO has this year made an initial proclamation of 19 masterpieces as part of the intangible heritage of humanity, so as to bestow special recognition on the most remarkable examples of cultural spaces or forms of popular or traditional expression. And we are working on a standard-setting instrument that, after the example of the World Heritage Convention, should make it possible to promote, with the help of

* The “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity” was adopted by the 31st session of UNESCO’s General Conference in Paris on 2 November 2001 (see Annex IV)

the countries and communities concerned, expressions of the cultural heritage that have for too long been neglected. These acts demand courage, and above all political courage, because they place diversity and the dialogue of cultures at the centre of history and of the evolution of any society.

Education is the essential tool that will enable us to develop the long-term dialogue between cultures and civilizations and to ensure the participation of all women and men, in this dialogue. I say “long-term”, because the timescale of globalization and of ITC’s is too often that of urgency and immediacy, of the short term, which limits the capacity of human beings to shape their destiny. Yet it is over long periods that peoples construct the values that give meaning to their lives, structure their relationships and give form and substance to their identity. We need to restore the priority given to the timescales of education and culture, artistic expression, creativity and dialogue, the timescale of language learning, without which neither education nor dialogue have any meaning. Education – I mean high-quality education for all, in particular that of girls and women – also constitutes, in a world in which some 135 million children do not attend school and almost 900 million adults are illiterate, an essential political commitment. The requirements of such a commitment are fully reflected in the goals set at the Dakar Summit last year, whose follow-up UNESCO is responsible for coordinating.

We should also recognize that history is not only a major drama, but also a key instrument for understanding, examining and promoting the interactions between peoples and cultures. Through the preparation of regional and general histories and through the launching of major projects of intercultural dialogue – the Silk Roads, the Routes of al-Andalus, the Slave Route, the Routes of Faith – UNESCO has highlighted the historical and contemporary processes that foster a positive understanding between cultures, through the discovery of a common heritage and shared values. These projects have helped to increase our understanding of the sources of collective memory, which can fuel prejudice and incomprehension just as they can contribute to renewal of the dialogue among civilizations, cultures, religions and spiritual traditions.

A careful examination of the major conflicts, both ancient and modern, between geographically separated peoples but above all between neighbouring peoples, reveals that antagonisms, mistrust, incomprehension and hatred have been shaped or have been fuelled and sustained by the way each people writes its own history and that of others and by the way it teaches this history and makes it a central part of its

heritage and its identity. History is thus one of the essential keys to the promotion of dialogue and reconciliation between civilizations and cultures.

This is why it is necessary to promote an awareness of the urgent need for an ethical approach to history. What is required above all is that every people, while enjoying its legitimate right to compose its own history, should be fully aware of the way it is thereby shaping its memory, its identity and its image and vision of others (neighbours, friends or traditional enemies). It should endeavour to observe the highest standards of scholarly accuracy and be determined to promote an ethic of dialogue, openness and mutual respect.

In the last analysis, history should be the stage on which plural identities and a common heritage are constructed, in keeping with the most positive values of humanity. It is for this reason that UNESCO encourages the renewal of historical research, history teaching and textbooks so as to foster the processes of dialogue, mutual enrichment and convergence between cultures.

Looking beyond history itself, it is education as a whole that needs to be rethought. It should help young people to embrace the complexity of a world in which each object has its place in a nexus of relationships and cannot be envisaged outside this environment with which it maintains such close links. In this vast interconnected whole, there are no isolated phenomena, and a relationship exists – according to the paradoxical image familiar to us all – between the fluttering of a butterfly's wings and the unleashing of a storm. This idea of universal "reliance", to borrow an expression from the philosopher Edgar Morin, invites us to conceive of the totality of phenomena in a global context and to always remain aware that we all belong to a single planet.

The great challenge in the years to come is simple: it is that of "humanizing globalization". We must recognize that the cultural, spiritual and linguistic diversity of humanity, far from constituting an obstacle to dialogue, is a guarantee of its richness. At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that current imbalances with regard to development are impediments to the creation of international areas of dialogue, where people and cultures can meet on an equal footing. Nor must we neglect the difficult path leading to the recognition of ethical standards and principles that should in future guide, on the basis of bilateral or multilateral negotiations, the dialogue of cultures and civilizations. The task may seem immense. But it is the only one that can engender peace in the minds of men and intellectual solidarity among nations.

How can we move towards an ethic of dialogue among civilizations? How can we ensure that the contemporary importance of cultural diversity is recognized? What contribution can high-quality education for all make in this context? These are key issues which must be seriously addressed, if we want to live up to the challenge.

I should like to conclude by inviting you to reflect upon an African proverb that illustrates admirably the primacy of core values: “when the branches of the forest trees quarrel, their roots embrace one another”.

Presentations

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

former President of the Republic of Iceland

I wish to thank the organizers of this Conference, our hosts in Japan and at UNESCO, for the invitation to come to Kyoto, the national shrine of Japan, to take part in this conference on Dialogue of Civilizations.

Let me begin by proposing that it is clever to use the word "civilization" rather than "culture". A civilization comprises the various cultures of a people living at a particular time. Let us not forget that civilizations are remembered, not for the wars that were waged by their people, nor for the wealth or power they had over their area, but for their culture and what they produced and handed down to those who care to remember. The word "culture" - that I have a tendency to use egocentrically to refer to my heritage which strengthens my so-called identity - evokes more than the concept of civilization. The difference is that many cultures can belong to a civilization. Civilization is a warm word that brings people together.

There are three points I would like to make on this occasion. The first point is the great importance that I attach to learning languages for the dialogue of civilizations. The second concerns the role of women in the dialogue of civilizations. The third relates to education, specifically obtaining information, learning how to listen, and how to question one's own judgment. But, before I touch upon these points, I would like to give

you my list of recommendations for promoting the dialogue of civilizations.

I would like to recommend the following:

- to carry out a systematic survey of positive experiences, worldwide and throughout history, where ethics have played a significant role in the dialogue of civilizations, with a view to using them later in teaching curricula;
- to undertake a study of ethical systems underlying the different civilizations in order to better understand them and to highlight the convergence around concepts, such as human dignity, justice, freedom and equality;
- to initiate an open forum on the concept of universality in different civilizations, so as to understand how universality can be a common aspiration to all civilizations;
- to launch an educational programme on ethics so as to sensitize younger generations to different cultural systems and logics.

I mentioned first on my list the attachment I have for languages. I come from a language area where we all have to learn other languages. In that respect we are in the same situation as the Japanese. Because no one else understands us, we realize, perhaps better than those who have one of the world languages as a mother tongue, how very important it is to have learned languages so as to be able to take part in dialogue. This is not insurmountable. It is possible. There is a study being undertaken presently of the different methods for learning languages. Good friends in Japan have told me that in their country, as in so many others, people study a language or languages for some time, without having an opportunity to exercise their skills, and as a result have difficulty speaking, despite the fact that they comprehend a great deal.

Our world thrives on diversity. From the myriad range of cultures and peoples who inhabit our planet to the extraordinary multiplicity of the natural world, we depend on diversity. Languages, in all their diversity, are the life force behind our knowledge of this world. We need words to express what we mean and what we feel, and to communicate what each generation leaves to those that follow. We need our languages so that we can construct the future, develop new knowledge and communicate it to others. We need multilingualism because we are living in a time of freedom of expression, globalization, and communications, which have led us to the realization that every language is a different form of expression of human identity, and more important, human dignity. All languages are to be regarded as the heritage of humanity, essential not only for access to

knowledge, but also for the development of understanding amongst peoples and for the dialogue for peace. As you are aware, there are few countries in today's world in which only one language is spoken, and the promotion of multilingualism contributes to the safeguarding of approximately 6,700 local, national, regional, and minority languages, many of which today are in great danger of disappearing.

There is a very political side to the topic of languages. Languages are expensive to teach. I have a dream about both languages and education in general, which is that we can allow learning to start very early on. We have seen that children very easily become bilingual if they have the opportunity to study two languages at the same time. This proves that the mind is open to receiving the meaning of words and the thoughts behind these words.

I will now link my thoughts around the teaching of languages to education in general. Education is of central importance in a dialogue of civilizations. There was a case of prejudice in South Africa, concerning a widow who went to the Human Rights Court so that she would not have to mourn for fifteen days in her village and stop working. She won the case, but she was driven out of the village. This is an example of prejudice, and of ignorance. With education, this would never have happened. Education is so very, very important. The Director-General of UNESCO has provided us with a list of rates of illiteracy in different regions of the world, and it is evident that there is indeed a great task ahead in the dialogue of civilizations to find a way to mend that situation. Education is not only about learning to read and write. It is also about learning how to think.

I agree with those, at the Kyoto conference, who called for ethical education. We must do everything we can. I was grateful that the Director-General of UNESCO emphasized the ethical side or ethical aspect that is essential to our lives in his presentation. But this ethical aspect is not, in my view, to be taught through norms. It should be taught through examples. We have come to the conclusion in my World Commission on Ethics in Scientific Knowledge and Technology that the aim of our ethical work is to raise the level of consciousness in society. It is about raising public awareness of good behaviour and about what is ethical and non-ethical. Let us not forget that it is the public that elects governments. So, it is the public that actually should help the government to formulate opinions on these matters.

Concerning ethical education and the teaching of values, it is quite clear that training in ethical thinking is an ideal way of equipping young people to tackle the problems they will face in tomorrow's world, simply because democracy, for instance, is not just a bureaucratic institution, but

a state of mind. The community is no longer the town where we live, but the whole wide world.

So what are the values we should defend? During the last few years, I have worked with people who have been trying to redefine values. The values of the world today are very, very materialistic. Are we to accept this, or do we want something else? Do we want something for the mind, something that would perhaps make us happier than the monetary side of life?

I have shared my recommendations with you and they of course have to be addressed, in the different societies where we are trying to create this dialogue of civilizations. We often ask ourselves, are we ready? Are societies ready? Are they trained to listen? Do they know how to tackle the problems? This is something upon which we really have to concentrate. The Rector of the United Nations University has put it so clearly when he says that the core of it all is a world civilization of great diversity based on shared values of tolerance and freedom. It is defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, its insistence on fundamental universal human rights, and its belief in the right of people everywhere to have a say in how they are governed.

The third point I want to take up is a duty that I always feel I have to perform. It concerns the role of women in the dialogue of civilizations. Why do I do this? It is not only because I am a woman. I have a motto: never let the women down. That is quite clear. It is because I realize that my countrymen have had the guts to change the dialogue of civilizations by being the first in the world to vote for a woman as a head of state. This was world news just twenty years ago. It was news around the world. Headlines read: a woman head of state. Though it has nothing to do with me, in general, I was so proud, and I am still so proud of my countrymen for having had the courage to do it. It was not the women who did it. It was the men. So my request to you who are going to work for the dialogue of civilizations is to please make women visible in this dialogue. I am quite often invited to conferences on gender issues. Of course, that is quite natural. And I have noticed these last years that women are now usually sent from parliaments and institutions to conferences on gender issues. So women are now discussing women's issues. And I think that is not natural. Several years ago, there was a conference in New Delhi on the topic of partnerships between men and women in politics, organized by the Interparliamentary Union. They were intelligent and clever enough to have asked all the democratic parliaments not to send only women. If you send three, send two men and one woman. And it was a real delight to be there

and listen to the discussion, and listen to the compliments that the gentlemen of the conference were paying to the women of the world. So I really wish to see a conference on women's issues attended mainly by men. Please help me to make this possible.

I have these ambitions for the future because I care for the future. I care for children. I care for those who cannot speak for themselves. I am constantly trying to help them by speaking for them and pointing out their problems and difficulties. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity for *having been able to do so*. I am deeply touched by President Khatami's definition of the civilizations or the cultures in the world as one river with many tributaries, with the confluence of warm and cold streams. I myself have had for many years a vision of humankind and the world as a huge multicoloured tapestry. The horizontal threads hold it together. Earth is horizontal, but the vertical threads are of these magnificent, shining colours. And when a language disappears or a culture is subdued, the colours fade and in one corner of *that fine piece of art* by the master of everything, there is suddenly a hole, an emptiness that cannot be filled, cannot be repaired, and the world is so much the poorer for it. How could this come about, we ask ourselves. I deeply appreciated the Director-General of UNESCO's reference to the necessity of humanizing globalization. This is what it is all about.

Allow me once again, ladies and gentlemen, to conclude with something from the old mythology of my ancestors. The treasure of languages and myths, the vivid fantasies of people long gone, but who are still here because they left as a heritage to humankind, wisdom and charm, are an intellectual nourishment, endlessly to be enjoyed, retold and reinterpreted. It is a joy to have a language and a story to share with young and old, and with foreigners in a dialogue that brings about understanding of the human mind, and of traditional thought. The name of the old god Oden in mythology, also known as, Wotan, the highest of the gods in ancient Nordic cosmogony, like Zeus and Jupiter on the southern shores of Europe is preserved in English-speaking cultures in the name of the day, Wednesday, as are the names of other heathen gods. We have lost them in the names of our days, but the British have kept them. Oden gave his eye for wisdom. So he lived with limited eyesight where he sat on a throne at the top of the world, where he was supposed to see everywhere. He was lucky however to have had two ravens sitting on his shoulders and he sent them out every day to gather the latest news of what was happening around the world. They came back in the evening and whispered into his ears everything they had witnessed. They were the newspapers of the day, the

Japan Times. They told him everything that they had witnessed, in the East, West, North, and South, so that he could use his wisdom to understand the world. These ravens were called *Fuijen* and *Meunen*, Thought and Memory.

It is my sincere wish that thought together with wisdom and memory will guide us in our precious dialogue of civilizations.

Amara Essy

Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union

The preamble to UNESCO's Constitution stipulates that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". Peace is what Africa needs, because Africa, since 1996, has seen over ten conflicts, which have caused half of all deaths accounted for in the world. Africa needs peace to foster its development. I can assure you that I will put all the efforts necessary into reinforcing co-operation between UNESCO and the Organization of African Unity.

The dialogue of civilizations, which is the topic of this great international meeting, constitutes a central dimension of the society, culture and history of the African continent. This continent, beyond the vicissitudes of history and the immense challenges that are laid before it, is, in its deepest fibres, a land of dialogue. If there is a value, which nourishes, structures and gives direction to life in Africa, it is, above all, the human value of a permanent search for a rapport with the other and for solidarity.

How many anthropologists and other superficial observers of Africa have mocked, without understanding its profound significance, the amount of time that an African devotes – at any meeting, or during any human contact – to asking about family, friends and parents, being attentive to name each one individually, and worrying about the health and well-being of all of them. In fact, it is an ethics of human relations – born of a deep conviction that the relationship with the other is not about his or her social status nor fortune – that over time, gives life its sense and creates the conditions necessary for individual and collective happiness. The depth and complexity of this relationship cannot be understood without a complete understanding of the place and role of culture in African society.

Africa has always brought a cultural response to the major challenges presented to it. Faced with the great tragedy and violence of slavery, the enchained African drew upon the innermost depths of his myths, his rites, and his values to devote the vital force of resistance to total oppression, and above all, as a response to the inhumanity which was attributed to him to justify slavery. It is this same life instinct which is reflected in all that the African has projected into the foreign lands of the Americas and the West Indies where he or she was transported by force. Finally, although the struggle against colonization was certainly political in its organization and strategy, it was in the cultural ethics of resistance that the African founded

his combat. It is in reference to this that it is most appropriate to speak of what I call the cultural misunderstanding with Africa.

The culture to which I am referring is not only that of aesthetics – creation and formal cultural expression – rather it is the deep understanding of the sense and significance, for the individual and society, of creation and expression. This misunderstanding first expressed itself twenty years ago, when, in spite of the urgency for economic development, Africa launched the claim to the restitution of cultural goods to their country of origin at UNESCO. Africa's message, through this symbolic act, was that the African mask, for example, upon which Europe posed an aesthetic glance, was for the African who created it of a social, mythical or sacred significance. It is this vision of culture as a human network, a relationship and a transcendence which binds the aesthetic, ethical and spiritual, which Africa is determined to bring to the fore during the great debate on the dialogue of civilizations, to which the General Assembly of the United Nations has invited us after having declared the year 2001 as the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations.

I thought it important to underline these African specificities, because in the last analysis, it is on the dialectic of unity and/or diversity, or upon specificity and universality, that a true dialogue of civilizations must be built. Dialogue is a meeting point of giving and receiving, as was so precisely highlighted by one of Africa's greatest sons, Léopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal. He stated that to give and to receive signifies that universality should not be conceived, as has often been the case in history, as the expression of domination or superiority of certain cultures, which are attempting to impose their values.

True universality, in the strongest sense of the term, which implies meeting and interaction, is a construction to which all cultures and all civilizations bring their contributions together in a spirit of mutual respect and recognition of each other's specificity and values. What this means is that politics, in the noblest and highest sense of the term, is similar to an African proverb, which states that "man is the remedy of man". In other words, it is on the basis of this fundamental value that the international community must find sustainable answers to conflicts and problems relating to development, human rights, and the environment.

The mandate which was entrusted to me by all the Heads of State of the African continent, is the construction of the African Union, a major step forward by which Africa wishes to advance the Organization of African Unity. The Kyoto Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations constitutes a particularly significant occasion for me to affirm that I shall draw

inspiration from major sources of African culture, for which I have underlined the fundamental aspects – humanity, ethics, establishing roots and openness – in my determined effort toward the construction of the African Union.

Giandomenico Picco

*Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
for the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*

Listening is becoming more and more important - for our interdependence is increasing - and we may have to learn much more about each other. Those with whom we were not in direct contact yesterday may be closer to us tomorrow.

The Secretary-General and I have focused on one specific meaning of the Dialogue among Civilizations. That is, a dialogue between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who perceive diversity as an element of betterment and growth. This we believe is the core.

The group of Eminent Persons chosen by the UN Secretary-General to offer a reflection on the implication of dialogue for the international system, will be presenting a short book later this year. It will contain no recommendations. In fact, in the true spirit of dialogue, we thought to avoid even the use of the terms "must" or "should". It will not preach or pontificate, rather it will try to identify those seeds we believe already exist in today's reality that may be enhanced by an approach to international relations based on dialogue. Those seeds in our view would permit - if nurtured - to move from a paradigm of exclusion to one of inclusion.

The old paradigm, and to a certain extent one which still prevails, is one of governance through exclusion. A skill we may therefore have to develop in order to make the leap from this old paradigm, is how to manage diversity better. The management of diversity, with the aim of becoming more inclusive, is thus a practical objective of a dialogue.

For too long, diversity was seen as a synonym of enmity, and for too long we have indulged in the convenience of having an enemy. In the old days when leaders were in trouble at home they invented an enemy outside. It is an old trick, yet it seems to be working even today.

We believe, however, that through dialogue and listening to the "other" - this mentality of "us and them" may well be overcome by the recognition of our common destiny as a human species. Such a new paradigm is emerging, and we hope that a mindset of inclusion both by necessity and by choice will thus be fostered.

First, the paradigm of inclusion is arising out of necessity simply because of the global dimension of problems.

Second, a new paradigm is driven by choice, because in a borderless reality we benefit more from inclusion than from exclusion. Needless to

say, we are moving more and more towards a system where we either win together or we lose together.

While the way of perceiving diversity as a threat still persists, and examples continue to emerge in different parts of the world, the necessity and choice of looking at diversity as an element of advancement and amelioration are equally present in the emerging paradigm.

While there continue to be anti-immigration demonstrations and even violence throughout Europe (a manifestation of the old paradigm), European Union studies already show that thirty five million new adult immigrants to the European Union are a necessity for the economic prosperity of that region by 2025.

While the old paradigm still demonizes the enemy, the new paradigm is transforming the enemy into a competitor, an opponent, and a partner.

Dubiously, the many examples of violence which have erupted over the last ten years may well have been last-ditch attempts by those who feared the convergence of the new paradigm, and more specifically, the loss of a traditional enemy. Such leaders - were and still are - unable to manage and indeed to rule without the enemy.

In a way, the new paradigm requires a new kind of leader. His or her greatness will be the consequence of the positive values he or she offers, not of the negative they purport to fight.

The new leader's vision is anchored in a society where participation is uninhibited and once remote voices are heard; where the door is open to new channels for that participation; and where new actors have a role.

This vision is one where institutions are not the remnants of the past but are open to be reshaped and remodeled in order to appraise a future not yet defined. It is a vision where ideas are not feared, but are welcomed and discussed. And finally, where a new balance between the dignity of each individual and the wisdom of traditions is found.

Perhaps the new paradigm allows for individuals to revere their public service as a temporary honor in a professional life rather than a permanent occupation, which lasts forever. It may entail leaders who will "resign their commissions" even when asked to stay. Most of all, the new paradigm invites leaders to value and uphold their institutional responsibility equal to that of their personal, and individual responsibility.

In other words, this is a new paradigm where both institutions and individuals will have roles and where neither will overshadow the other. For institutions do not think without individuals; they do not even exist without individuals, and likewise individuals can hardly achieve much without the structures provided by institutions.

In fact, it is a paradigm where each individual intrinsically becomes a leader.

The processes of globalization are giving birth to a new paradigm of global relations. As such, these are the elements that we believe are already appearing: equal footing; re-assessment of the “enemy”; dispersion of power; stake-holding; individual responsibility; and issue driven alignments.

It might be said that the current reality is a mosaic of the old and the new; a mingling of the paradigm that excludes and that which embraces an understanding of the new. Nonetheless, we should not lose hope; for this is how human societies evolve. The border between the old and the new and between yesterday and today is seldom precise.

Many will say that the new paradigm requires a fundamental change in human nature; others will say that the interests of states will never change; others yet will simply say that it has never happened. Accordingly, the latter might also say that it cannot be done. Perhaps, we should remind the skeptics that few would have predicted the changes of the last decade and a half.

Finally, I wish to impart that the success of the new paradigm resides with the young generation. Many will call them idealists; others will call them naïve. These hasty judgments, in fact, belong to those who are unable to free themselves from the old paradigm.

We should not dampen the aspirations of the young generation to achieve what we have failed to achieve. Sad is the nation whose young have no dreams - but sadder yet is the nation whose elders try to squelch the dreams of their youth.

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

*Director-General of the Islamic Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)*

The concept of civilization in its deep and all-encompassing sense covers the whole of human activities in the areas of intellectual, literary, artistic, cultural and architectural innovation, together with values, principles and conceptions about man, the universe and life, as well as modes of conduct, life styles, ways of thinking, perceptions, social manifestations, and ways of interacting with cosmic phenomena and dealing with life problems.

Civilizations are, in essence, the very spirit of peoples and nations as well as their distinctive features. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition, the deepest meaning and broadest sense of civilization, is that it is a worldview for a given nation. This definition covers both the terms civilization and culture in their broadest sense.

It is quite normal that there should be many civilizations and that their distinctive characteristics should be diverse. This is indeed the law of life and the universe, because Allah, Sublime be He, has created humans and has bestowed this very nature upon them all. That is why any action or endeavour or attempt to alter this nature by force of intellect, by political or economic influence, or by imposition of one single thought is totally in contradiction with the nature of things.

A deep understanding of the history of civilization and of humans, shows clearly a reality of critical importance, to the effect that civilization assumes an upward trend. It in fact develops and thrives and reaches the height of innovation and creation, and then takes a downward trend and reaches the bottom after its downfall. A civilization may experience decline but it never disappears altogether, because the seed of civilization is always alive and moves from one historical stage to another. When a favourable climate is there, it grows and ripens and when it reaches full growth, a fresh civilizational cycle starts.

There are many factors that bring about the decline of civilizations or lead to their revival. Civilizational revival is usually the result of a crossbreeding between civilizations, mutual borrowing or integration by the blending of constituents and fundamentals that feed them and make them grow and thrive. Human history is, in fact, a succession of interrelated episodes of crossbreeding, blending, mutual borrowing and interrelation between civilizations witnessed by humans on earth.

This is the seed of dialogue between civilizations, as well as the origin of the emergence of civilizations, their growth and prosperity, and their collapse and downfall.

We should take into consideration the fact that dialogue is at the origin of successive civilizations. We should adopt the historical meaning of dialogue, which is in our opinion the complementary exchange process which takes place under different forms and during long eras of history. We will then be faced with a reality of human history which deserves to be given serious thought and consideration. This reality is that the law of human life created by Almighty Allah is dialogue between humans, in that deep sense which may not correspond to the meaning we give today to dialogue. In the Holy Qur'an there is a verse which underlines this meaning of "knowing each other" between peoples and nations. It shows how the Most High has created people into nations and tribes to know each other, in order that they come closer to each other and therefore reach entente and mutual understanding.

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you.

How can this knowing each other, in the sense contained in the Holy Qur'an, be possible without paving the way for it by mutual understanding? And how can we achieve mutual understanding that is conducive to knowing each other, if it is not conducted by the only means available for humans, that is dialogue?

From the perspective of the Islamic civilization, dialogue is deep-rooted in history since Allah, the Most High, created mankind, breathed His Spirit into human beings, endowed them with wisdom and intelligence, and guided them to the right path, in order to establish their lives on a sound basis until they would reach full growth and perfection, within the limits possible for man's perfection, thus creating human civilization in one form or another, through a long process stretching over time.

Dialogue between civilizations is not only a necessity and an obligation, but it is also one of the foundations of human history. In fact, there is no civilization that does not dialogue with another civilization or

with many civilizations, whether it is close to them in space or time or separated by historical eras.

Today, our contributions to the dialogue between civilizations do not begin from within a vacuum, rather we build on the foundations established by those who shaped successive human civilizations from the time man first knew a civilization in one form or another.

Given this historical foundation and its significance for human beings, we can say that dialogue between civilizations, which was one of the features of civilizations throughout history, is indeed one of the specificities of human history. In fact, any nation, whatever the degree of its advancement or level of innovation, has always taken from and given to at least one other civilization, has borrowed from it and contributed to it, and has blended with it whatever the extent of the blending, for this is a central element of any given civilization in one era or another. Let me give two examples:

First, both the Roman and Greek civilizations borrowed from the Egyptian and Phoenician civilizations. Further still, some modern researchers maintain that the origin of the Greek civilization is ancient Egypt. This field is open to further research.

Second, the Islamic civilization borrowed from the civilizations of nations that were open to Islam, including the Persian civilization, the Hindu civilization and the Greek civilization.

However, the West in general believes in the centrality of the European civilization, even though this does not correspond to historical reality. The American historian Will Durant points out in the introduction of his famous book, *The Story of Civilization*, that:

...the regional fanaticism that prevailed in our conventional historical writings start the recounting of history from Greece and summarize Asia in one line, is not just a simple scientific error, but perhaps a considerable failure in depicting reality and a serious shortcoming in our intelligence. The future is looking to the Pacific Ocean. The mind should, therefore continue in that direction.

Establishing dialogue, at this time in history, must be based on human legacy, which is highly diversified. This is not a new initiative without a link to history. We are, of course, fully aware of the fact that dialogue, in our times and in the future, must be developed and diversified, deepened and broadened, in terms of thought, practice, terminology and purport. It should also rise to the level we want it to attain, so that dialogue

will lead to the prevention of crises, trouble and turmoil, now standing in the way of those presently engaged in shaping a new world, in which human principles would prevail that have been the subject of consensus of all civilizations without exception.

We therefore know that dialogue is a human necessity and extremely pressing, because either mankind will engage in dialogue, mutual understanding, coexistence and cooperation, or our destiny will be bad, the present more troubled, and it will be difficult to reach the objectives to which we aspire in today's world.

As dialogue is one of the foundations of human history and a requirement for mutual understanding and co-existence as well as the defence of the values of justice and equality and the principles of peace and security, it is necessary that dialogue should cover many subjects and bring together all sides.

One of the things we should make clear is that all aspects of dialogue are interrelated, even if the parties to the dialogue agree to limit the area of it to a particular subject. The nature of dialogue, being first and foremost an intellectual process and a cultural activity, is that it covers many subjects and issues, and that its scope is broad, especially when the objective prerequisites are met for a genuine and honest dialogue designed primarily to further human interests.

Dialogue therefore has many dimensions, including political, economic, cultural, intellectual, legal, legislative, military, security, literary and artistic dimensions, which are often difficult to dissociate from one another.

The importance of examining the political dimensions of dialogue between civilizations is twofold. First, the political factor is the most powerful and influential element shaping the present and the future of all mankind. Second, the political issues which need to be addressed in order to reach human consensus are varied and numerous, and many of them need to be examined thoroughly for the purpose of clarifying their contexts and objectives.

The broader the meaning of dialogue we adopt, the more diverse will be the political aspects of dialogue between civilizations. However, in our view, the major political aspects of the dialogue among civilizations are as follows:

- Dialogue to halt injustice and aggression against people struggling for self-determination, in Palestine, for example.
- Dialogue to establish human rights, with internationally recognized standards, and respect for difference, in cases where there is a

conflict between a society and the teachings of a religion or the cultural specificities of a people, whose preservation we regard as a human right.

- Dialogue to apply the rulings of international law fairly on all international political issues whose settlements are *difficult and to return* legitimate rights to their rightful claimants, thereby doing justice to those who have been wronged.
- Dialogue to save humanity from natural disasters which result from policies that cause environmental pollution, desertification, depletion of water resources, deviation of scientific research to the field of genetic engineering, drug abuse, devastating diseases, and child and youth delinquency, by collaborating in the formulation of international legislation to lessen the impact of such disasters and problems.
- Dialogue to agree on a genuine and appropriate definition of the concepts of terrorism, extremism and fanaticism, so that each concept corresponds to a particular case, and there is no wilful ambiguity or confusion.
- Dialogue to develop the United Nations system in light of the new realities being witnessed by the world, and in order to renew international action and modernize its mechanisms with the aim of promoting the role of the United Nations and its agencies, achieving justice and equality, and establishing balanced international relations.
- Dialogue to halt injustice against the countries of the South, which are grappling with economic problems as a result of exploitation exercised in the past and present by countries in the North, so as to achieve justice for the international community.
- Dialogue between followers of different religions, based on equality and attachment to religious values, and the rejection of injustice, aggression and superiority on any grounds, in order to achieve faith in Allah the Most High, spread virtue and righteousness and establish the principles of justice and equity.
- Dialogue to underline the humaneness of modern world civilization by setting aside the notion of European or Western centrality in general, because the current human civilization is a common human heritage and the product of the blending and crossbreeding of successive civilizations throughout history.

These nine objectives, though they may differ in importance and some of them may have a social, intellectual, or religious character, are all,

in essence, political objectives of the dialogue between civilizations, for they all agree that the vital interests of mankind are linked with their present and future and they aim, first and foremost, to work towards improving the welfare and well-being of all humans.

Anyone wishing to address the political aspects of dialogue among civilizations will inevitably be faced with a host of difficulties and a series of obstacles, owing to multiple political impediments. One major obstacle to serious, constructive dialogue among civilizations could be the misunderstanding of the term 'politics' which is often equated with 'direct political action'. Indeed, politics is a science, a culture, and an acquired expertise; it requires a consciousness of the nature of society and the type of difficulties it faces. 'Political action', by contrast, is a practice, a daily activity and an involvement in direct action through the legal channels whereby one caters for the needs of society, helps to upgrade the standard of living and achieves the common objectives and goals of the society at large.

The political dimension of dialogue among civilizations consists of promoting the political action to the level where interlocutors could serve common human interests and address any subject relating, implicitly or explicitly, to politics, provided they stick to noble human values and adopt the appropriate, positive means and approaches.

The experience of the world over the last decade points to the fact that the big powers are determined to impose indiscriminately a single life pattern and a specific way of thinking on all human societies. They lobby hard to have all societies follow their model and imitate them in every detail of individual and community life.

This political approach, which disregards the national will and disrespects the cultural identities of peoples and nations, may be seen as a breach of universal human values and a defiance of the genuine desire of the international community to establish the principles of equity, justice and equality in international relations.

This trend runs counter to the process whereby universal human civilization is handed down from generation to generation. Modern contemporary civilization is not a pure European or American civilization. It is a mixed universal civilization, shared by all societies, which means that the tendency to take Europe, or the West in general, as a reference contradicts the spirit of dialogue, defined as a call for mutual understanding of the issues of common interest to the parties involved. Hegemony and domination, which extend the colonial past, are the stumbling blocks crippling the good efforts being exerted to establish

genuine civilizational coexistence, cultural understanding, economic cooperation, and political entente all of which have the potential to soften the effects of the crises tearing apart two-thirds of the world population.

The way to dialogue among civilizations shall remain deadlocked as long as the major powers monopolize authority under doctrinal and political pretexts. Therefore, the major mission of the intellectual elite, especially people involved in dialogue among civilizations, is to promote joint cooperation and join efforts to refute colonial thought, which shelters behind the slogans of universal civilization, and to combat it through intellectual and cultural means. The elite must also capitalize on the available international and regional channels, make use of science and logics, and develop perennial, objective approaches likely to benefit all humanity.

A major obstacle to the universal call launched for dialogue among civilizations is globalization. Indeed, globalization forced on peoples and nations of the world is a Western concept aimed at imposing its material values and quantity-based concepts to the detriment of human values and standards of quality. There is also a trend to denigrate other world civilizations, and above all the Islamic civilization. This is reflected in the theses developed by a host of strategists, among them Samuel Huntington. He pointed out that the major problem facing the West was not Islamic fundamentalism, but Islam itself, on the grounds that Islam was a different civilization, with a people convinced of the superiority of their culture and obsessed with the weakness of their power.

It is a deadly methodological mistake to assume that a given civilization is superior to and better than other civilizations, or that a given civilization is inferior and may constitute a threat to the world. Indeed, any assumption of this kind would be an incitement of world nations against that particular civilization, and might trigger a ravaging conflict that could create further havoc within the international community. The feeling of pride in one's civilization, although a natural feeling, should not evolve into what could be called 'civilizational terrorism'.

Our critical attitude towards globalization is not specific to our worldview. It is also a stance shared by several European and American strategists, such as Paul Kennedy, in his famous book *The Rise and Fall of Big Powers*. He predicted the fall of the United States of America in the balance of international power, in the historical sense of the term, after completion of the present historical cycle in the coming decades.

If dialogue is a communication with "the Other" and a process of exchange, built on the recognition of civilizational and cultural diversity,

globalization, by contrast, is a negation of plurality and any notion of 'the other', whether in terms of culture, information, economy or society. This 'negation' is destined to favour the Western liberal, capitalist model.

The international situation, as succinctly described here, should not bear negatively on the process of dialogue among civilizations. Dialogue should proceed ahead steadily, since nothing must harm the will of peace-loving peoples and nations or deter them from engaging in the pursuit of dialogue to build a prosperous and stable future, pervaded by the values of brotherhood, coexistence, and cooperation, within the framework of international law and the principles underlying universal human civilization.

Dialogue among civilizations should be geared to working out a series of ethical rules which would govern international relations and the political, economic, cultural, scientific, media and military activities of the international community.

Today, humanity is looking forward to injecting fresh impetus into international relations and energizing its civilizational and human dimensions, by consolidating the ethical components of international law and international relations between countries and governments, given the fact that ethics are the soul of civilization and the essence of a nation's experience.

A number of international instruments, including the United Nations' Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should therefore be revised in light of the profound changes and mutations taking place in the world, in such a way as to affirm the right to preserve the cultural specificities of peoples and nations, as well as the right to 'civilizational' and 'cultural' differences. Efforts should also be exerted to promote national laws reflecting cultural specificities and to nullify the primacy of one nation's will in the name of international law over national laws, especially with regard to national cultural specificities and the rules and regulations stemming from the precepts of religions.

It is our hope that the present conference shall launch strong appeals to the international community to have international rules observed, and to help initiate an open, responsible dialogue among modern civilizations, and to give substance to this new project, in a bid to halt the practices breaching international law under different banners, the most important of which are globalization and the new world order.

The *Rabat Communiqué*, issued on 12 July 2001, at the closing of the International Symposium on 'Dialogue among Civilizations in a Changing World', organized by ISESCO in the capital of the Kingdom of Morocco,

under the high patronage of the Moroccan Sovereign, King Mohamed VI, enshrined a number of general principles and guidelines for dialogue among civilizations. The *Communiqué* focused on the following points:

- Respect for civilizational diversity, as embodied in cultural specificities, is an inalienable human right. It is imperative for the international community to spare no effort to safeguard this diversity in civilizational identities and cultural specificities, which is a source of strength and creativity for humanity.
- Dialogue among civilizations is a must, indeed it is a moral and human duty. It is a prerequisite for initiating a positive and fruitful cooperation and establishing a peaceful coexistence among human beings. It requires, in addition to coherent objectives and good intentions, a commitment to the goals aimed at reinforcing the human values and principles, which constitute the common denominator of all civilizations and cultures.
- Dialogue among civilizations contributes largely to bringing peoples and nations together and removing the barriers arising from mutual misunderstanding and unfounded stereotypes. Continuation of dialogue and enlargement of its scope become, therefore, a mission devolved upon intellectuals, religious scholars (as it is part of the dialogue among religions), those with cultural and scientific competencies from all segments of society, and all those concerned with the future of humanity.
- To be more efficient and useful, dialogue among civilizations requires the multiplication of international fora, in such a way as to cover different areas and regions, at the initiative of institutions and organizations having common interests, as well as universities and cultural and academic circles. However, their efforts must be focused on spreading far and wide the values of dialogue and co-existence with a view to paving the way for rapprochement and understanding, and to consolidating the human bonds linking different peoples and nations.
- The paramount importance of dialogue among civilizations has increased at the present stage of human history owing to the growing challenges facing humanity in all fields, and to the exacerbation of the crises threatening the life of individuals and communities and hindering the efforts exerted for comprehensive development, thus enlarging the gap between industrialized and developing countries, and triggering wars and tensions in various areas of the world.

- The proposed dialogue should tackle the questions preoccupying humanity and weighing on its conscience, and search for solutions inspired from the essence of civilizations and cultures. Dialogue should seek, in the first place, to combat injustice as well as the violation of human rights and the denial of the right of peoples to self-determination, in addition to countering hegemony and the attempt to impose a uni-polar intellectual and cultural system on the international community. Dialogue among civilizations should also aim at preventing all kinds of aggression against the peoples aspiring for freedom and liberty, and should serve, at all levels, as a means of fighting against the deprivation of rights, which are confirmed by international laws and guaranteed by the revealed religions as well as by human principles.
- Dialogue among civilizations and cultures should be based on mutual respect among all peoples belonging to these cultures and civilizations, and should protect the principles of justice and equity. It should also contribute to giving impetus to the efforts exerted by the international community to reinforce tolerance, establish peace and security and encourage cultural and civilizational co-existence among human beings.

We believe that the most important aspects of dialogue among civilizations are the political aspects, which directly relate to the general international situation marked by the prevalence of un-civilized policies that are disrespectful of all human civilizations.

I would like to conclude by citing a saying of the Prophet Muhammed (Peace Be Upon Him): *"None of you will become a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself"*.

Mongi Bousnina

*Director-General of the Arab League Educational,
Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)*

It is very fortunate that this important event is taking place in Japan, a country which has been characterised by its persistent ability throughout history to preserve its historical and geographical legacy. Today, this reflects Japan's ability to successfully intertwine its national heritage with technological creativity.

I am addressing you in the name of ALECSO, a regional Arab organization, whose primary objective is the promotion and coordination of educational, cultural and scientific activities in the Arab region. A few days ago, we celebrated our 31st anniversary. The past years were full of events that highlighted cooperation and interaction with different bodies at the regional and international levels. ALECSO has been very vocal in putting forward the conscience of the Arab nations and expressing their values and ideas, regarding the fields of education, culture and science.

Furthermore, ALECSO is exerting its utmost effort to confront all the challenges that face the Arab nations, one of which is opening the channels of mutual and multi-dialogues at all levels with other cultures and entities. The aim of this is to encourage people from different cultures to share their experiences with one another and to foster peace. In so doing, ALECSO is destined to experience the spirit and realities of this contemporary age. To carry out this burden successfully, ALECSO is required to play a very distinctive role in the process of bridging the gap between the peoples of the globe in order to consolidate such endeavours as those undertaken by UNESCO and ISESCO.

I come from another part of the globe thousands of miles away, yet this region, which is home to the great Arab Islamic civilization, has been involved in intricate human relations with other regions throughout history. Islamic civilization, despite its obvious contribution to humanity in all walks of life, has sometimes been a target of unjustifiable offences, as can be noted in the midst of today's "no boundary" globalization. The fact that the past century has been characterized by catastrophic wars, bloodshed, and identity crises, creates a problematic situation, which coincides with globalized economic trends. We, in the Arab Islamic world, are not the only victims of this situation. In the present context, a serious question remains to be answered. How can we avoid wars between civilizations or a collision of cultures and identities?

There is no doubt that we are witnessing today the obliteration of political boundaries and the formation of a contemporary human identity. This trend places the civilization to which I belong in a difficult situation. For some, it is an aggressive entity that generates wars with others. For others, it is stereotyped as an entity that revolts against itself, if a common enemy does not exist. Still others go far beyond that and classify it as dangerous to Western civilization. There is no doubt that such accusations will close the door to dialogue and will lead to collision, and this in itself is against Islamic values and against the human understanding it persistently calls for.

It is also unfortunate that a good number of Western strategists have imaginatively established an arena of conflict between Western civilization and other civilizations. The solution they present is a model where Western civilization prevails. Unfortunately their voices become louder and louder in an age of unharnessed media and effective means of communication. What can we say, while being rubber-stamped as peripheral societies that should not belong to history or the contemporary world? How can we establish meaningful dialogue while being stereotyped as aggressive and deserving extermination? We strongly reject such accusations, and we shall overcome this trend. Our aim is to open dialogue with all cultures, without prejudices and without predetermined ideas, in order to live in peace and avoid being trapped into the areas of conflict.

Being at the head of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation and being guided by its great aims and ideals, I promise that I shall work with all those concerned to avoid the process of action and reaction with those bearing destructive ideas that will only result in putting fuel on the fire. This attitude, which I firmly stand for, is not something that needs to be invented or created. As a matter of fact, it comes directly from Arabic Islamic civilisation, which is deeply embedded in the cultural values of the Arab Muslim societies.

As a representative of Arab Islamic culture, I would like to assure you that this part of the world believes unconditionally that globalization should not be considered a monster or an untamed fierce enemy. We simply believe that it is necessity to humanize globalization.

Speaking of the world of technological knowledge and digitalization, which is continuously adding new dimensions to the information revolution, it should be stressed that this knowledge is adding greatly to the well-being of humans while at the same time threatening their existence. There is no doubt that this contradictory situation requires dialogue between the different cultures concerned, in order to sustain the

colourful mosaic beauty of world cultures in all corners of the globe that shaped human civilization in the past and should continue to shape it in the future. Such dialogue should be extended to all human endeavours, at all levels, and by all competent international bodies, such as the United Nations and its affiliate institutions. Cooperation to activate dialogue should be extended to encompass non-governmental bodies and intellectual thinkers at the regional and international levels. By all measures, dialogue between cultures has become a fact of life, especially at this critical junction of human history, which is governed by globalization and the threat of its negative consequences in the future. Through dialogue we can all be immunized against these shocks and avoid any catastrophic results. We are therefore responsible for supporting all efforts that lead to dialogue between cultures, not only to meet the existing challenges, but also to create a new world order, based ultimately on respect for humanity and acceptance of others.

We also believe that dialogue between cultures is based on historical facts. The Arab Islamic culture has always been open to a give and take process, since it is humanitarian by nature. It was able to co-exist with Asian, African and European civilizations throughout history. It contributed to all these civilizations without arrogance, without attempting to contain them and also without being absorbed by them.

The Arab Islamic culture gives due respect to the identity and specificity of other cultures and the social and cultural organization of societies with which it comes into contact. The aim has always been to enrich the Arab Islamic culture without exclusion or elimination. This is typical of Arab Islamic civilization and has characterized it until the present time.

The Arab nations have always strived to assure their continued presence during past events, highlighting cultural dialogue. We are still supporting, without reservation, the efforts of UNESCO in this field as active participants on all occasions. The Arab nations will continue to support such efforts to demonstrate the elements of strength that characterize Arab culture, while highlighting its uniqueness and its ability to contribute to existing cultures. The elements of a positive contribution are guaranteed as long as there is a will to interact with others, and as long as we possess historical knowledge of what shaped the past and will shape the future.

The cultural dialogue, which we believe in and support, is a dialogue of competence and equity based on the acknowledgement of the other and respect for his culture and identity. We stand firmly against impositions of

any uni-culture upon our societies, in order not to be reduced to mere receivers and blind consumers.

It is obvious that the communication revolution has swept aside many concepts and human values, and there is fear that human dialogue stands at the front line of defence in this situation. Our gathering could therefore be an indication that we share the necessity of establishing a new kind of dialogue. However, this new dialogue is confronted with various challenges and many obstacles, especially when perceived in relation to other priorities which pertain to intricate economic and commercial issues. We can get nowhere if we consider these priorities as preconditions to the dialogue in question. Other human values and ideals have to be considered as catalysts of fruitful and benevolent dialogue, despite the power of gigantic multi-national companies. If we see this power as the only one on the stage of globalization, without due consideration of other perpetual human values, our efforts to establish a solid dialogue will be futile.

Our spaceship Earth needs an honest watchman to be entrusted with guarding it against encroachment of malevolent trespassers. In this spaceship Earth, we in the Arab countries will not stand against human progress and welfare, or against technological development. We believe in all those human values, which pertain to life long learning, languages, freedom of thought, freedom of the individual and the free exchange of commodities. We strongly believe in human rights without prejudice or double standards.

We stand firmly against racism, hatred and the exclusion of others, whoever they are and wherever they live. We are against the collision of civilisations and religious wars. In short, we shall be with you for the good of humanity.

The crucial questions today are: how can we convert the assumed existing encounter between cultures into a dialogue marked by parity and justice? How can we build a global, humane, multi-cultural society, emphasizing education and based on moral values? What is needed to get positive answers is to push forward the ideals of international cooperation that emphasize tolerance and the culture of peace. Furthermore, there should be popular enlightenment and sensitization to these issues in schools and in all types of media.

There is no doubt that the inception of globalization stimulated discussion of other issues, which highlights new dimensions of human relationships at the present time. This can be traced to the fields of biotechnology and genetic engineering. Despite the fact that these fields have been newly developed, we should work together to construct a new

philosophical and moral formula to deal with the problems ensuing from the new discoveries relating to these fields, in order to preserve the dignity of man and his human nature.

I would like to call upon you to work together, hand in hand, in order to reach our ultimate goal, for which the right beginning is the cultural dialogue that will lead to diminishing confrontation and sustaining the value of tolerance and human contacts. We need a dialogue that will restrain hatred, racism and religious conflicts. In so doing we can build together a world of tranquillity and peaceful coexistence.

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For a free and fruitful dialogue among civilizations, respect for other civilizations is a prerequisite. But how can we conceive the basis for this respect, and how can we carry it out? In what follows, I will attempt to show that what is really important, to begin a dialogue, is not to take the value or the viewpoint of one's own civilization as absolute and universal. We must make an effort to objectify and relativize our own perspective by reflecting it in the mirror of other civilizations. As a practical way for different civilizations to shed light on each other, I propose the method of "triangulation of civilizations", which I have applied in my anthropological research. The basic idea is to facilitate the objectification of the standpoint of each of the three civilizations, including one's own, by inspecting each one from the point of view of two other radically different civilizations. I will use examples from the Japanese, French and Mossi (or West African) civilizations to illustrate this approach.

Under the influence of the linear evolutionary concept of human civilization, which has prevailed since the second half of the nineteenth century, the theory of cultural relativism was formulated by several American anthropologists, Ruth Benedict among others, in the years between the two world wars ("Configurations of Culture", in *American Anthropologist*, 1932; *Patterns of Culture*, 1935). This idea was defined by Benedict herself as "a new base for tolerance". Since a more adequate theory has not emerged, cultural relativism continues to be referred to as an important theoretical support for tolerance of the diversity of civilizations.

Nevertheless, in the current context of human civilizations, I must point out two main defects of the cultural relativist idea. First, it is based on cultural essentialism, to the extent that it treats a culture as a particular configuration or unit, defined by a specific group of people. It is clear that this concept of culture makes it impossible for us to understand other cultures or to interrelate with them. The cultural configuration idea may serve minority groups, who are victims of oppression and discrimination, as a fabricated banner to fight for their otherwise legitimate requests. That kind of banner may be coloured with cultural essentialism or fundamentalism, which mobilizes people not through rational convictions but on an emotional basis. It also has the potential to give birth to a fanatical purification movement.

Second, tolerating every other standpoint, including those which deny cultural relativism, leads to isolationism. The overall tolerance for any culture today, results in a dangerous non-interventionism. This is also related to the approval of all that actually is, especially concerning the state of life in underdeveloped countries. Should everything that exists be respected as the proper way of life? If so, is cultural relativism a principle only for well-fed peoples?

How can we overcome these tricky problems to realize an open-minded dialogue among civilizations?

First, as regards civilizations or cultures, we must deny the false belief in the objectivity of any particular standpoint. That is, all our standpoints are subjective, and contain inevitable cultural bias. Second, starting from this awareness of our subjectivity, we must not take any standpoint as absolute or universal. Instead, we must try to relativise and objectify our subjectivity from other cultural viewpoints. This attempt leads us to the method of "triangulation of cultures", which I will discuss later. Third, we should not interpret a phenomenon of another culture in our own terms, but in terms of the culture in question.

Even though these principles may seem to us quite obvious, their realization is not. To overcome the cultural relativist dilemma, we must begin by distinguishing two pairs of contrasting concepts: the global versus the local, and the universal versus the particular. We should not mistake the global for the universal. The global is a fact, and a matter of power, which may be political, military or economic. The local is a relative concept: some things become global, other things remain local. The universal is not a fact, because it is impossible to prove the real universal validity of anything, but it is an aspiration or a value orientation for the worldwide achievement of something. The particular, on the other hand, has its own original value which cannot be denied by the fact that it has become local in relation to the global.

We all are aware that human beings have a tendency to be egocentric, in spite of their fundamentally sociable nature. Amongst many human groups, the term used to name their own group is synonymous with the word to designate humans in general, and they often apply a discriminatory word to strangers. The Japanese of the sixteenth century called the Portuguese *namban*, or "the savages of the south" because they came to Japan from the southern countries.

In Europe too, the word "savage" was applied to designate the inhabitants of non-Occidental countries, like the indigenous peoples of the Americas during the first phase of contact. It is worth noting that the

adjective "savage" was largely replaced by that of "primitive" in the nineteenth century, when the supremacy of the industrialized Occident over the non-Occidental world was established and the evolutionist idea of human civilizations prevailed. The word "savage" is derived from a Latin word "*silva*" or the "forest," which was opposed to "*domus*" or the "human's living space".

When the term "savage" was applied to the non-Occidental peoples, the focus was therefore placed on the differences in their living space and habits. Thus, the "savage" people could serve the Europeans as a mirror to criticize their own civilization, as is visible in the *Essays* of Montaigne, or in the idea of "the noble savage" of the eighteenth century. But the adjective "primitive", meaning one who was born first, taken from the terminology used in the writings on the history of arts and Christianity, was applied to characterize non-Occidental peoples or societies as "backward" in relation to the Occidental people who considered themselves to be the most advanced. Here we see that the focus on the difference in space and habits expressed by the adjective "savage" was transferred to a focus on the difference in time, more precisely to the difference in the developmental stages of human civilizations, which were thought to be universal.

Expressions like "primitive people" or "primitive society" were still being used without reservation even in anthropological writings, until the nineteen fifties when these peoples or societies began to be called "underdeveloped". The term changed again later to the euphemistic adjective "developing".

I stress the question of the characterization of peoples and societies over the course of history for three reasons. First, reflections on this issue are indispensable for mutual understanding among civilizations. Second, without consideration of this problem, no heart-to-heart dialogue among civilizations will be possible, especially if the participants include people from the societies which have been labelled as "savage", "primitive", "under-developed" or "developing". Third, the problems of so-called development are a subject of great concern in any encounter among civilizations.

By tracing transformations of the Occidental concepts of the peoples or societies of the non-Occidental world, we realize that, before the first stage, that is to say before the period of the application of the adjective "savage" to the newly encountered non-Occidental peoples, there had been in Europe an old and popular image of the savage or the "Wild Man", an image always attached to the forest.

Among other peoples of non-Occidental countries too, we find a similar concept: an imaginary savage being living in a kind of parallel world. An example of this concept from Japan would be the opposition between "sato" (village) and "yama" (mountain). The latter is often imagined to house a parallel world. A similar example from the culture of the Mossi people of West Africa is the opposition between "yiri" (dwellings) and "weogo" (bush).

Thus, we can recognize that, at the stage of the "savage", in the Occident as well as in other parts of the world, the cognition process toward strangers (imaginary or real) was similar across cultures, and not entirely contemptuous. This was true even of the idea of the "noble savage", which has its roots in Europe during the Middle Ages. In the eighteenth century, the term "noble savage" was substantiated when it was applied to the strangers of the non-Occidental world after the first contact on a large scale. The Edo people of the old Benin kingdom of West Africa believed that the first Europeans, who arrived by sea, were incarnates of their sea god *Olokun*, and the Incas of South America took the conquistador Pizarro as their cultural hero and deity *Viracocha*, who had gone to the sea and was believed to be returning. Similarly, though the sixteenth century Japanese called the first Portuguese they encountered "the savages from the south", this does not mean that these new strangers were looked down upon by the Japanese.

Nevertheless, if the cognition process of the first encounter was mutual, the important fact is that it was always the Europeans who went to the other countries, overcoming many difficulties, and "discovered" the inhabitants. Neither the Japanese, nor the Amerindians arrived in Europe by their own initiative and effort. However, by the second stage, the cognitive process as well as the real relations between the encountered peoples were not mutual any more. Since then, characterizations like "primitive" or "under-developed" were always applied unilaterally from the side of the Occidental peoples.

In my opinion, the question of how and why this expansionist and universal orientation developed in the Occidental civilization, and not in others, is fundamental to understanding global vs. local features, and universal vs. particular characteristics found in human civilizations today.

Among the fundamental factors that might have contributed to giving an expansionist and universal-oriented character to the Occidental civilization, we can cite first the agro-pastoral subsistence economy along with the closely related monotheistic and anthropocentric world view formed in ancient West Asia. As this world view is clearly formulated in

Genesis of the Old Testament, I would like to introduce the "Genesis paradigm". By this I mean the whole complex of value and technological orientations, which formed a basis for the Occidental civilization.

As for the subsistence economy, the Europeans basically inherited the most ancient food-producing economy from Mesopotamia, in which animal husbandry and farming were combined. The maximal use of domestic animals not only for food and clothing, but also for farming and transportation, was elaborated in Mesopotamia in a more efficient way than may be found anywhere else in the world. The use of wind and water energy, combined with various applications of the principle of rotary motion were among the technological particularities that existed in this civilization.

In other words, an archetype of the rationalistic exploitation of nature was formed in ancient West Asia. When introduced to Europe, it was elaborated further, as in the case of the three-field rotation of crops, using a wheeled plough powered by several horses or cattle. The ideological conviction that human beings were singled out by the Creator to be the masters over other living things, formulated in Genesis, might have contributed to the development of these rationalistic and pragmatic orientations. These orientations can be made clear by contrasting them with almost opposite ones found in the traditional value and technological orientations of the Japanese. If I call the Occidental ones "human-independent orientations", the Japanese ones may be described as "human-dependent orientations".

The human-independent orientations found in the Occidental technological culture consist of first, a concern to devise instruments that will ensure consistently good results, regardless of personal human skill and second, a concern to make maximum use of non-human energy, thus sparing human beings the pains of labour, while at the same time obtaining results on a larger scale.

By contrast, the human-dependent orientations, which I find in the Japanese technological culture, are characterized first, by the use of simple, non-specialized tools to obtain an effective result with the aid of highly trained human skills, and second, by the unsparing use of human energy to obtain good results.

The use of non-human energy necessitates a system of energy transmission, by making wide use of the principle of rotary motion by means of wheels, gears, drive-belts or connecting rods. None of these were present in the technological culture of Japan before the beginning of so-called modernization during the middle of the nineteenth century.

It is clear that the use of non-human energy could be shifted from animal power or water and wind energy to steam, fossil fuel, electric and nuclear energy. Therefore, we understand that in the Occidental world, industrialization and technological modernization constituted a process of continuous development. However, in Japan, and in many other non-Occidental countries, so-called modernization was a grafting process, although we must recognize differences according to what had been achieved in each country during the preceding "Early Modern" period.

In Japan, the two and a half centuries of the Tokugawa period preceding modernization can be considered as the phase of elaboration of the above mentioned human-dependent technological orientations. After this period, in the Meiji era, the amalgam of these two opposite technological orientations, human-dependent and human-independent technological orientations, which are at the same time complementary, resulted in giving modern Japan a certain strength in the international industrial marketplace.

If we add another type of value orientation from the South, to these two types of orientations in the East-West contrast, we may recognize more clearly the fundamental characteristics of these East and West orientations.

As the third type of value orientation, I take an example from the ancient Mossi kingdom of Burkina Faso, West Africa. This people lived on slash-and-burn, shifting cultivation of millets in the savanna. The choice of this people is due to my long personal research experience among them. The essential traits of their value orientation may be very briefly formulated as follows: to make maximum use of a given situation, by currying favour (*belem*) with the invisible supreme power (*wênde*), as well as with the King or with all powerful or socially influential persons, in order to ask them, while offering them presents or services, to sort out a difficult situation (*manege*).

On the basis of this value orientation, in the technological sphere, the Mossi people have elaborated a form of "bricolage". The word "bricolage" became well known after it was used in an analogical sense by Claude Lévi-Strauss (*La Pensée Sauvage*, 1962) to characterize the intellectual process of mythological thought, which works by means of "signs," in contrast to scientific thought, based on "concepts".

Starting from this definition, I use this term in the technological sense. That is to say, to designate a technique whereby, rather than making use of the "genuine parts" designed for a specific system to arrange the matter in hand, they make a clever use of whatever happens to be available, through the visible analogy supplied by the material. Thus, the Mossi

blacksmiths, for example, manufacture flint guns using the steering rod of an abandoned car as the barrel, while the people make sandals to sell at local markets, using scrap car tyres in place of animal leather.

Instead of decomposing and transforming nature for human profit, they make maximum use of it by applying a keen analogical sense. This can be seen in the subtle use of gourds as various types of recipients and of wild plants in basketry, some of which can only be found there. These utensils are gentle and easy to use, and entirely a part of the natural ecological cycle. In comparison with the active and rationalistic Occidental value orientation, the Mossi people are passive, in regard to nature as well as to society. Nevertheless, they are not fatalists, as they always act, expecting good luck.

This kind of tripartite comparison, which I call "triangulation of cultures", makes it easy to relativize and objectify one's own standpoint as well as that of the other two, by taking the two others as points of reference. Based on an analogy borrowed from geodesy, this method also suggests a further direction, which is to cover major parts of human cultures with such significantly contrasting triangles, by multiplying them starting from one triangle.

The three different value orientations which constitute our triangle will be properly used as operational models if we eliminate the proper noun attached to these models, like European, Japanese or Mossi, and call them Models A, B and C. To cover still larger parts of humanity, we would have to multiply the models.

However, these sets of basic orientations, extracted from historical and ethnographic materials taken from societies that have been studied for a long period, should not be considered as fixed patterns, in order to avoid the mistake of cultural relativism of taking a culture as a "configuration" with its core character. Rather, they may serve as operational idealized models of heuristic value in comparative studies. What happens in reality is obviously determined by historical and other factors, many of which are accidental.

In applying my method of the "triangulation of cultures" I have only taken examples from three civilizations. However, to establish a global reference for particular value orientations, an exhaustive investigation must be made of local technological cultures. This is needed to avoid taking as absolute the values of modern Occidental culture and to arrive at a more objective understanding of other cultures, hence paving the way for a better future.

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In this presentation I will begin by examining the history of civilizational dialogue in the autochthonous epoch, the colonial epoch and the contemporary epoch. In particular, I will focus upon globalization and civilizational dialogue in the contemporary epoch. This will be followed by a discussion of the reaction to certain patterns of power and dominance associated with globalisation in the contemporary epoch. The final section of the essay will explore the alternative to the communal response to the identity crisis in contemporary civilizations.

The autochthonous epoch is the epoch of indigenous, independent kingdoms and empires, which spanned long centuries of Asian history. During this period, there were both positive and negative elements in the interaction between civilizations on the continent. Chinese scholars travelled to India to study Buddhism just as Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese literati journeyed to China to imbibe Confucian ethics. Muslim rulers dialogued with Christian and Jewish notables in parts of West Asia in the eighth and ninth centuries while Muslim savants such as Ibn-a-Nadim and as-Shahrastani in the tenth and eleventh centuries wrote with much warmth about the exemplary qualities of the Buddhists living in their midst in parts of what is today Iran and Afghanistan.

An even more outstanding example of an Islamic scholar reaching out to 'the other' was Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni (973-1051 C.E.). He not only studied Hinduism, Christianity and Judaism but also developed principles for the comparative analysis of religions. It is remarkable that he tried to be as objective and unbiased as possible in examining the tenets and practices of religions other than his own. Al-Biruni's *Kitab al-Hind*, which probes Hinduism and Hindu society, is a brilliant testimony to this. By studying the religion and civilization of the Hindus, Al-Biruni hoped it would be easier for the Muslims to dialogue with them. As he put it, "*We think now that what we have related in this book (Kitab al-Hind) will be sufficient for anyone who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science or literature, on the very basis of their own civilization.*"

Through the scientific study of other religions and civilisations, Al-Biruni, in a sense, paved the way for the dialogue of civilisations. At a time when the world is beginning to recognise the vital importance of civilizational dialogue - as reflected in the United Nations' proclamation of

2001 as the year of Dialogue among Civilizations - it behoves us to remember the pioneering role of that celebrated interlocutor, Al-Biruni.

The flow of religious and cultural ideas across civilizational boundaries was part and parcel of a larger flow involving ideas on science, technology, architecture and art. Between China and the Arab world, the Arab world and India, and India and Southeast Asia, there was an active exchange of knowledge and information which, though restricted to a small elite, was nonetheless significant. It was through such creative interaction that Islamic civilization, which absorbed ideas in both the sciences and the humanities from every conceivable source, became the storehouse of knowledge for the whole of humankind between the eighth and thirteenth centuries.

In this transmission and synthesis of ideas, trade between different states and empires in Asia played a major role. The famous silk route for instance not only facilitated the exchange of goods but also enabled illustrious cities to flourish in what is today central Asia - cities such as Samarkand and Bokhara which became homes to great libraries and museums. Likewise, trade between China and Southeast Asia brought with it ideas on public administration, town planning, architecture and aesthetics from the former to the latter.

It should be emphasised, however, that while there was intellectual and cultural exchange among an infinitesimal few at the apex of the different civilizations, the vast majority of people lived within their own geographical and social spheres, hardly interacting with outside elements. Needless to say, communities in the distant past bound by kinship ties and ethnic relationships were much more culturally homogenous and physically insulated than they are today. The cultural or religious "other" just did not exist in their thinking. To put it in another way, communities of antiquity were simply oblivious of other cultures and civilizations. This was understandable, given the nature of political organisation, the type of economic activities and the modes of communication that existed in what were largely agrarian societies.

Even when communities and cultures came into contact with one another, it was not always peaceful. The history of Asia is littered with tales of wars and conflicts, sometimes between adherents of different faiths and sects. The underlying causes of these conflagrations might not have been linked to religious doctrines or religious practices but they undoubtedly exacerbated inter-community relations. The victor would be subjected to ethnic stereotyping just as the vanquished would be the victim of communal prejudice. Of course, in some instances, after a generation or

two, adverse sentiments about 'the other' were gradually eradicated. This happened in a number of Muslim societies where the more all-encompassing Muslim identity appears to have been successful in at least minimising communal consciousness. Even in their treatment of non-Muslim communities, Muslim states often ensured that their religious and cultural rights were protected, and that they had the freedom to participate in the economic and social life of the larger society in which these minorities were domiciled.

Unlike the autochthonous epoch, the second epoch characterised by Western colonial dominance over Asia, caused much more stress and strain to inter-community and inter-cultural relations. There is no need to repeat that whether it was the British or the Dutch or the French, colonial policy invariably sought to 'divide-and-rule' the local population. Thus, Hindus were pitted against Muslims in British India, the Javanese against the Sumatrans in Dutch Indonesia, and the Khmers against the Vietnamese in French Indo-China. Specific policies in relation to land, agriculture, employment, the public services and education, served to widen the chasm between the communities.

There was yet another dimension to colonial policy, which also generated negative consequences for ethnic ties. In Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Fijis, among other countries, the British brought in immigrant labour to work in certain sectors of the economy and thus created ethnic enclaves, which remained separate and distinct from the indigenous communities. Because the economic and political dichotomies, which divided the immigrant and indigenous communities were so severe, the communal problems associated with these two groups have often been perpetuated into the post-colonial era.

But more than the policy of divide and rule, the greatest disservice that colonialism did to inter-community, inter-cultural and inter-civilizational relations in Asia was to redirect the face of each and every Asian country, away from its neighbour towards the metropolitan power in the West. From the economy to education, from administration to entertainment, the colonised state was influenced by, and paid obeisance to, the colonial overlord in London, the Hague, Paris and Washington. It was not just a question of dependence brought about by the colonial exploitation of indigenous resources or economic bondage created by colonial hegemony. For the colonised, the coloniser became, through coercion and persuasion, the exemplar par excellence. Laws, institutions of governance, the mechanics of the market, the school curriculum, the

health system, public transportation and indeed each and every facet of life derived its guidance and inspiration from the colonial model.

As a result, the colonised developed a vast corpus of knowledge and information about the coloniser, his land and history, his culture and geography, his politics and his social mores. A student in colonial Malaysia, as a case in point, would know much more about English poetry and British history than he would about Thai music or Indonesian geography. Likewise, it was very likely that a Filipino living under the aegis of American rule would empathise more readily with American literature than with Vietnamese literature even if it had been translated into the English language. To extend the argument further, an English educated Hindu in British India would have greater rapport with Christianity - because it was perceived as Western - than with Islam which had millions and millions of adherents in the Indian sub-continent during the height of colonial rule (compared to a few thousand Christians).

By altering relations between cultures and religions in the Asian neighbourhood, colonialism erected formidable barriers against civilizational dialogue. It removed the objective conditions, the political, economic and social imperatives, which would make dialogue a necessity. Since there was no real relationship with one's neighbours, there was no compelling need to engage and interact with them.

Besides, colonialism developed the notion that Asian cultures and communities, religions and civilisations had little to contribute towards human progress. It was a notion, which became deeply entrenched in the psyche of many Asians, partly because of the overwhelming power of colonial dominance. Asians began to believe - as their colonial masters wanted them to - that their cultures and civilisations had become inert and static. They lacked drive and dynamism. Indeed, their cultures and civilisations, so they were told, only served to keep the people in shackles. Asians had to be liberated from their serfdom by Western civilization.

What this suggests is that the colonial experience created a deep sense of cultural inferiority in a lot of Asians. This inferiority complex became an obstacle to cultural and civilizational dialogue. For if one's civilization is bereft of any greatness, how can one take any pride in it? What is the point of talking to others about one's civilization if it is devoid of noble values and outstanding accomplishments? If dialogue is about exchanging ideas, how can intellectually impoverished civilisations engage in dialogue?

It is significant that while Asians were assailed with doubts about their cultures and civilizations in the colonial epoch, they seemed to be a

little more certain about the strength and viability of their religions. This is one of the reasons why in spite of the power and potency of colonial rule in Asia, only a small minority, in relative terms, embraced Christianity - the Christianity that came with Western dominance. Apart from the Philippines, no other Asian country adopted Christianity on a national scale in the colonial period. Only small percentages of Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, Vietnamese, Thais and other Asians became Christians. The vast majority chose to remain Hindu or Buddhist or Muslim. In fact, very, very few Muslims in particular converted to Christianity anywhere in Asia.

It is an equally remarkable fact of history that when Asians began to organise and mobilise the masses to throw off the colonial yoke, many of them turned to religion to provide them with the inspiration and impetus for their nationalist struggle. The Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj of India, the Sarikat Islam of Indonesia and the Young Men's Buddhist Association of Burma would be some examples. Religion, in other words, was for many Asians, the most meaningful conduit for articulating the quest for freedom, justice, identity and dignity.

Does this indicate that within Asian civilisations, religions have a special role? In the dialogue of civilisations, will the religious dimension emerge as the most significant factor in a continent whose unique attribute is that it is the birthplace of all the world's religions? These are some of the questions we will try to answer in the latter part of the essay. For now, we shall turn to the third epoch.

The third epoch, or the contemporary epoch, begins with the end of formal colonial rule in 1946. That was the year Indonesia proclaimed its Independence from the Dutch. For the last four decades or so, most of Asia has been independent, in the legal and constitutional sense. Has independence resulted in inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue among Asian communities and religions? Is there greater interest in, and commitment towards, developing better understanding among the myriad religions and civilisations of Asia?

There is certainly much more interaction among Asian governments today than in the colonial or the autochthonous epochs. This is a product of a growing realisation among the continent's political elites that their nations' destinies are closely intertwined and that they must endeavour to cultivate good neighbourly relations, however immense the odds. It is out of this awareness that a multi-civilizational regional grouping like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has managed to sustain itself. It comprises all the 10 states of Southeast Asia - Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia,

Vietnam and Burma. ASEAN, at least in terms of its background, embodies 5 religious civilisations - Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu and Muslim. There is also the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) consisting of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives and, in a sense, reflecting the religious diversity of the region, with its Hindu, Muslim Buddhist, Christian and Sikh populations. The former has been far more viable than the latter as a regional organisation.

If governmental ties have expanded within regions and between regions in the Asian continent, it is largely because of trade and economics. There is much more intra-ASEAN trade today, for instance, than 10 years ago. With increasing business ties, come exchanges in the technological and educational spheres, and even in the cultural arena. Independent of these exchanges, has been the continuous interaction among Asians in the field of sports and, to a much lesser extent, in the entertainment sector.

In spite of this upward trend in intra-Asian ties, it is undeniably true that there have been very few attempts by Asian governments or entrepreneurs or universities or cultural elites to consciously focus upon inter-civilizational understanding. There are only a handful of universities within ASEAN, for instance, that offer courses related to inter-civilizational or even inter-cultural and inter-religious issues. Religious and cultural Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) may espouse causes connected with a particular religious and cultural community but seldom engage in serious inter-religious or inter-cultural dialogue. Governments, even when they are presiding over heterogeneous societies, may provide support to the religious or cultural activities of a particular group but have not been known to be active, enthusiastic patrons of inter-civilizational dialogue, with one or two exceptions, which we shall discuss later.

Why is this so? Perhaps the most important reason is the global system that prevails today, and the process that is conterminous with it, namely, globalisation. Globalisation is in a sense a process that has grown out of the colonial epoch. If, as we have seen, under colonialism individual Western powers dominated and controlled Asian societies, thus crippling the development of their potential and circumscribing the scope for inter-state, inter-cultural exchange, today, there are global centres of power and global elites, located mainly in the West, exercising tremendous influence over the direction of the global economy, global politics and global culture. Once again, their overwhelming power has stifled and suffocated the capacity of Asian civilizations to identify and articulate ideas and values from their own heritage and to present them as the bases for dialogue and

mutual understanding. Unlike the colonial past, these new centres of power and new elites are not just linked to superpowers like the United States of America but are also connected to international institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to transnational corporations (TNCs) and money markets.

It is the TNCs and the money markets that set the tone and tenor of the global economy and indeed of most domestic economies. 500 corporations for instance account for 70 per cent of world trade. Many small and middling economies in the South are very dependent upon TNCs for investments, technology, skills and most of all market reach. If the WTO succeeds in pushing its investment agenda, TNCs will be able to exercise even greater control over national economies, since there would be hardly any restrictions on their right to expand domestic operations or to repatriate profits. Likewise, currency trading now dominates global financial transactions. Only 2 to 3 per cent of transactions are connected directly to real commerce and industry. Currency trading, on the other hand, which is indistinguishable from sheer speculation, runs to something like 1.5 trillion dollars a day. This is almost equivalent to the total annual output of the German economy or to four times total world expenditure on crude oil. The volume and value of speculative capital has become so huge that no economy today can insulate itself from money markets and their operations.

What this means is that there is very little room for independent economic initiatives. And yet scope for autonomous action and organisation is important for economic globalisation carries with it practices, attitudes and values, which are diametrically antithetical to some of the cardinal principles and precepts contained in most religious philosophies. The incessant drive to produce and to expand production, often stimulated by the constant titillation of the senses through seductive advertisements, a feature of TNC operations, is at variance with the Buddhist and Muslim ethic of restraint and self control. Similarly, the consumer culture, so much a part of contemporary capitalism, would not harmonise with either Hinduism or Christianity or any of the other religions with their emphasis upon limiting our wants and desires. Neither would religion approve of the pronounced materialistic thrust of economic globalisation. Since economic globalisation seeks to deregulate, liberalise and privatise in order to allow for the untrammelled flow of capital and the unbridled accumulation of wealth, it would run contrary to the moral teachings of all great faiths which have always admonished those who are

obsessed with the possession of riches. In Islam, as in Judaism, it is the equitable distribution of wealth and the alleviation of poverty that are regarded as acts of piety. Economic globalisation, in contrast, has resulted in both the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and the widening of disparities between rich and poor.

There is yet another characteristic of economic globalisation which would go against the grain of religion. The preponderant power of speculative capital in today's economy, which has prompted one economist to describe the present phase of capitalism as casino capitalism, would be condemned by Islam and Christianity, on the one hand, and Hinduism and Buddhism, on the other. In Islam, for instance, money is a medium of exchange, not a commodity to speculate upon, or gamble with.

By showing how economic globalisation violates some of our most fundamental moral and spiritual values, one is not denying that certain countries where the rituals of Buddhism and Confucianism are widely practised also tend to promote and propagate casino capitalism. After all, East Asian and Southeast Asian countries such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore are acknowledged as important digits in the global economy. And, it is true that sections of the populace in other parts of Asia have also benefited from economic globalisation. But this has happened only because they have adjusted to the demands and dictates of globalisation without any regard for some of the contrarian values and principles in their religious and cultural philosophies.

How does political globalisation fare in relation to spiritual and moral values found in religion? The rapid spread of the democratic form of government, with its emphasis upon human rights, in particular civil and political liberties, periodic elections, multi-party competition and peaceful, orderly change has been one of the most remarkable developments of our time. On the whole, the triumph of democracy as a global phenomenon, in the wake of the end of the cold war, has been a boon to humankind, including the people of Asia.

Nonetheless, democracy as interpreted by the forces of globalisation has also marginalized certain ideas and notions of governance associated with Asian spiritual traditions. Has the preoccupation with civil and political liberties served to sideline economic, social and cultural rights? Would a more holistic vision of rights not make more sense, both from the standpoint of the concept of the human being in some of our philosophies and from the perspective of the realities existing in Asian societies where economic rights such as the right to food, social rights such as the right to education and cultural rights such as the right to study one's mother

tongue, are as basic as the freedom of expression and assembly? Equally vital, is it not true that in almost every Asian philosophy, be it Confucianism or Hinduism, rights cannot be separated from responsibilities? Are responsibilities given any weight at all in globalisation's democracy? In like manner, by making the individual and individual freedom, the foundation of a just and fair society, has political globalisation downplayed the communitarian dimension which figures so prominently in the value systems of various Asian societies? Does inter-party competition and the significance attached to partisan politics transgress the principle of unity in Islam and other religions, since unity within the community is rooted in the concept of Divine Unity?

The gist of the matter is this: if it were not for globalisation and its push for partisan politics and elections, would Asian societies have evolved alternative forms of governance? Would institutions have emerged that were more representative of values such as consultation and consensus, harmony and integration? Since these and other such values are shared by a number of cultures, Thai, Javanese and Malay to name a few, would they have provided a basis for inter-civilizational dialogue in a world that did not have to face the challenge of globalisation? There are of course other perhaps more important issues that political globalisation has brought to the fore which are not really within the purview of this presentation. For instance, how can the advocates of democracy espouse the cause of human rights and political freedoms within the sphere of domestic politics and yet ignore the palpably undemocratic, unjust global structures which deny representation and participation to the vast majority of humankind, including the citizens of Asia?

From political globalisation we turn to cultural globalisation. In a sense, the impact of cultural globalisation has been much more penetrative and much more pervasive than either political globalisation or economic globalisation. Over the last three or four decades in particular, television programmes, films, videos, comics and cartoons, apart from music, drama and dance forms mainly from the United States have found eager ears and eyes in the remotest corners of the earth. The international fame of top Hollywood and CNN personalities is proof of how ubiquitous American culture is.

The pre-eminence of American culture, it should however be emphasised, has not resulted in the extermination or even the marginalization of other cultures. Hindi movies, as a case in point, like their Hong Kong counterparts, remain as popular as ever. Japanese, Chinese and Indian cuisine are relished by American and British palates.

Women in the capital cities of Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam continue to don their traditional attire. In other words, American films and fast food may have a global reach but they are not the only fare in town.

The issue is not whether facets of other cultures will survive in the midst of American driven globalisation. The real question is whether underlying values and norms are beginning to change as a consequence of the cumulative, continuous impact of American television and media, in particular, and the popular projection of an American way of life in general. Is stark American individualism, for instance, beginning to take root in parts of urban Asia? Are family relationships beginning to change, as the young in certain Asian cities imitate American kids on television in their brusque behaviour towards their parents and elders? Is the increasing preoccupation with sensate pleasures within segments of the urban middle-class in Asia also due to the influence of the American media, specifically television? Or, are the changes that are occurring the inevitable consequence of other more fundamental transformations that are taking place in the economy and the social structure of various Asian countries, and not because of cultural globalization *per se*?

Whatever the real reasons, it is quite apparent that time-tested values connected with individual, family and community in Asian cultures and religions are being challenged in the present epoch. Since values such as the primacy accorded to family relationships are so central to Confucianism, Hinduism and Islam, among other religions, one wonders whether the changes that are happening will erode yet another principle of living that could have provided a basis for inter-civilizational communication.

The political, economic and cultural dimensions of globalisation, which we have analysed, and other aspects of the process that we have not discussed, taken together, represent an overwhelmingly powerful system. To reiterate, it is a system which emerged from Western colonial dominance but whose impact, influence and authority is much greater than the power exercised by individual colonial powers. Modern communication technologies have undoubtedly played a big part in facilitating this. It is a truism that without television, the computer and internet, globalisation would not have become such a powerful phenomenon. Since the computer revolution is a product of scientific and technological advancements associated with the United States one can understand why that country is in the forefront of globalisation.

But technology alone cannot explain the power of globalisation. The ideas and instruments of globalisation, whether it is individual freedom or

the internet, have an appeal of their own. Besides, as we have noted, it is a process which has brought some benefits to sections of humanity.

This is why globalisation, unlike colonialism, is not perceived as dominance and oppression in some quarters. The centres of power and the elites in the West have succeeded in making it appear as if it is integral to development and progress. But not everyone is convinced. A lot of people in Asia and elsewhere know that globalisation has not only marginalized the poor and powerless but it has also, as we have shown, subordinated non-Western civilisations, their ideas and ideals, their values and visions. This has now provoked a reaction in a number of Asian societies.

We are concerned with a specific aspect of the reaction to globalisation, namely, the perception that it is a threat to civilizational identity and integrity. And it is a particular type of reaction that we shall focus upon.

While there have been varied reactions to the challenge to civilizational identity, it is those who have chosen to re-assert their own identity in an exclusive manner that will be the subject of our analysis. This exclusive re-assertion of identity is taking place in a number of countries. In India, it has taken the form of Hindu revivalism; in Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, there is Islamic revivalism; and in Sri Lanka, there is Buddhist revivalism.

Let us clarify, at the outset, that revivalism in all these countries is not due entirely to globalisation or even to Western colonial dominance. The failure of so-called secular elites and secular ideologies to overcome the challenge of poverty and destitution among the masses; corruption and abuse of power at the apex of society; political repression and authoritarianism; and latent or manifest antagonism towards 'the other' within one's milieu, have all contributed towards religious revivalism. Globalisation is a factor insofar as its dominant power - which mirrors Western hegemony - is seen as a formidable obstacle to the revivalist desire to build an alternative culture and civilisation that is authentic, that is rooted in one's own tradition and patrimony.

This explains why in India, the Hindu revivalists (together with other groups) have been battling some of the symbols of globalisation - Kentucky Fried Chicken and MacDonalads' outfits, Kellogg cereals firms and coca-cola corporations. They have also sought to protect Indian interests in the face of the WTO's intellectual property rights regime. Even the participation of Hindu girls in beauty pageants, viewed as demeaning to the religion, was proof of the negative side of globalisation. For Islamic revivalists in Malaysia, on the other hand, pornography on the net and the

propagation of 'yellow culture' are among the adverse consequences of globalisation that have to be repelled and resisted. They have also been critical of WTO's investment rules which are detrimental to the interests of developing nations.

However, it is not on issues related to the economic and cultural dimensions of globalisation that revivalist thinking is a problem. It is in their understanding of, and approach to, their own tradition, and how they should relate to 'the other' that the revivalists seem to falter. The Hindu revivalists, for instance, emphasise rituals and symbols connected with their religion. Building a temple, resurrecting an ancient rite or ensuring that a certain ritual is meticulously observed, would be the essence of faith for the revivalists. At the same time, they are determined to re-write Indian history purportedly to give Hinduism its legitimate place. This is part of the attempt to right the wrongs allegedly committed against the Hindus by Muslims, Christians and other enemies of the religion. Since the mainstay of the ruling coalition in India is a Hindu revivalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the revivalists are in a position to implement at least a part of their agenda.

Not unexpectedly, the activities of the BJP and the revivalists have generated some apprehension among the large Muslim and small Christian minorities. The destruction of India's oldest mosque, the Babri mosque, in Delhi in 1992 was an example of the zealotry that the revivalists had unleashed. The religious riots that followed the Babri incident, first in Delhi then in Bombay, which claimed thousands of lives, revealed in all their ugliness the threat that religious fanaticism posed to Indian society. Muslim fears about Hindu communalism are shared to some extent by the Christians. A couple of dastardly killings of Christians allegedly by Hindus have only aggravated their sense of insecurity.

Religious revivalism of this sort with its pronounced antipathy towards 'the other', it is obvious, does not help inter-faith or inter-civilizational dialogue. If anything, it widens the gulf between the communities. Unfortunately, this is what is also happening in Pakistan where fanatical elements within the Muslim majority have been utterly callous in their attitude towards the Christian and Hindu minorities and in Sri Lanka, where a small group of Buddhist monks are in the forefront of a chauvinistic movement to constrict further the rights of the Tamil minority.

In Malaysia, the situation is somewhat different. The Islamic revivalists are, on the whole, more accommodative in their approach to the non-Muslim minorities, compared to most other countries in the region. But then the minorities constitute almost 40 per cent of the population.

The revivalists profess an interest in dialoguing with them though it appears from the meetings that have taken place that they are only keen on propagating their version of an Islamic state to the non-Muslims. They have yet to appreciate the simple fact that the quintessence of dialogue is listening and learning, listening to the other's story and learning from his or her experience.

The track record of the revivalists in different Asian settings demonstrates that when groups return to religion and re-assert their identity, it need not lead to more amicable inter-community relations. On the contrary, it can even make the situation much worse especially if there are other conditions present that portend towards conflict.

While there are religious groups that are exclusive and communal, there are others, which we have alluded to, that are genuinely committed to inter-faith, inter-civilizational dialogue. They may be few and far between but because they are inclusive and universal in outlook they hold the key to inter-civilizational understanding and empathy in the future.

There are two important characteristics about these groups and the individuals associated with them. Apart from their inclusive attitude, they also seek to focus upon the substantive, as against the symbolic, dimension of religion. For them justice and freedom, love and compassion, equality and integrity, modesty and humility, restraint and discipline, and the efforts to translate these fundamental values, into laws, policies and institutions, constitute the essence of faith. This does not mean that they do not appreciate the role of forms and symbols, rituals and practices in religion. They do, but they realise that the meaning and message behind a symbol or ritual is what endows it with strength and vitality.

Because their approach is inclusive and the values they espouse are not only universal but also identifiable with other religious communities, these groups and individuals will be completely at ease with inter-civilizational dialogue. In almost every country in Asia, there are groups like this, though their influence is limited. Among the leading lights of religious universalism - as against religious revivalism - in Asia today would be Swami Agnivesh of India, Ariyaratne of Sri Lanka, Nurcholis Madjid of Indonesia and Bishop Labayan of the Philippines. Though these four individuals come from different religious backgrounds, they speak the same global language - of a God who belongs to all and yet to none; of the human being as God's trustee with the sacred responsibility of advocating what is right and prohibiting what is wrong; of universal, perennial values as the foundation of an ethical society; and of rights, responsibilities, roles

and relationships shaped by the set values that provide human life with harmony and equilibrium.

The alternative visions of these and other individuals resonate with the outlook of a couple of Asian political leaders who realise the importance of civilizational dialogue. The former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, for instance, initiated a dialogue between Islam and Confucianism in 1995. No high-level government leader in Malaysia before him had undertaken such a task. Anwar argues eloquently that:

The primary motive of civilizational dialogue must be a global convivencia a harmonious and enriching experience of living together among people of diverse religions and cultures. To enter a more meaningful stage of engagement between Asia and the West, it must be an encounter between equals, between cherished ideals and values that will serve to challenge our pride and end our prejudices.

The other Asian leader who has been in the forefront of inter-civilizational dialogue is, of course, the President of Iran, Mohammed Khatami. It was he who proposed that the United Nations declare 2001 as the year of Dialogue among Civilisations. Displaying an intimate grasp of the issues involved in civilizational dialogue he observed in a lecture to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1997:

With the terrible gap between the rich and the poor in various communities and countries of the world, how can we naively call for peace and mutual understanding? How can we call for dialogue if this inequality persists and if no fundamental steps are taken to help the deprived peoples of the world? On the threshold of the third millennium, the destiny of our world is common for all. For this destiny to be a just and happy one, the only course of action is a dialogue among various cultures and civilisations. We should remember that although in the twentieth century the sword held sway, and some people won and others lost with each sweep of its blade the next century should revolve around dialogue. Otherwise, this sword will re-emerge as a two-edged weapon that will spare no one, and it is quite possible that the mighty warmongers will be among its first victims.

At the beginning of the third millennium, and in the year of civilisational dialogue, it is apparent that there are governments, NGOs and individuals who are deeply committed to the noble goal of bringing people

of different religions, cultures and civilisations closer together on the basis of shared universal spiritual and moral values. But there are impediments. The global system is one of them. Exclusive, communal attitudes within religious and cultural communities is another. However, the realities that challenge all of us - more and more societies are becoming ethnically heterogeneous; nations everywhere are becoming more and more interdependent - leave us with no choice. Either we dialogue with one another or we die together. That is the promise and the peril.

Concluding Remarks

Hans van Ginkel

Rector of the United Nations University

Dialogue of civilizations has great potential to help prevent conflicts – on the international, national and local levels – by reducing misunderstandings and mistrust, and by laying the foundation for non-violent resolutions to conflicts. It does so by helping us understand what unites us across all boundaries, through a joint exploration of the deeper, ancient roots of cultures and civilizations, and through a better mutual understanding of the values and traditions that underlie present day thinking and action in different cultures. In this way, inter-civilizational dialogue helps to overcome the misperception of diversity as a threat to one's own individual or group identity, which so often prepares the ground for the abuse of notions of culture, ethnicity or religion in the escalation of conflicts.

Dialogue of civilizations also has enormous potential for solving current and future economic, social and political problems by encouraging people to share their experiences and through joint implementation of remedies. At its best, inter-civilizational dialogue can result in a collective sense of shared goals, enabling us to address the most important questions of all: What kind of future world do we want to live in? How can we work together to solve the problems facing humankind today, and to begin creating that future? This does not necessarily imply a common approach

to every issue, but without such a constructive dialogue the future is less likely to be one that we would want. After all, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan has pointed out, we live in a world of great diversity, but a diversity based on shared values of tolerance and freedom; a world which is defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, its insistence on fundamental, universal human rights, and its belief in the right of people everywhere to have a say in how they are governed.

From the many discussions and dialogues that we have had during the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, including the UNU/UNESCO conference in Tokyo and Kyoto, we have acquired much more knowledge and a deeper insight into what is truly important for obtaining a better understanding of other people from very diverse geographical, historical, social and cultural backgrounds. In the following paragraphs, I would like to concentrate on exploring some key elements underlying a meaningful dialogue of civilizations, and on describing some concrete methods and practices that should prove useful in facilitating such dialogue. Before doing so, however, one important point needs to be emphasized: “Dialogue” is fundamentally different from a “debate” or from “negotiations” in that its goal is not to make one’s opinion or viewpoint prevail over that of another, or even to always reach a consensus. Rather, dialogue aims at better mutual understanding of the values, norms, historical experiences and cultural reality underlying the words and actions of others. This difference is crucial, and we should always bear it in mind.

To attain the ambitious but necessary goal of establishing a true and sincere dialogue of civilizations as a new paradigm in international and intercultural relations, a positive attitude towards cultural diversity has to be nourished at all levels of society. At the core of such a positive attitude are the following:

- *Knowledge:* Diversity is often perceived as a threat to one’s own individual or group identity. Once knowledge takes the place of pre-conceived opinions, stereotypes and prejudices about others, “otherness” will be perceived less as a threat than as a source of enrichment. In fact, the highly diverse “world culture” that is developing today derives its richness from the variety of cultures developed by humankind throughout history. It is essential that we capitalize on this wealth of diversity.
- *Respect:* In order to enter into a meaningful dialogue aimed at better mutual understanding, every individual has to be prepared to

exercise tolerance towards other ways of thinking, and towards people whose daily lives are based on values and experiences other than their own. But tolerance alone is not enough: Equally important is the notion of “respect” – for others as well as for oneself. While tolerance implies not interfering with other people’s ways of living or thinking, “respect” attaches a positive value to what one is or does – respect thus goes beyond mere tolerance.

It is often a combination of lack of self-respect and not being respected by others that leads to conflicts. Education, understood as an ongoing process, including both formal and informal, regular and non-regular modes of teaching and learning, plays a crucial role in nourishing such respect, as well as an appreciation of diversity. In order to do this effectively, however, education should not attempt to convey one uniform understanding of the world. Rather, education should help us appreciate the fact that, while there is usually more than one perspective on a given problem, there is also more than one way of solving each particular problem.

- *Search for unity in diversity:* A pluralistic view of human identity helps to illustrate how universality and particularity coexist at all times. Every person or social group in fact reflects a multiplicity of traditions and cultures. For this reason, all individuals differ in some respects, but in other respects have much in common. Herein lies the basis for dialogue, and at the same time its goal: To discover what one has in common with members of other cultures, religions, and ethnic, social or political groups, thereby fostering increased awareness of the common ethical principles underlying value systems belonging to different civilizations and providing a basis for the development of feelings of joint responsibility among future generations.
- *Recognizing the dynamism of culture and civilizations:* To avoid limitations to the discussion and practice of a dialogue of civilizations, the terms “civilization” and “culture” should not be perceived as fixed entities. As history has shown, neither cultures nor civilizations are static, but instead undergo a permanent process of change and renewal. Also, both “culture” and “civilization” should not be understood as entities defined solely by religion, state boundaries, or economic and political dominance, but as referring rather loosely to groups of people who share certain ways of organizing their societies - the traditions and values underlying their

social, cultural, political and economic institutions in the broadest sense.

- *Inclusiveness*: Dialogue of civilizations refers to the act of listening to and learning to understand the beliefs, judgments, and concerns of people not only with a different cultural, ethnic or religious background, but also with different political convictions, social positions and levels of economic power. The process of dialogue should be open and inclusive, carefully restraining attempts at “globalizing” the specific value systems of those currently in power politically or economically. Any social or cultural group should be able to join the dialogue and contribute to the process of defining the “global ethos.” In this way, the future “world culture” will not be based simply on the worldwide expansion of one culture, but rather on the globalization of diverse contributions, the blending of many cultures worldwide, benefiting in this way from the wealth of diversity created over time throughout our entire world.
- *Readiness to transform*: Inter-civilizational dialogue is an ongoing process in which the participants show not only a willingness to exchange information by sharing their own thoughts and listening to others, but also are open to the possibility of transforming their own world views by integrating other perspectives into their own ways of thinking. The recognition of differences alone does not lead to mutual understanding. It is only through a genuine receptivity to other viewpoints that mutual appreciation occurs. Only this openness can bring reconciliation across longstanding, seemingly unsurpassable barriers, as recent history in Europe has shown.
Let me now turn to methods and practices that facilitate the exploration of different civilizations through dialogue.
- *Awareness of one’s own cultural norms*: A basic, though all too easily neglected prerequisite for a respectful dialogue between members of different civilizations, is the recognition that no judgment should be made about the norms of other cultures unless one has first critically examined similar norms within one’s own culture. More often than not we rush to generalized, often negative conclusions about other cultures, without realizing that all or parts of our own society or social group adhere to norms and values that we ourselves might not share completely.
- *Mediation*: In some instances, it may prove helpful, if not even essential, to involve a mediator in inter-civilizational exchanges about highly contentious issues. Such mediators could be

individuals taking part in the direct exchange between members of different civilizations, offering interpretations of the issues at stake from the point of view of their own experiences in order to soften the impact of a direct confrontation. They could also render their services in a more indirect manner, by facilitating access to information about other cultures through the translation or dissemination of original sources.

- *Triangulation*: Built on the same basic idea as the concept of mediation – the use of an additional frame of reference to arrive at a more objective judgment of other cultural values and norms than would be attainable by simply comparing them to one's own – is the method of “triangulation”, introduced by Junzo Kawada from Hiroshima City University. It suggests that, when embarking upon inter-civilizational dialogue, there should always be a minimum of three members, each coming from a different civilization. This way, each cultural norm expressed by a member of one civilization is examined from the perspectives of more than one other cultural frame of reference, thus greatly enhancing the objectivity of the exchange. Dialogue therefore might benefit from a further development into “trialogues” or even “multilogues”.

However, it is important to remember that civilizations are abstract entities – civilizations do not enter into a dialogue. It is people who are at the heart of the matter. The actors in a dialogue of civilizations will always be individuals, whose ways of thinking and values are influenced by their civilizational backgrounds, and who engage in a dialogue with other individuals, whose identities again are shaped by many influences, including their geographical, socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The relevance of this very obvious observation lies in the fact that it assigns responsibility to engage in dialogue to all of us, irrespective of our profession or place in society, and encourages us to embrace dialogue in both our public and private lives.

We should also not forget that while the actual dialogue will be carried out by individuals – including, but by no means limited to, politicians and government officials – it is largely in the hands of political actors on all levels, from the local and national to the regional and international arenas, to create an environment conducive to inter-civilizational encounters that lead to a meaningful dialogue. These inter-civilizational encounters should take place, not only between people in different parts and countries of the world, but also between people within the same country, the same town or village. This is a challenge that governments should rush to take up.

Annexes

I - United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which, *inter alia*, call for collective effort to strengthen friendly relations among nations, remove threats to peace and foster international cooperation in resolving international issues of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, Recognizing the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity, Aware that positive and mutually beneficial interaction among civilizations has continued throughout human history despite impediments arising from intolerance, disputes and wars, Emphasizing the importance of tolerance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means to reach understanding, remove threats to peace and strengthen interaction and exchange among civilizations, Noting the designation of 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance, and recognizing that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate universal promotion and protection of human rights and constitute sound foundations for civil society, social harmony and peace, Reaffirming that civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of mankind, providing a source of inspiration and progress for humanity at large, Welcoming the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium,

1. Expresses its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations;

2. *Decides* to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
3. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, *Scientific* and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations, to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to present a provisional report on activities in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, and a final report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

II- Report by the Director-General of UNESCO on the Execution of the Programme adopted by the General Conference: United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

(UNESCO Framework for Action;
UNESCO document 161 EX/INF.14 of 21 May 2001)

I. BACKGROUND

1. By resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. In doing so, the Assembly emphasized the importance of tolerance and recognized "the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity". The resolution invited "Governments, the United Nations system, including UNESCO to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject ...".
2. Subsequently, by its resolution 55/23 of 11 January 2001 the General Assembly stated that "civilizations are not confined to individual nation-States, but rather encompass different cultures within the same civilization ..." and that "globalization brings greater interrelatedness among people and increased interaction among cultures and civilizations". Moreover, the Assembly noted that "the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations ... constitutes a profoundly human challenge that invites us to embrace the interdependence of humankind and its rich cultural diversity. The General Assembly also invited "Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations to continue and further intensify planning and organizing appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, inter alia, through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities".
3. By resolution 55/23, the General Assembly also decided to devote two days of plenary meetings at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, on 3 and 4 December 2001, to the consideration of the item, including consideration of any follow-up measures, and commemoration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and encouraged Member States and observers to be represented at the highest possible political level.
4. General Conference resolution 31 of 17 November 1999 endorsed the terms of proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, welcoming "the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium". It also recognized "the importance of the values embodied in the resolution, such as the importance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means of reaching understanding, removing threats to peace and strengthening interaction and exchange among civilizations".

5. The General Conference further recommended that "UNESCO play a leading role in the organization of activities of a cultural, educational, scientific and social nature, which aim to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations, through, for instance, active collaboration in the organization of special events, conferences and colloquia on themes related to intercultural dialogue"; and urged "Member States to give the year 2001, the United Nations year of Dialogue among Civilizations, all due prominence and to support activities aimed at facilitating and promoting dialogue among civilizations".

II. PRINCIPLES

6. The guiding principles for the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations are intrinsically linked to the three fundamental principles of universality, diversity and dignity, which will guide UNESCO's activities during the forthcoming Medium-Term Strategy (see Draft 31 C/4). These principles are closely related to the values of justice, solidarity, tolerance, sharing and equity, respect for human rights and democratic principles.
7. The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations represents an opportunity for UNESCO to highlight, in all its domains, the accomplishments by various civilizations and cultures, to promote the concept of dialogue, and to facilitate dynamic and inclusive modalities for dialogue between cultures and civilizations in a globalized world.
8. UNESCO's efforts are based on an understanding of the term "civilization" as a universal and plural phenomenon, nourished by each society's specific characteristics, and encompassing a multiplicity of dimensions (economic, political, social, environmental, educational, cultural, scientific, philosophical, spiritual etc.). In contrast to the evolutionary vision that separates civilizations in order to place them in a hierarchical order or oppose them, UNESCO is emphasizing that there is no civilization which has not been enriched by interaction and exchange with other civilizations: civilizations are profoundly "intercultural". They are founded on sharing and mutual enrichment through dialogue.
9. Intercultural exchanges have intensified in scope and pace with globalization. It has resulted in cultural penetration and overlapping, the coexistence in a given social space of several cultural traditions, and in a more vivid interpenetration of cultural experience and practice. In such a context, the notion of "civilization" carries with it the implicit assumption of a homogenous, integral, and coherent unity, which hardly corresponds to a lived reality. Rather, the question of promoting and protecting cultural diversity lies at the core of the larger framework of dialogue among civilizations in the contemporary context.
10. It should be recalled that the general principles for dealing with diversity were spelled out clearly by the World Commission on Culture and Development in 1995 and endorsed by the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm 1998.
11. In today's knowledge-based societies, cultures are rapidly becoming transboundary creations exposed and exchanged, often instantaneously, throughout the world via the media and the Internet. Certain types of activities – networking, building of solidarity, lobbying and reflection – suggest that culture must increasingly be regarded as a process rather than as a finished "product". The challenge for

- governments and civil societies is to find ways of channelling such exchanges – “dialogues” – through democratic practices that respect human rights, gender equity, tolerance, sustainability.
12. UNESCO is facing new types of challenges in the struggle to promote cultural diversity, to preserve the world’s heritage, including its intangible domains, and to foster dialogue among cultures and among civilizations. Cultural diversity has come under siege owing to the preponderance of limited cultural and linguistic approaches and content, effectively disseminated through new and old media. Indigenous people and cultures as well as local knowledge are most affected and UNESCO has an important mission to help preserve their uniqueness and identity.
 13. Information and communications technologies hold the potential to foster hitherto unknown types of engagement, contacts and interaction among individuals, peoples, communities, nations, cultures and civilizations that can be harnessed to build understanding, solidarity and peace at all levels and to reduce isolation and exclusion so often associated with poverty. Participatory governance, the promotion of creativity, intensified intercultural dialogue, new forms of cultural exchange and dialogue among civilizations leading to better understanding and exchanges are other potential benefits and areas of intervention for the Organization.
 14. Many of the problems faced by today’s world have arisen as a consequence of differences *within* nations. Dialogue therefore begins at home. While globalization is creating new opportunities for cultural exchange, conflicts arising within nation-States often involve cultural matters. New forms of intolerance and aggression are emerging. Xenophobia and racism, ethnic wars, prejudice and stigma, segregation and discrimination, mainly based on ethnicity and gender, are widespread, generating violence and suffering. Tensions between migration and citizenship have intensified, as cultural minorities increasingly articulate their cultural rights as human rights. According to the International Organization for Migration, there are currently some 150 million migrants in the world, a figure expected to rise to 230 million by 2050. In ever more countries, migrants are sustaining economic activities and social service systems. Understanding the relationship with “others” therefore has acquired a new urgency, and this will be one focus in UNESCO’s many initiatives throughout the Year 2001.
 15. The acknowledgement, approval and even celebration of diversity does imply pluralism. Cultural pluralism refers to the way in which different nation-States, civil groups, and national and international institutions understand and organize cultural diversity. The manner in which diversity is defined and acted upon by governments and civil society will determine whether it is to lead to greater overall social creativity, cohesion and inclusion – or to violence and exclusion. Equity and cultural recognition are major avenues to turning cultural diversity into an opportunity rather than an obstacle – and they hold the key to sustainable pluralism. Hence, the very apt motto by the United Nations for the Year “Diversity is not a threat”.
 16. Real dialogue occurs when a full recognition of the different “other” generates a preoccupation with and responsibility for the “other”. In many respects, it is an invitation to re-think the idea of humanity. The capacity of human beings to feel empathy and compassion for others goes deeper than the mere coexistence of different ethno-cultural groups. Such feelings touch the most profound spiritual

nature of human beings and should be given overt recognition in social and political discourse relating to a global society.

III. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES ALREADY CARRIED OUT BY UNESCO

17. In September 2000, UNESCO organized a launch event for the Year at United Nations Headquarters and it has since carried out a broad range of activities, in cooperation with Member States, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The launch took the form of a Presidential Round Table on "The Dialogue among Civilizations" held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 5 September 2000, on the eve of the Millennium Summit. The round table was organized in cooperation with the United Nations and with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ten Heads of State and two Ministers of Foreign Affairs participated in the session, sharing their views of how the dialogue among civilizations could lead to a new paradigm of international relations that recognizes universally shared values while preserving and respecting cultural diversity. A group of internationally eminent scholars and thinkers also met the same day for a further debate.
18. UNESCO has produced a video on the proceedings of the Round Table on Dialogue among Civilizations. It will be made available on the Internet for UNESCO's field network, governments, National Commissions for UNESCO and other partners. A publication with the proceedings of the round table is in print and will shortly be released.
19. Since the launching event, UNESCO has contributed to many international events, including:
 - From 14 to 16 September 2000, UNESCO organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, an international congress on interreligious dialogue in the framework of the "Spiritual Convergence and Intercultural Dialogue" and the "East-West Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia".
 - In November 2000, UNESCO participated in the annual conference of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO in Ottawa, Canada. One of the main themes of this conference was devoted to the dialogue among civilizations.
 - In November 2000, UNESCO participated as the only United Nations Organization in the Second Quadrilateral Conference of Ancient Civilizations, bringing together parliamentary leaders from Egypt, Greece, Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy, held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran.
 - In December 2000, UNESCO organized in Paris a seminar for German journalists with briefings on the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations.
 - On 8 January 2001, UNESCO co-sponsored a major philharmonic concert with the Government of Lithuania at the Théâtre de Champs Elysées in Paris to inaugurate the Year.
 - On 5 February 2001, the Director-General delivered a guest lecture at the Oxford Centre for Islamic studies, United Kingdom, focusing on the renewed contexts for dialogue at all levels of society, the recognition of diversity inherent in the notion of dialogue, and its important potential for humanizing globalization.
 - On 8 and 9 February 2001, the Director-General addressed the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi, Kenya, in connection with its ministerial meeting devoted to the subject of the Dialogue among Civilizations and Sustainable Development.

- UNESCO also contributed to the Conference on Dialogue among Asian Civilizations, held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 17 and 18 February 2001.
 - The Director-General addressed the International Colloquium on the Indus Valley Civilization on the occasion of its inaugural ceremony held in Islamabad, Pakistan, 6 April 2001.
 - An international conference on "Dialogue among Civilizations" was held in Vilnius, Lithuania (23-26 April 2001), under the auspices of the President of Lithuania, the President of Poland and the Director-General of UNESCO.
20. During the remainder of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, UNESCO will organize, initiate or sponsor a range of activities in its fields of competence – education, culture, science and communication – which aim at facilitating and promoting dialogue communities, nations, cultures and civilizations that can be harnessed to build understanding, solidarity and peace at all levels and to reduce isolation and exclusion so often associated with poverty. Participatory governance, the promotion of creativity, intensified intercultural dialogue, new forms of cultural exchange and dialogue among civilizations leading to better understanding and exchanges are other potential benefits and areas of intervention for the Organization.
21. Several UNESCO special days and observances, festivals (especially youth festivals) as well as activities by the UNESCO Prizes and Chairs will be oriented towards the theme of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Among the Prizes selected for such focus are the "UNESCO Prize for Peace Education" (10 December 2001), the "UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize" (during the General Conference, 22 October-10 November 2001), the "UNESCO 'International Music Council' Music Prize" (September or October 2001), as well as the forthcoming "UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence" (16 November 2002).
22. Towards the end of 2001, an issue of the *Courier* will be devoted to the theme of dialogue among civilizations. This will enable the Organization to take stock of the results and main features of the many events held throughout the Year. It will help to capture the significance of dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world where cultural diversity poses new challenges and opportunities for mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.
23. UNESCO has also created a dedicated website for the Year – available in English, French and Spanish. This internet site will continue to be maintained and expanded. It contains key information latest news on ongoing activities and forthcoming events and is linked to numerous other sites of relevance, among them the United Nations website. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001>

<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001/en/events.htm>

IV. THE FRAMEWORK OF ACTION FOR UNESCO'S FUTURE ACTIVITIES

24. At the policy level and level of strategic orientation, the dialogue among civilizations will be a significant issue for UNESCO's activities, especially in the Culture Programme, not only during the Year but beyond the Medium-term Strategy covering the period 2002-2007 (Draft 31 C/4). One of the three major strategic

- thrusts and objectives for the Culture Programme centres around universality, diversity and participation. As regards the Programme and Budget for 2002-2003 (Draft 31 C/5), the principal priority for Major Programme IV has been defined as "Diversity, cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue".
25. Through its mankind and regional histories and through interregional, intercultural projects (notably the Silk Road and the Slave Route projects), UNESCO has already shed light on the complex processes involved in cultural interaction and their relevance for today's life. The activities undertaken during the United Nations Year for the Dialogue among Civilizations will provide opportunities to reflect on these relationships and their present-day implications from different angles. Through conferences, workshops, publications and a dedicated website, UNESCO will promote awareness about these processes and relationships. It will also stimulate the conduct of research in order to document and demonstrate in more detail the benefits and enrichments civilizations and cultures have drawn from each other, for the larger good of humanity. UNESCO will support the creation of online networking facilities and interaction among research institutions internationally to promote synergies, collaboration and multidisciplinary results.
 26. But beyond culture, it is clear that the dialogue among civilizations is of direct relevance for all other areas of the Organization. The dialogue among civilizations transcends dimensions of culture and heritage, affecting all areas of UNESCO's competence. It extends to a much larger agenda: different ways in which societies relate to and protect the environment, express solidarity, harness scientific and technological knowledge in innovative ways and express their societal experience and life through literature and the arts. UNESCO will seek to introduce aspects of the need and value of the dialogue among civilizations into curricula for history, geography and citizenship education.
 27. All UNESCO's sectors, with input from field offices, will be actively involved in the preparation and implementation of relevant activities under the umbrella of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations within their specific spheres of competence.
 28. The overall UNESCO focal point is the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) who will be responsible for the coordination of all activities among the various sectors, and will ensure liaison with the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.
 29. Relevant UNESCO activities will also be organized in connection with the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), which will promote a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations. The first year of the Decade has been designated by the Director-General to focus on the dialogue among civilizations. The Decade places children at the centre of programmatic action and it will be specifically geared to their needs and involvement. Priority will be given to education with the aim of preparing children for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins.
 30. Activities in the various programme sectors include:

Education

Promoting universally shared values

An important dimension of UNESCO's role as catalyst for international cooperation in the pursuit of Education for All (EFA) goals consists in promoting new approaches to improve the quality of education for all throughout life, including the values forming the basis of social cohesion and respect for human dignity and linguistic diversity.

Revision of school textbooks

Support is being provided to Member States for the revision of school textbooks with a view to removing prejudices and stereotypes against specific groups in this literature. This action is undertaken on an intersectoral basis (ED/CLT) as it implies revisiting the general history of countries and revision of curricula. Particular attention is given to countries afflicted by internal conflicts.

Human rights education

The "Intercultural education and education for human rights" project, financed by the Government of Italy, is being implemented in Albania. Its objectives are to promote a climate of intercultural understanding and respect for human rights in all educational establishments, through the introduction of the dimension of peace, human rights and democracy in the curricula, both at formal and non-formal levels.

Promotion of multilingual education

Within the LINGUAPAX network, a Language Institute on regional languages in the Caribbean region (Haiti) is planned, the preparatory work on the UNESCO Report on the world's languages has progressed, and the preparation of specialized teaching materials for language policies in education has been promoted.

International understanding

The approximately 6,500 institutions in 166 countries, which are part of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), have been invited to undertake special activities for the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. An International Friendship Encounter "Sport for a Culture of Peace" will be held in June, in Dinard, Saint Malo, France.

Promotion of student-teacher exchanges (and UNESCO Chairs) and internationalization of higher education

UNESCO will promote policy dialogue between all actors and stakeholders in education and enhance the exchange of information and expertise on innovative approaches and local solutions through advocacy and networks of learners, educational professionals and decision-makers. Measures will be taken to facilitate the mobility of teachers and students and to encourage broad participation of women.

Sciences

Tolerance

UNESCO's activities follow the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and the related Action Plan, adopted by the General Conference at its 28th session as follow-up to the United Nations Year of Tolerance. Special emphasis is placed on education and

on sensitization for tolerance as a universally recognized value which transcends nations and communities.

The International Year of Mobilization Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001) and the World Conference

UNESCO is actively involved in the observance of the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The main event will be the World Conference against Racism (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001).

Preparations for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001)

UNESCO has contributed to all preparatory meetings for the World Conference. Close links are maintained with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Mobilization of partners

UNESCO's traditional partners are being mobilized to contribute actively to the Year and the Conference. Among these are the UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance, the UNESCO Associated Schools, as well as various human rights research and training institutions.

Publications, information and media outreach

Special publications, handbooks and kits will be published during 2001. A compilation of articles by eminent human rights specialists on various aspects of discrimination, as well as the texts of major standard-setting instruments in this field, is being prepared in cooperation with OHCHR. *A Guide to Human Rights Institutions, Standards, Mechanisms* will be dedicated to the International Year, as will *Human Rights: Major International Instruments, Status as at 31 May 2001*.

Social sciences and dialogue

An International Colloquium on "Les Civilisations dans le regard de l'autre" will be co-organized with LEcole Pratique Des Hautes Etudes, Paris at UNESCO Headquarters on 13 and 14 December 2001.

Follow-up to the World Conference on Science

Worldwide cooperation among scientists can make a constructive contribution to global security and to the development of peaceful interactions between different nations, societies and cultures. UNESCO's programmes in science focus on issues that are at the root of potential conflicts and ensure that the ethical dimensions of the current scientific and technological evolution are fully addressed.

The World Water Assessment Programme

In accordance with the outcomes of the World Water Vision project, UNESCO regards the resolution of water-related disputes, especially at the international level, to be dependent, to a large extent, upon the reconciliation of different cultural perceptions and value systems. These perspectives form an integrated part of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and its subcomponents.

Scientific and traditional knowledge holders

In order to strengthen the dialogue between scientific and traditional knowledge holders, intersectoral field projects are under way in Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Haiti, and Jamaica. The enhancement of natural resource management through the creation of synergies between science-based approaches and local and indigenous knowledge is also pursued in a series of international meetings and forums of scientists organized by UNESCO.

Culture

Intercultural dialogue

The priority given to dialogue among cultures and civilizations will focus, in both reflection and action, on two closely linked lines of emphasis: the promotion of mutual knowledge of cultures, civilizations and spiritual traditions and the highlighting and recognition of instances of interaction and cross-fertilization. Cultural tourism constitutes another thrust of the Organization's action for the protection and revitalization of cultural diversity, which, by its very nature, affords an opportunity for dialogue among civilizations. During 2001, the intercultural "Route" documentaries and television programmes will be re diffused, and a new publication: "Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce" widely distributed.

Examples of planned events

"Reflections on Interculturality", Barcelona, Spain (Centre of Documentation and Research on Interculturality (CIDOB), 28-30 June "International Conference on Education, Religions and Science on the Silk Routes", Almaty, Kazakhstan, October 2001 (CLT/SC) "Intercultural Dialogue in Central Africa and in the Region of the Big Lakes", Libreville, Gabon, Autumn 2001

Participatory pluralism

Based on best practice analysis, UNESCO will develop guidelines for participatory pluralism, and seek to sensitize national and local authorities as to the crucial role to be carried out by cultural and educational institutions in this regard. Notions of dialogue, debate, tolerance and mutual respect for the other irrespective of their origins, gender, race or creed are at the core of this approach.

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

In the framework of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995- 2004), UNESCO will apply an interdisciplinary approach towards ensuring the full participation of minorities and marginalized and vulnerable groups in devising, implementing and monitoring policies and actions which directly affect them. An International Colloquium and book fair on "Indigenous identities: oral, written expressions and new technologies" will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2001.

Intangible cultural heritage

The ceremony of the first Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity will take place at UNESCO Headquarters on 18 May 2001. "UNESCO will encourage nominations for the programme of "Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage" and stimulate the use of the Guidelines for the establishment of a Living Human Treasures system. This will feed into the

preparatory work for a normative instrument which is intended to improve the Recommendation on the safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and create new conceptual and legal framework for intangible cultural heritage. An exhibition on "Youth and world heritage" will be co-organized by UNESCO and the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) in the context of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the International Year of Volunteers at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 25 November 2001 to 9 January 2002. The exhibition will be accompanied by a symposium entitled "Youth and World Heritage: A Privileged Space for Dialogue among Civilizations".

Communication and Information

Intercultural communication

The "Screen Without Frontiers" project provides a database of television programmes to public service television stations in developing countries, fostering the circulation of audiovisual productions from South to South. A series of CreaTV workshops will be held during 2001 in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, with the aim of co-screening productions and promoting cultural diversity through audiovisual media.

Networking of institutions

In Central Asia, "HeritageNet" seeks to converge methods of research via digital catalogues, enhance access to multilingual websites, establish virtual exhibitions between different museums, and promote international dissemination of e-digests on cultural development. La Bibliothèque virtuelle méditerranéenne (MEDLIB) highlights, via the Internet, the documentary heritage of the Mediterranean world produced by different establishments within and outside, the countries of the region.

Enhancing mutual understanding

In collaboration with EBU, Europe by Satellite and the Finnish TV YLE, UNESCO and the Baltic Media Centre will set up a Daily Regional Satellite News and Current Affairs Exchange Programme for southern Eastern Europe. The objectives are to ensure the free flow of information in the region, to assist in de-escalating tension and conflict between and within the countries of the SEE, to ensure the access to regional news, and to enhance the independence and professionalism of public television stations.

Women and Youth

Cross-cultural encounters

As 2001 is also the International Year of Volunteers, UNESCO will develop pilot projects on youth volunteering, with a focus on intercultural learning aspects, in cooperation with international volunteer NGOs. UNESCO will be further organizing a series of round tables or special action days on the theme of the "Dialogue of civilizations" within the framework of several international youth festivals. " Arab Women in a knowledge society" This project envisages to focus on the role of Arab women in the creation and sharing of knowledge, their access to and use of information-communication technologies, and their contribution to humankind's cultural and scientific heritage. It is expected to provide a forum for

discussion among Arab women and between Arab women and women of other regions and cultures of the world.

V. PRINCIPAL ACTORS

31. The principal actors in all activities will be UNESCO Member States, National Commissions, relevant international and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO Secretariat units including field offices, the scientific community, and the media. UNESCO will seek to mobilize decision-makers, intellectuals, educators, and members of the scientific community in a series of regional, international conferences and meetings. UNESCO Clubs, Parliamentarians, 21st Century Partners, and key partners from the private sector will also be associated with UNESCO activities. The electronic "Global Constituents Agora" will play an important role in this outreach effort.
32. National Commissions will be invited to foster awareness about the Year in collaboration with the media, NGOs and schools (through country coordinators of associated schools in Member States) with the aim of promoting the publication of brochures and leaflets in local languages for wide distribution to the representatives of civil society, parliamentarians, organizers of academic lectures and symposia, and to social events such as "Day of Dialogue among Civilizations" in schools and universities.

VI. CONCLUSION

33. UNESCO's contribution to the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations will be both significant and highly visible. In accordance with its mandate, and while drawing on the vast experience of the Organization in this domain, UNESCO will implement programmes and activities in its spheres of competence in order to promote and facilitate dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The motto chosen by the United Nations "Diversity is not a threat" is most appropriate and fully endorsed by UNESCO.
34. In today's world, the need for dialogue is increasingly relevant and acute, both at the national and international levels. The faster pace and huge volume of global interaction have prompted a greater awareness of cultural diversity. While it has given wider scope to the expression of such diversity, it has also permitted the representation of differences such as hierarchy, domination and conflict. Difference is often used as an excuse for intolerance, hatred and the annihilation of others. Yet the very same differences, in a framework of political equality, human rights and responsibility for others, can – and often do – offer the opportunity to explore new horizons and to enrich our lives.
35. In many ways, the human trajectory is the history of different answers to the same questions. How do people behave towards those of a different community? How should they behave? These questions are as relevant at the level of interpersonal relations as in interstate, international and intercultural contexts. Our choices in relating to others with different cultures, traditions and heritages will shape the societies of the twenty-first century.
36. The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations is therefore a unique opportunity for UNESCO to take a fresh look at the potentialities of dialogue in a globalized world, to provide the concept with new meaning, and to facilitate dynamic and inclusive modalities for imbibing it with vivacity. The challenge is to

broaden the spectrum and to orient the dialogue, not only towards the historic past but also towards the present and future,so that it becomes an instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, a vehicle for diversity and pluralism, especially in culture, with the ultimate aim of furthering the common good.

III - 31 C/Resolution 39 adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 20 October 2001: Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism.

Resolution 39

The General Conference

1. *Expresses* its sorrow and indignation at the tragic events of 11 September 2001 in the United States of America and the enormous loss of human life, destruction and damage affecting world peace and security;
2. *Recalling* resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) of the United Nations Security Council as well as resolution 56/1 of the United Nations General Assembly, which inter alia strongly condemns the heinous acts of terrorism and “also urgently calls for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism, and stresses that those responsible for aiding, supporting or harbouring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of such acts will be held accountable”;
3. *Considers* that all acts of terrorism are a denial of the principles and values of the United Nations Charter, the UNESCO Constitution and the UNESCO Declaration on Principles of Tolerance (1995) and represent an attack against humanity as a whole;
4. *Considers* that the present challenges require a coherent and coordinated response by the organizations of the United Nations system as a whole;
5. *Rejects* the association of terrorism with any particular religion, religious belief or nationality;
6. *Affirms* that the values of tolerance, universality, mutual understanding, respect for cultural diversity and the promotion of a culture of peace, which are central to UNESCO’s mission, have acquired new relevance for inspiring action by international organizations, States, civil society and individual citizens;
7. *Recalling* in particular that the year 2001 is being observed as United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and bearing in mind the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, affirms that such dialogue constitutes a fundamental challenge based on the unity of humankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of its cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture;
8. *Noting* that intolerance, discrimination, inequality, ignorance, poverty and exclusion, among others, provide fertile ground for terrorism, affirms that while acts of terrorism can never be justified whatever the motives, the world community requires a global and inclusive vision of development based on the observance of human rights, mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and the alleviation of poverty, founded on justice, equity and solidarity, to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations and segments of society;
9. *Expresses* its firm conviction that, based upon its mandate and within its areas of competence – education, science, culture and communication – UNESCO has a duty to contribute to the eradication of terrorism, drawing on its character as an intellectual and ethical organization, and invites the Director-General to take appropriate action through UNESCO programmes and studies.

Resolution adopted at the 11th plenary meeting, on 20 October 2001.

IV - 31 C/Resolution 25 adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 2 November 2001: UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

The General Conference,

Committed to the full implementation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognized legal instruments, such as the two International Covenants of 1966 relating respectively to civil and political rights and to economic, social and cultural rights, Recalling that the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO affirms "that the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfill in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern",

Further recalling Article I of the Constitution, which assigns to UNESCO among other purposes that of recommending "such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image", Referring to the provisions relating to cultural diversity and the exercise of cultural rights in the international instruments enacted by UNESCO, ¹ Reaffirming that culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs,²

Noting that culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy, Affirming that respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security,

Aspiring to greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, of awareness of the unity of humankind, and of the development of intercultural exchanges,

Considering that the process of globalization, facilitated by the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, though representing a challenge for cultural diversity, creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations,

1. Among which, in particular, the Florence Agreement of 1950 and its Nairobi Protocol of 1976, the Universal Copyright Convention of 1952, the Declaration of Principles on International Cultural Cooperation of 1966, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970), the Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972, the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice of 1978, the Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist of 1980, and the Recommendation on Safeguarding Traditional and Popular Culture of 1989.
2. This definition is in line with the conclusions of the World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT, Mexico City, 1982), of the World Commission on Culture and Development (Our Creative Diversity, 1995), and of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998).

Aware of the specific mandate which has been entrusted to UNESCO, within the United Nations system, to ensure the preservation and promotion of the fruitful diversity of cultures, Proclaims the following principles and adopts the present Declaration:

IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM

Article 1

Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 2

From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.

Article 3

Cultural diversity as a factor in development

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 4

Human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity

The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

Article 5

Cultural rights as an enabling environment for cultural diversity

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent. The flourishing of creative diversity requires the full implementation of cultural rights as defined in Article 27 of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights and in Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. All persons should therefore be able to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons should be entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons should be able to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 6

Towards access for all to cultural diversity

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

Article 7

Cultural heritage as the wellspring of creativity

Creation draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures. For this reason, heritage in all its forms must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures.

Article 8

Cultural goods and services: commodities of a unique kind

In the face of present-day economic and technological change, opening up vast prospects for creation and innovation, particular attention must be paid to the diversity of the supply of creative work, to due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and to the specificity of cultural goods and services which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods.

Article 9

Cultural policies as catalysts of creativity

While ensuring the free circulation of ideas and works, cultural policies must create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries that have the means to assert themselves at the local and global level. It is for each State, with due regard to its international obligations, to define its cultural policy and to implement it through the means it considers fit, whether by operational support or appropriate regulations.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Article 10

Strengthening capacities for creation and dissemination worldwide

In the face of current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods and services at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition, to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level.

Article 11

Building partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society

Market forces alone cannot guarantee the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, which is the key to sustainable human development. From this perspective, the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed.

Article 12

The role of UNESCO

UNESCO, by virtue of its mandate and functions, has the responsibility to:

- (a) Promote the incorporation of the principles set out in the present Declaration into the development strategies drawn up within the various intergovernmental bodies;
- (b) Serve as a reference point and a forum where States, international governmental and nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector may join together in elaborating concepts, objectives and policies in favour of cultural diversity;
- (c) Pursue its activities in standard-setting, awareness-raising and capacity-building in the areas related to the present Declaration within its fields of competence;
- (d) Facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan, the main lines of which are appended to the present Declaration.

MAIN LINES OF AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNESCO UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The Member States commit themselves to taking appropriate steps to disseminate widely the "UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity", in particular by cooperating with a view to achieving the following objectives:

1. Deepening the international debate on questions relating to cultural diversity, particularly in respect of its links with development and its impact on policy-making, at both national and international level; taking forward notably consideration of the opportunity of an international legal instrument on cultural diversity.
2. Advancing in the definition of principles, standards and practices, on both the national and the international levels, as well as of awareness-raising modalities and patterns of cooperation, that are most conducive to the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity.
3. Fostering the exchange of knowledge and best practices in regard to cultural pluralism with a view to facilitating, in diversified societies, the inclusion and participation of persons and groups from varied cultural backgrounds.

4. Making further headway in understanding and clarifying the content of cultural rights as an integral part of human rights.
5. Safeguarding the linguistic heritage of humanity and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in the greatest possible number of languages.
6. Encouraging linguistic diversity – while respecting the mother tongue – at all levels of education, wherever possible, and fostering the learning of several languages from the youngest age.
7. Promoting through education an awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and improving to this end both curriculum design and teacher education.
8. Incorporating, where appropriate, traditional pedagogies into the education process with a view to preserving and making full use of culturally appropriate methods of communication and transmission of knowledge.
9. Encouraging “digital literacy” and ensuring greater mastery of the new information and communication technologies, which should be seen both as educational discipline and as pedagogical tools capable of enhancing the effectiveness of educational services.
10. Promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace and encouraging universal access through the global network to all information in the public domain.
11. Countering the digital divide, in close cooperation in relevant United Nations system organizations, by fostering access by the developing countries to the new technologies, by helping them to master information technologies and by facilitating the digital dissemination of endogenous cultural products and access by those countries to the educational, cultural and scientific digital resources available worldwide.
12. Encouraging the production, safeguarding and dissemination of diversified contents in the media and global information networks and, to that end, promoting the role of public radio and television services in the development of audiovisual productions of good quality, in particular by fostering the establishment of cooperative mechanisms to facilitate their distribution.
13. Formulating policies and strategies for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage, notably the oral and intangible cultural heritage, and combating illicit traffic in cultural goods and services.
14. Respecting and protecting traditional knowledge, in particular that of indigenous peoples; recognizing the contribution of traditional knowledge, particularly with regard to environmental protection and the management of natural resources, and fostering synergies between modern science and local knowledge.
15. Fostering the mobility of creators, artists, researchers, scientists and intellectuals and the development of international research programmes and partnerships, while striving to preserve and enhance the creative capacity of developing countries and countries in transition.
16. Ensuring protection of copyright and related rights in the interest of the development of contemporary creativity and fair remuneration for creative work, while at the same time upholding a public right of access to culture, in accordance with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
17. Assisting in the emergence or consolidation of cultural industries in the developing countries and countries in transition and, to this end, cooperating in the development of the necessary infrastructures and skills, fostering the emergence of

viable local markets, and facilitating access for the cultural products of those countries to the global market and international distribution networks.

18. Developing cultural policies, including operational support arrangements and/or appropriate regulatory frameworks, designed to promote the principles enshrined in this Declaration, in accordance with the international obligations incumbent upon each State.
19. Involving civil society closely in framing of public policies aimed at safeguarding and promoting cultural diversity.
20. Recognizing and encouraging the contribution that the private sector can make to enhancing cultural diversity and facilitating to that end the establishment of forums for dialogue between the public sector and the private sector.

The Member States recommend that the Director-General take the objectives set forth in this Action Plan into account in the implementation of UNESCO's programmes and communicate the latter to institutions of the United Nations system and to other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with a view to enhancing the synergy of actions in favour of cultural diversity.

V - United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001 : Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/22 of 4 November 1998, 54/113 of 10 December 1999 and 55/23 of 13 November 2000 entitled "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations",

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which are, inter alia, to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace, and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Underlining that all Members have undertaken to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Reaffirming their commitment to the fulfillment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and as a source of inspiration for the further promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms – political, social, economic, civil and cultural – including the right to development,

Underlining that all civilizations celebrate the unity and diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilizations and that, despite obstacles of intolerance and aggression, there has been constructive interaction throughout history among various civilizations,

Emphasizing that a common humanity unites all civilizations and allows for the celebration of the variegated splendour of the highest attainments of this civilizational diversity, and reaffirming that the civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of humankind,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, which considers, inter alia, that tolerance is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and should include the active promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations, with human beings respecting one another, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity,

Noting that globalization brings greater interrelatedness among people and increased interaction among cultures and civilizations, and encouraged by the fact that the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, has underscored that globalization is not only an economic, financial and technological process which could offer great benefit but that it also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilization,

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Recognizing that human rights and fundamental freedoms derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person and are thus universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, consequently, should be the principal beneficiary and should participate actively in the realization of these rights and freedoms,

Reaffirming that all peoples have the right of self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Emphasizing that promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression and a collective commitment to listen to and learn from each other and to respect cultural heritage and diversity are essential for dialogue, progress and human advancement,

Underlining the fact that tolerance and respect for diversity and universal promotion and protection of human rights are mutually supportive, and recognizing that tolerance and respect for diversity effectively promote and are supported by, inter alia, the empowerment of women,

Recalling its resolution 55/254 of 31 May 2001, which calls upon all States to exert their utmost efforts to ensure that religious sites are fully respected and protected,

Emphasizing the need to acknowledge and respect the richness of all civilizations and to seek common ground among civilizations in order to address comprehensively common challenges facing humanity,

Welcoming the endeavours of Governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and countless individuals to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations,

Welcoming also the efforts of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and of the Group of Eminent Persons established by the Secretary-General, 2 See resolution 55/2.

Expressing its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations,
Proclaims the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations:

A. Objectives, principles and participants

Article 1

Dialogue among civilizations is a process between and within civilizations, founded on inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue.

Article 2

Dialogue among civilizations constitutes a process to attain, inter alia, the following objectives:

- Promotion of inclusion, equity, equality, justice and tolerance in human interactions;
- Enhancement of mutual understanding and respect through interaction among civilizations;

- Mutual enrichment and advancement of knowledge and appreciation of the richness and wisdom found in all civilizations;
- Identification and promotion of common ground among civilizations in order to address common challenges threatening shared values, universal human rights and achievements of human society in various fields;
- Promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and enrichment of common understanding of human rights;
- Development of a better understanding of common ethical standards and universal human values;
- Enhancement of respect for cultural diversity and cultural heritage.

Article 3

Pursuit of the above-mentioned objectives will be enhanced by collective commitment to the following principles:

- Faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small;
- Fulfilment in good faith of the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;¹
- Respect for fundamental principles of justice and international law;
- Recognition of diversified sources of knowledge and cultural diversity as fundamental features of human society and as indispensable and cherished assets for the advancement and material and spiritual welfare of humanity at large;
- of the right of members of all civilizations to preserve and develop their cultural heritage within their own societies;
- Commitment to inclusion, cooperation and the search for understanding as the mechanisms for the promotion of common values;
- Enhancement of participation by all individuals, peoples and nations in local, national and international decision-making processes.

Article 4

Dialogue among civilizations provides important contributions to progress in the following areas:

- Promotion of confidence-building at local, national, regional and international levels;
- Enhancing mutual understanding and knowledge among different social groups, cultures and civilizations in various areas, including culture, religion, education, information, science and technology;
- Addressing threats to peace and security;
- Promotion and protection of human rights;
- Elaboration of common ethical standards.

Article 5

Participation in dialogue among civilizations shall be global in scope and shall be open to all, including:

- People from all civilizations;
- Scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, writers, scientists, people of arts, culture and media and the youth, who play an instrumental role in initiation and sustainment of dialogue among civilizations;

- Individuals from civil society and representatives of non-governmental organizations, as instrumental partners in promoting dialogue among civilizations.

Article 6

Governments shall promote, encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations.

Article 7

Regional and international organizations should take appropriate steps and initiatives to promote, facilitate and sustain dialogue among civilizations.

Article 8

The media has an indispensable and instrumental role in the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and in the fostering of greater understanding among various civilizations and cultures.

Article 9

The United Nations should continue to promote and strengthen the culture of dialogue among civilizations.

B. Programme of Action

1. States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, are invited to consider the following as a means of promoting dialogue among civilizations in all domains, within existing resources and also drawing upon voluntary contributions:

- Facilitating and encouraging interaction and exchange among all individuals, inter alia, intellectuals, thinkers and artists of various societies and civilizations;
- Promoting of mutual visits and meetings of experts in various fields from different civilizations, cultures and backgrounds, which provide an opportunity for discovering commonalities among various civilizations and cultures;
- Exchange of visits among representatives of the arts and culture and the organization of cultural festivals through which people will have a chance of getting acquainted with other cultures;
- Sponsorship of conferences, symposiums and workshops to enhance mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue among civilizations;
- Planning sports competitions, Olympiads and scientific competitions, with a view to encouraging positive interaction among youth from different backgrounds and cultures;
- Reinvigorating and encouraging translation and dissemination of basic manuscripts and books and studies representing different cultures and civilizations;
- Promotion of historical and cultural tourism;
- Incorporation of programmes to study various cultures and civilizations in educational curriculums, including the teaching of languages, history and socio-political thoughts of various civilizations, as well as the exchange of knowledge, information and scholarship among academia;
- Advancement of research and scholarship to achieve an objective understanding of the characteristics of each civilization and the differences, as well as ways and means to enhance constructive interaction and understanding among them;
- Utilization of communication technologies, including audio, video, printed press, multimedia and the Internet, to disseminate the message of dialogue and

- understanding throughout the globe and depict and publicize historical instances of constructive interaction among different civilizations;
- Provision of equitable opportunities for participation in the dissemination of information, with a view to achieving an objective understanding of all civilizations and enhancing constructive interaction and cooperative engagement among civilizations;
 - Implementation of programmes to enhance the spirit of dialogue, understanding and rejection of intolerance, violence and racism among people, particularly the youth;
 - Utilizing the existence of migrants in various societies in bridging the gap of understanding between cultures;
 - Consultation to articulate effective mechanisms to protect the rights of all people to maintain their cultural identity, while facilitating their integration into their social environment.
2. States should encourage and support initiatives taken by civil society and non-governmental organizations for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations.
 3. States, international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, are invited to develop appropriate ways and means at the local, national, regional and international levels to further promote dialogue and mutual understanding among civilizations, and to report their activities to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
 4. Governments, funding institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector are invited to mobilize the necessary resources to promote dialogue among civilizations, including by contributing to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General in 1999 for that purpose.
 5. The United Nations system, including, in particular, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, are invited to continue to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields.
 6. The Secretary-General is requested to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of this Global Agenda and Programme of Action.