

Dialogue among Civilizations

The International Ministerial
Conference on Dialogue
among Civilizations:
Quest for New Perspectives



New Delhi, India
9 and 10 July 2003

Dialogue among Civilizations

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The International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations: Quest for New Perspectives, in New Delhi, India, 9 and 10 July 2003

Organized by UNESCO
and the Government of India

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the proceedings of the International Ministerial Conference on the theme 'Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives', held in New Delhi, India, on 9 and 10 July 2003. The joint efforts of UNESCO and the Government of India resulted in a highly successful meeting. Indeed, the New Delhi Declaration, the important product of this conference, lays down a series of specific approaches, innovative concepts and new perspectives to guide future activities.

The Declaration was adopted unanimously by the conference and then by UNESCO's Executive Board. I am particularly pleased to inform you that the UNESCO General Conference, in a landmark resolution adopted on 16 October 2003 (reproduced in the annex) directed that the New Delhi Declaration should henceforth represent the new framework for action of the Dialogue among Civilizations, placing emphasis on concrete activities in the key areas of education, science and technology, cultural diversity and communications.

The International Ministerial Conference in New Delhi generated a very high level of participation. The Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and I opened the conference, which was attended by representatives from over 80 countries drawn from all regions; among them were some 40 ministers or deputy ministers. The President of the UNESCO General Conference, the Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board and Permanent Delegates to UNESCO from several countries also participated. In addition, numerous eminent experts and personalities from all walks of life – including government, parliaments, academia, the media, religious and spiritual communities, the private sector and civil society – contributed to the deliberations, especially through three special working groups. By providing the full range of views and ideas discussed in Delhi,

this book will serve as both a useful point of reference and a point of departure for designing future activities at the global, regional, inter-regional, national and local levels.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "K. Matsuura". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Ko chiro Matsuura

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

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The New Delhi Declaration



New Delhi Declaration adopted at the International Ministerial Conference on the 'Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives' New Delhi, 9 and 10 July 2003

We, the participants in the International Ministerial Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives, held in New Delhi from 9 to 10 July 2003,

Recognizing that all civilizations celebrate the unity in diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilizations,

Underlining the contemporary relevance of the ancient Indian concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakkam, which means that all the world is one family, and that a common humanity unites all civilizations,

Recognizing that dialogue among civilizations, which has existed since the earliest stages of history, has blurred the frontiers of different civilizations and led to today's multitude of overlapping cultures, which are rich in diversity while preserving the uniqueness of identities,

Noting that while civilization provides an important source of identity, people have multiple identities deriving from nationality, gender, profession, etc.,

Emphasizing that complementarity of civilizations is strengthened by constant interplay and exchange of ideas as well as by creativity in science, art, philosophy, ethics and spirituality, and allows for the highest attainments of civilizational diversity,

Noting that globalization, while offering great benefits, also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilization,

Noting further the threat to equitable social and economic development of all civilizations consequent to problems of poverty, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and profligate utilization of the natural resource base of the planet,

Emphasizing that international cooperation, as a key means of promoting dialogue among civilizations, should contribute to enabling everyone to have access to knowledge, to enjoy the arts and literature of all peoples, to share in advances made in science in all parts of the world and in the resulting benefits, and to contribute to the enrichment of social, economic and cultural life,

Convinced of the need to contribute to the Global Agenda and Programme of Action for Dialogue among Civilizations contained in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001,

1. Recognize that tolerance is a fundamental value common to all civilizations and that this includes respect for others, regardless of diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity;
2. Underline the need to address and overcome ignorance and prejudice about the ways of life and customs of peoples;
3. Recognize the crucial role of education in promoting a scientific temper and an ethical and spiritual value system which facilitate the use of knowledge and reasoning in understanding other cultures and civilizations;
4. Recognize further that education promotes tolerance, respect for diversity and friendship among peoples and nations;
5. Affirm that the nature and content and quality of education should help to develop knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary to ensure a high quality of life for all;

6. Recognize that education is necessary to develop communities and societies rooted in principles of democracy, justice and respect for human rights;
7. Invite governments to also give special emphasis to democratic principles and practices as well as pluralism, including through the teaching and learning at all levels of formal, informal and non-formal education;
8. Encourage all governments to expand their educational curricula and learning materials in order to promote a better understanding of all cultures and civilizations – especially through the teaching of respect for various cultures and civilizations and their histories and philosophies, human rights education, non-violence and the teaching of languages;
9. Emphasize the importance of knowledge, information and scholarship among governments and civil society in order to promote a better understanding of all cultures and civilizations;
10. Emphasize that the pursuit of the six Education for All (EFA) goals, including especially the fight against gender discrimination in education, is essential to an inclusive approach to dialogue among civilizations;
11. Resolve to take suitable steps to establish in educational institutions a learning environment which will contribute to tolerance, respect and understanding about the diversity and wealth of cultural identities;
12. Urge governments to take full and effective measures to ensure that educational institutions are protected from teachings that promote extremism, intolerance and violence;
13. Reaffirm that all acts of terrorism represent an attack against humanity, as the killing of innocent civilians in order to spread terror is despicable to the values of all civilizations;
14. Affirm that in the twenty-first century, science must become a shared asset benefiting all peoples, serving as a powerful resource for economic transformation and for understanding natural and social phenomena;
15. Recognize that science and technology are major engines of social change which should be guided by ethical and moral perspectives and approaches;
16. Emphasize that social and human sciences should assume a much more proactive role in analyzing all the dimensions of social interaction and transformation in a rapidly changing world with a view to

- ensuring the well-being of the societies and to enhancing global understanding of civilizational dynamics and processes;
17. Underline the importance of traditional and local knowledge systems as dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding the world, and that this tangible and intangible cultural heritage and empirical knowledge need to be protected and preserved;
 18. Affirm further that the information and communication revolution offers new and effective means of exchanging scientific knowledge and advancing education and research which promote the economic and social development of all people;
 19. Further recognize that information and communication technologies can enhance intercultural communication and mutual understanding, especially through the promotion of cultural and linguistic pluralism, the generation of cross-cultural links, and the sharing of knowledge and information in various forms by networking communities and individuals;
 20. Affirm therefore the need for enhanced intercultural dialogue through international cooperation in order for all peoples and nations to share with one another their knowledge and skills;
 21. Stress the need to develop the various branches of knowledge side by side and, as far as possible, simultaneously, so as to establish a harmonious balance between technical progress and the intellectual and socio-economic advancement of mankind;
 22. Affirm that respect for diversity of cultures, including the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, values of tolerance and mutual understanding are fostered through multi-civilizational discourse and are the best guarantors of peace in the world;
 23. In the context of the above, the Conference:
 - (a) Enjoins all governments and civil society to support actively a dialogue within and among civilizations and cultures so that it will become an effective instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, and a vehicle for diversity and pluralism;
 - (b) Calls upon governments and civil society to ensure the empowerment and full participation of women and youth in efforts to foster dialogue within and among civilizations and to generate equitable, inclusive societies where mutual understanding may flourish and people may learn to live together in peace;

- (c) Recommends that UNESCO initiate a broad-based collaboration with Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, civil society, the scientific, academic and artistic communities, the private sector and other partners with a view to translating the various proposals contained in this Declaration into concrete action.

Keynote Addresses



From left to right: L.M. Singhvi, Representative of India to the Executive Board of UNESCO; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India; Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Prime Minister of India

In recent years the concept of dialogue among civilizations has caught the imagination of the political, intellectual and cultural elite around the world. The concept itself is not entirely a novel one. After all, the best minds in world history have always championed the idea of dialogue and cooperation among peoples from different culture and civilizational backgrounds. The rishis and saints of India, in ancient as well as modern times, dreamt of a world where all faiths, cultural influences, languages, and intellectual streams are given an honored place and integrated to form a symphony of universalism. For example, the Vedas taught us to accept and assimilate all that is positive and life promoting from around the world.

Aa no bhadrah ritavo yantu vishwatah

May noble thoughts come to us from all sides.

Two factors have worked to provide a new context to the concept of dialogue among civilizations. Some years ago, a famous writer put forward a thesis about the coming 'clash of civilizations'. The thesis was, of course, flawed and baseless. Its main fault was that it failed to recognize that civilizations do not – rather, cannot – clash. To be civilized is to abjure clashes and conflicts, and to try to resolve all disputes and contentious issues through dialogue. Civilizations are anchored in a common set of values and ideals, which we all share in our common yearning for human solidarity and in our common aspiration for peace, justice, truth and fellowship. Thus, all civilizations have a civilizing influence on human beings. That is a part of the very definition of a civilization.

Here we should not confuse civilization and history. Human history is a tale of clashes and conflicts, as well as of peace and progress. This is true about all countries and all continents. In contrast, when we talk of civilizations, we are essentially talking of the self-humanizing endeavor of different societies, carried on from generation to generation, through the means of spiritual systems, cultures, art, philosophy, science, agriculture, industry and the daily social activity of ordinary people.

Nevertheless, we should thank the worthy writer who predicted the coming 'clash of civilizations'. The provocative title of his book served to catalyze a worldwide debate that vehemently argued to the contrary. The future of mankind is not going to be determined by a conflict among civilizations; rather, as some people have beautifully put it, humanity's future will witness a concert or a confluence of civilizations.

Of course, this will not happen automatically. All of us, and all our coming generations, will have to strive and struggle for it. I believe that the 'New Delhi Dialogue among Civilizations', and similar dialogues that have preceded it, are a part of this earnest striving to build a better world.

Friends, there is yet another factor that has propelled us into this dialogue. As we crossed into a new century and a new millennium three years ago, all of us realized that the world we now live in, and the world that the coming generations will inherit, are fundamentally different from the times past. Trade and technology have broken old barriers between countries and cultures. The world has become a global village. Some would like to call it a global marketplace. More and more countries are witnessing an unprecedented activity on the economic front.

Yet, the present situation presents two paradoxes. One is the continuing wide gap between the unmet basic needs of the world's poor and the more than adequately-met wants of the world's rich. The other is the equally troubling imbalance between the current excessive focus on man as the consumer of material goods and services, and the colossal neglect of the integral man who wishes to become a complete human being.

With all the material progress that we have achieved, we acutely realize that there is something precious – the human element – lacking in this progress. We feel that, with all the technological advancement, we are all still less than what we can be, less than what human beings have been created for. We are dreaming of the ideal society, a cooperative collective in which all production is geared for meeting all his human needs – of the body, mind and soul. A society in which man can experience peace within himself and witness peace in the world, both of which are today eluding him.

Therefore, troubled by the destruction of the environment and the erosion of traditions, and numbed by the daily news of violence around the world, the modern man is searching for answers. After the horrible wars of the last century, the continuing ethnic clashes in some parts of the world, and the emergency in recent times of terrorism that misuses the name of religion, he is not swayed by claims like – 'My country right or wrong', 'My people the greatest in history,' and 'My faith the only faith'.

And his search for answers is taking him to study the essence of his own faith, culture and civilization, and the faiths, cultures and civilizations of his fellow human beings in a world that he sees is becoming increasingly inter-dependent. It is this intensified search for solutions and solace that is behind this new phenomenon called the dialogue among civilizations.

This is a very hopeful sign. The dialogue among civilizations is a broad enough theme to embrace all the major issues and challenges before mankind today. We need answers on how to create a future without wars and violence; how to achieve sustainable development, so that industrialization does not become a curse to the environment; how to impart a much-needed cultural dimension to development; how to preserve the unique cultural identity and artistic wealth of nations, especially of small communities, who are genuinely concerned about the onrush of uniformity in the name of globalization; and how to advance the cause of human rights, economic justice, gender justice, and a compassionate and caring social order. It has become equally important to know how our system of education and the mass media can promote positive values in society, especially among children.

I believe that we can get the answers to these questions by broadening, deepening and sustaining the dialogue process. The deeper and broader the dialogue, the greater is the understanding among civilizations and nations. The greater the understanding, the stronger is the cooperation and goodwill among nations. And the stronger the cooperation and goodwill among nations, the lesser is the need to spend huge resources on arms and military strategies.

Here I must emphasize that we also need the 'Culture of Dialogue' at a national level, so that contentious issues can be resolved amicably through talks. Dialogue is an essential part of democracy. Democracy both requires and mandates dialogue. The more a nation can harmonize differences at home, the greater will be its ability to contribute to a dialogue at the international level.

India's longstanding experience and ancient tradition of fostering dialogue among communities, cultures and civilizations is well recognized. For centuries, India has nurtured a multiplicity of spiritual and cultural traditions. Yet, within this diversity, India has also woven a silken bond of unity. This is principally because India has protected people's freedom of thought and faith, while at the same time encouraging an unbroken tradition of inter-faith dialogue and cooperation.

The meeting points of ancient trade routes may lie in other parts of the world, but India has always been a meeting point of faith routes. Besides all the faiths that originated here, India welcomed the Jews, Syrian Christians, Catholics, Zoroastrians, Muslims and people belonging to other religions. We are proud of India's age-old adherence to the ideal of Sarva Pantha Samabhava – which means, respect for all faiths. I suggest that this principle of secularism, which is enshrined in India's constitution, should

be accepted by all countries. Tolerance should become a global ideal. This would go a long way in promoting understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples belonging to different faiths and cultures.

It is a fitting tribute to India's longstanding tradition of tolerance that the Zoroastrians, a prominent minority community, are holding an exhibition to herald the celebrations of the 3000th Year of Zoroastrianism, to coincide with this conference. They comprise less than 0.01% of our country's population. Yet, they have made a major contribution to many walks of national life. The world needs to recognize the greatness of the Zoroastrian faith and culture, and help in its protection and resurgence. The Government of India has lent full support in organizing this exhibition, which will be taken to the other parts of the country.

We are very happy that ministers from around 50 countries and high level official delegations, as well as a galaxy of eminent scholars, scientists and experts have gathered here to take part in the deliberations of this conference. The New Delhi Declaration, which is to be adopted at the concluding session of the conference tomorrow, will be an important addition to the ongoing dialogue process.

The learnings from the series of dialogues among civilizations, which have been held so far under the aegis of the UN and other institutions, should be fed into the foreign and domestic policies of member countries. National parliaments and governments should be advised on how to incorporate these learnings in their legislations and policy-making. Hence, I look forward to receiving your valuable ideas, suggestions and recommendations that will act as a roadmap for future efforts at the international and national levels on issues that will figure in your deliberations.

As inheritors of a proud and priceless civilizational legacy ourselves, we in India are prepared to lend our full support to this noble undertaking of dialogue among civilizations. We are prepared to discharge our responsibility in demonstrating its beneficial impact among and within countries, cultures and religions. We are prepared to continue to play our part in promoting tolerance and respect for diversities, within the wider goal of the unity of humankind, as an essential component of sustainable human advancement in the new century.

With these words, I have great pleasure in inaugurating the conference and wishing it all success.

Ko chiro Matsuura

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

It is highly appropriate that UNESCO and the Indian Government should come together here, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, around this theme of 'Dialogue Among Civilizations: The Quest for New Perspectives.' In 1956, UNESCO's Ninth General Conference was the first international conference to be held in this center. At the meeting, UNESCO's General Conference adopted the initiative for the 'Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values,' which was a precursor of the 'Dialogue Among Civilizations' initiative that brings us here today. That important step towards intercultural dialogue was brought to UNESCO with the strong support of the Indian Government under Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

As this case illustrates in regard to the idea of 'dialogue among civilizations', practice may come before concept. We in UNESCO believe that, from its very beginning, the Organization has been engaged in promoting this dialogue, even though it went under other names.

It is important to recognize that, once the Cold War came to an end, new tensions, uncertainties and conflicts began to appear on the international scene. Many people attempted to attribute the growth of the 'new international insecurity' to the clash of civilizations, and some predicted that a major clash would ensue. But others argued that, to prevent the recurrence of such conflicts and uncertainties, we must promote dialogue.

Against this background, let me draw your attention to several important developments through which the promotion of dialogue has taken place. In November 1998, the UN General Assembly, in a resolution sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran, proclaimed the year 2001 as the 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations'. On the eve of the Millennium Assembly in September 2000, I organized, in cooperation with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a Round Table of Heads of State on the Dialogue among Civilizations at UN Headquarters in New York as well as a Round Table of Eminent Persons. These occasions, which set in motion the celebration of the UN Year, signaled high-level interest in this theme as well as UNESCO's strong commitment to promoting intercultural dialogue.

During the UN Year itself, many meetings and exchanges took place which explored the meaning of dialogue and its importance for building peace and mutual understanding. For example, the conference held in

Vilnius, Lithuania, in April 2001 provided a memorable opportunity for regional leaders and representatives to discuss key issues. This opportunity occurred again, on the other side of the world, when UNESCO and the United Nations University organized an international conference on the theme of dialogue among civilizations in Tokyo in July 2001.

I mention these occasions to remind us all that the process of cultivating dialogue among civilizations preceded the shocking and tragic events of 11th September 2001, which served as a brutal illustration of the dangers lurking in our globalizing world. These horrific events alerted everyone to the presence of new threats to international peace and the existence of gaps of understanding and fellow-feeling that are extremely disturbing.

In early November 2001, UNESCO's General Conference agreed a resolution on the fight against terrorism and, significantly, also adopted the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which has many implications for promoting intercultural dialogue and preserving cultural diversity in all regions of the world. Later that same month, the UN General Assembly voted for the resolution establishing the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations. This Global Agenda provides the framework within which all of our actions in support of dialogue are taking place.

The task before us in our meeting is to search for new perspectives on dialogue among civilizations in light of events and developments occurring at the start of the twenty-first century. Let me stress that this is not a quest for newness for its own sake. It is not our intention to abandon the wisdom of the past or to underestimate the virtues and skills which, for example, have enabled India to create, out of its diverse mixture of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, the largest democratic nation in the world. Instead, it is to recognize that the world is changing before our eyes. New challenges and threats are emerging which increasingly are not amenable to traditional approaches and methods.

As a result, we must broaden the scope of our dialogue. As fresh problems and obstacles arise, such as new forms of stigmatization, discrimination and ignorance that impede mutual respect and understanding, governments and their partners are called upon to respond in ways that are relevant and effective. We must seek new perspectives on dialogue and new modalities for conducting it. In this, we must not be afraid to be innovative and creative.

In my remarks to you today, I shall not be prescriptive. I do not presume to know the answers to all the questions before us. But perhaps I

know some of the questions. I mention the following as examples: there are many more!

First, how can education help to develop and conduct a long-term dialogue between cultures and civilizations while ensuring the participation of all in such dialogue?

Second, how can we ensure that science and technology effectively promote equitable forms of intercultural dialogue and exchange when so many developing countries lack the capacities to fully participate in the building of knowledge societies?

Third, how can we increase the role of the mass media in regard to the dialogue among civilizations through a strengthening of press freedom and freedom of expression?

Fourth, who can legitimately speak for a particular civilization or culture? Whose voice counts? In whose name is the dialogue conducted?

Fifth, through which types of people, institutions and processes can the dialogue among civilizations be best advanced? Through politicians? Through religious leaders? Through artists? Through scientists? Through children? Through schools? Through trade? Through the Internet?

These are open-ended questions that do not presume particular answers. It is in this spirit that the dialogue should be conducted. The search for new perspectives and modalities needs to be as open as possible. After all, the greatest enemy of dialogue is a closed mind.

In regard to the dialogue among civilizations, my perspective from UNESCO convinces me of three important things. First, I believe that the new approaches to dialogue need to be rooted in concrete expressions of human interaction, not just in general agreements on principles. We must move from talking about dialogue to actual engagement in dialogue on matters of substantive concern – for example, on practical matters such as intercultural exchanges and tourism; the management of trans-boundary freshwater resources; the handling of issues in bioethics; or regional approaches to curriculum renewal and textbook revision.

Second, the new approaches and modalities are most likely to be found in those fields of human endeavor where the interface between knowledge and ignorance, between understanding and prejudice, is most acute. I believe that this interface is especially evident in precisely those areas covered by UNESCO's fields of competence – education, the sciences, culture and communication. Here, the ethical and intellectual terms of debate are highly attuned to the character and needs of intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, it may well be at the junctures between these fields—for example, between education and science, between culture and

technology, between social science and communication – that the most fruitful interactions can take place.

Third, for these reasons, I believe that UNESCO is the agency best placed within the UN system to help the dialogue among civilizations move into a new phase of development, through a broad-based collaboration with Member States, other members of the UN family, civil society, the scientific, artistic and academic communities, and other partners. UNESCO stands ready to provide the nurturing environment in which a new global dialogue can flourish.

To engage in dialogue is to lay oneself open to others, and this involves risk. It is necessary to accept this risk if one wishes to reap the rewards of dialogue. The attempt to understand someone else requires an act of imaginative sympathy which is the obverse of hatred, distrust and prejudice. The latter are forms of imaginative antipathy. I believe that these two types of 'imagining' are quite different in how they work. To reject and hate the other is easy; it requires no great effort or risk. But to reach out to the other, to embrace the other, and to invite the other to understand you in return – these require a form of courage because one thereby enters the territory of the unknown.

These thoughts lead me, as is often the case, to UNESCO's Constitution, which begins with the following famous statement: 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed'. To engage in dialogue and to seek and promote mutual understanding are to build the defenses of peace in the minds of men. This is UNESCO's mission and one which is shared by people of goodwill everywhere.

At a gathering of this magnitude, there is the chance for a large number of countries to listen to one another, exchange proposals, devise solutions and send out a clear and positive message. I believe that this Conference is a real opportunity to identify new perspectives, approaches and methods that will help to deepen and widen the scope of global interaction in the twenty-first century. In our deliberations, we must seek fresh inspiration that may take the form of a forward-looking declaration that would guide our future work, especially in undertaking the crucial task of putting ideas into practice. Future international efforts will certainly require stronger commitment to tolerance and dialogue between different faiths, cultures and civilizations. Let us therefore resolve to work together to bring our hopes for peace, dialogue and tolerance to fruition.

Welcoming Addresses



From left to right: S.K. Tripathi, Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education, India; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India; Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development; L.M. Singhvi, Representative of India to the Executive Board of UNESCO.

Murli Manohar Joshi

Minister of Human Resource Development, India

It is significant that the United Nations and UNESCO have underlined the themes of unity and diversity of humankind. It is also significant that the United Nations has emphasized that 'a common humanity unites all civilizations and allows for the celebration of the variegated splendor of the highest attainment of this civilizational diversity'.

These affirmations impel us to conceive a progressive path that can lead us to a union of humankind that permits and enhances free diversity.

It may be pertinent to ask the question: What is civilization? At the basic level, civilization may be defined as a state of civil society, governed, organized, educated, possessed of knowledge and appliances. Civilization transcends barbarism and philistinism precisely because it promotes education, science and ethical and spiritual values. Civilization is that evolved state of society which also seeks to infuse knowledge in all aspects of physical, economic, social, scientific, philosophical, ethical and aesthetic life. The fact that humanity has developed varied systems of civilization and the fact that there has been celebration of unity and diversity among humankind is perhaps an achievement that we prize and cherish most.

We stand today at a new stage in the progress of human civilization where we clearly recognize that intolerance and aggression are obstacles; that these obstacles are engendered by ignorance, and that this ignorance can best be cleared by a new mode of awareness and a new mode of action that promotes diversity, interchange, assimilation, synthesis and enrichment. We have come to realize that the most fruitful instrument in this direction is the instrument of dialogue. It can be easily recognized that only a voluntary decision can provide the quintessential justification of the process of dialogue; and it is the contemporary voluntary decision on the part of humankind that lies at the root of the initiatives taken by the United Nations in putting forward a concept and practice of dialogue among civilizations. It is in that context that this Conference aims at enhancing the forces of reciprocity and mutuality in the dialogue among civilizations.

Dialogue among civilizations is emerging today as a new paradigm in international and intercultural relations. But in order that this new paradigm gets firmly established, it should be made clear that a true and sincere dialogue aims at tolerance of diversity, but this is not enough. It must also aim at accepting and it must go farther and aim at respecting diversity. The new culture of dialogue needs to encourage respect for other

ways of thinking, and respect for values and experiences other than one's own. India has a long tradition of fostering dialogue among different communities, cultures and civilizations. It has interacted with the world and its scholars and monks have carried this tradition to different parts of the globe. Many races and faiths have come to India and found abode and have enriched its life and culture by becoming a component of the matrix of Indian social fabric. All major faiths of the world exist and live peacefully in this country. India presents a unique and ennobling experience of spiritual co-existence.

Dialogue must aim at knowledge; dialogue must seek the knowledge of what is common in all, and where exactly differences lie and how those differences can be fostered for purposes of enrichment of unity. Dialogue must aim at excluding exclusivism and it must promote inclusiveness. And yet inclusiveness should avoid the mistake of imposing uniformity in the world. Even world culture, which is being generated today under the forces of international interchange, should not be allowed to be a worldwide expansion of one culture; it should be the blending of many cultures worldwide, a blending that benefits from the wealth of diversity created over time throughout the entire world.

This Conference has rightly chosen as its sub-themes education, science and the search for values. For they are today unifying forces that insist at the same time on diversity.

What is now needed is a concerted action towards the development of a curriculum that can bring home to the students three important lessons, namely, (i) that all humanity shares one basic impulse towards progress and by sharing this impulse humanity can be seen as one vast surge of adventure which aims at continuous self-exceeding; (ii) that humanity, in its mature developments, tends to reject uniformity and adopts the law of unity that permits and respects cultural diversities; and (iii) that the future progress of humankind is bound up with the development of a new science and art of living together which necessitates adherence to the law of mutuality rather than conflict and the law of varied expressions rather than any uniform monotone. Education should aim at strengthening democratic and universal human values and respect for human rights. Education is the most powerful instrument for preparing a mind which can promote the culture of dialogue.

During the past two centuries, rapid advancement of science and technology has played a very crucial role in transforming human society. Thanks to the shrinking of the world on account of advances in transport and information communication technology, scientific quests and scientific

knowledge are increasingly being shared universally. Advancement of science and technology is today a global phenomenon, and this globality provides all of us a vast canvas for dialogue that transcends narrow grooves of thought. It is also fortunate that the latest advances in science are tending to promote the unity of the microcosm and the macrocosm, and the more we probe into the quantum reality of the physical universe, the greater is our finding of unity that is diverse. During the last twenty-five years, physics, biology and psychology have been greatly bridged by the emerging concept of consciousness. And the mystery of consciousness is, as many ancient thinkers declared long ago, and to use the modern phrase coined by Michel Talbot, 'omnijective', an inseparable combination of plurality of subjectivities that reflect the unity of the objective. It is as though modern science is providing us an appropriate foundation for dialogue among civilizations.

We transcend here the classical reductionist world-view that was bifocal, a world-view of division, division between mind and body, unbridgeable and permanent. Due to the recent advances in certain branches of science we have now entered into a new world-view which emphasizes that at a deep and fundamental level, the separate parts of the universe are connected in an intimate and immediate way. This leads to the realization of unbroken wholeness which denies divisions and fragmentations. Instead of reductionist methods of finding solutions, holistic approaches are being increasingly adopted, simply meaning that life and problems cannot be understood in parts, but in their totality. It leads to the inescapable conclusion that human society has to function as one system, one family. And differences in a family can always be sorted out through dialogue. Science and technology on the one hand should increasingly be used to provide material benefits to the entire society and on the other to create an awareness of the fundamental unity of mankind. This can be achieved if the following principles can be adopted:

- (1) That humanity matures so as to make the right use of science and technology for creating an awareness about the fundamental unity of mankind.
- (2) That human society recognizes the use of science and technology in generating a sense of universal brotherhood.

Scientists and social scientists both have to enter into dialogue to generate understanding about issues and solutions leading to a democratic and pluralistic world order where the dignity of individual is preserved. This needs an attitudinal change which can be attained if a unity of purpose is arrived at. U. Thant, the Secretary General of the United Nations

Organizations, declared as far back as 1967, 'Men, if they unite, are now capable of foreseeing, and to a certain point, determining the future of human development. This, however, is possible if we stop fearing and harassing one another and if together we accept, welcome and prepare the changes that must inevitably take place. If this means a change in human nature, well, it is high time we worked for it, what surely must change is certain attitudes and habits man has'.

What U Thant had emphasized four decades ago is equally valid now. In fact, his analysis has an ethical dimension, and it needs an action plan based on ethical and spiritual values. I should like to add that if our Conference is to give a new impetus to our very theme, we should announce that dialogue among civilizations is not a dialogue for mere conversation and exchange even of ideas, but it is a dialogue inspired by ethical and spiritual values. Humanity is now recognizing increasingly that there is a realm of values – ethical and spiritual – in which all elements of culture can blend harmoniously without sacrificing their uniqueness and their specialty. Humanity is integral and not uniform, it tends at once towards unity and diversity. This seems to be the most valuable lesson of human history, the lesson of integral humanism. And this lesson can be a guide for true dialogue, a true and sincere dialogue among civilizations.

L.M. Singhvi

Representative of India to the Executive Board of UNESCO

This conference is a dream come true. The Inter-Ministerial Conference is by definition a conference of sovereignties but this is a polylogue of civilizations. A dialogue of sovereignties has its own uses, but when it comes to building enduring edifices of peace and foundations of human togetherness, a dialogue of sovereignties would be incomplete without a dialogue of civilizations. This you must define to include dialogue among cultures.

This inter-ministerial conference is a dialogue of sovereignties with a civilizational agenda in the quest of new perspectives. Our polylogue of civilizations will go forward only if the civilizational discourse is absorbed, adopted and internationalized by sovereign nations and by the civil society. It is particularly propitious that the idea of dialogue is being nurtured by the United Nations and UNESCO. Indeed it is not only the inter-governmental organizations and agencies which have been engaged in fostering the idea of dialogue. There are countless institutions of civil society in every nation and civilization which are engaged in the voyage of discovery and exploration and in the task of proposing blue prints of a new edifice of civilizational togetherness based on new and more relevant more creative and a more promising paradise. A renewed call for dialogue at this conference will not be a mere repetitive reiteration. I hope it will be a compelling and clarion call for building bridges between different civilizations and faith traditions, for building civilizational defenses of peace in the minds of men, women and children, and to rediscover and reclaim our common humanity in our innate and intrinsic spirituality at a critical juncture in human history. By combining resources of science, education and culture, by purposefully mobilizing global human resources at all levels, we can together embark on building the edifice of our common future on the basis of shared values rooted in a global ethic and reinforced by our dialogue.

The dialogue is our moment of truth, our pledge of peace, our tryst with destiny. A momentum in the mainstream of peace, justice and prosperity. The New Delhi dialogue will, I am sure, improve the human development index of the world. Dialogue is no longer an optional extra on the margins of our global agenda. It is the alternative to alienation and clash of civilizations and cultures. Alienation and clash are not inevitable or inexorable. They are certainly preventable. The haunting specter of alienation and clash and of wars and violence can be exorcised by a

meaningful and sustained dialogue based on responsive reciprocity. A true dialogue promises to create space for each other and to take us to a measured and holistic response to the challenges which humanity faces today.

We cannot overlook the fact that the so-called civilizations of the world and different religions have often been at loggerheads. They have often played a negative role. They have even allied themselves to colonialism, oppression, exploitation and apartheid. Violence and terrorism have often claimed victims in the name of religion and when that happens, civilizations are diminished and brought into disrepute. Sovereignities are often seen in a battle arrayed in shining armor and civilizations tend to fall between these stools and suffer the slings and arrows of misfortune. Therefore to inculcate a new culture of peace among religions, a new culture of reconciliation of sovereignty and a mindset of honest and sincere dialogue among the sovereign nations of the world, religions and civilizations must dialogue and converse on the foundation of mutual acceptance, affirmative mutual acceptance and must earn reverence to truth, tolerance, humility and the amelioration in the lives of the peoples of the world, first and foremost, religions and civilization must dialogue to adjust the imperatives of our times and to work out a strategy for taking the dialogue not only among nations but within nations to the new depths of convictions and the new height of aspiration and hope so that it is no longer a pious platitude but a living reality in our minds, hearts and souls. We must develop the discipline of dialogue and the ground rules of dialogue. We must establish a viable and dynamic jurisprudence of dialogue, its norms and its goals. The voice of William Shakespeare reminds us today that there are tides in the affairs of men, taken as flood leads on to fortunes. I also recall a poetic line by our distinguished Prime Minister who wrote quite some time ago 'Come let us again light the lamp'. I'm sure the lamp of civilizations that is the lamp he has lit today. As the poet Tennyson puts it in Ulysses 'Come my friends it is not too late to seek a newer world'.

S.K. Tripathi

Secretary for Secondary and Higher Education, India

Secretary General of the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO

This conference organized by the Government of India in co-operation with UNESCO on 'Dialogue among Civilizations' is a quest for better understanding, tolerance and respect of civilizational diversity through the means of dialogue. This is the paramount theme of this Conference and we are greatly honored by the presence today of a galaxy of statesmen, intellectuals and academicians to further this cause. I would like to welcome you all and wish you a pleasant stay in our country.

It is my proud privilege to propose a vote of thanks at this inaugural plenary session of this conference. At the outset, we express our profound gratitude to our Honorable President for his thought provoking message that will set the tone for discussions to follow. We are indeed honored that our Honorable Prime Minister has taken the time to personally inaugurate this event and for delivering an inspiring message in his unique manner. As the leader of a country which is home to one of the richest cultural diversities in this world, he has consistently advocated the primacy of dialogue for fostering peace and harmony in the world.

No words are sufficient to express our gratefulness to the Honorable Minister for Human Resource Development, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, who has been the moving force and inspiration in this endeavor. A rare combination of an educationist and a statesman, which is reflected in his erudite speech analyzing the crucial issues involved in this dialogue, will serve as the befitting precursor to the deliberations ahead.

We would also like to extend our warm thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koichiro Matsuura, for UNESCO's support of India's efforts to strengthen the dialogue process to encompass all civilizations and cultures. We would also like to express our appreciation for UNESCO's contribution and intellectual assistance during all stages of planning and organization of this conference. We are delighted that the Director-General has accepted our invitation to attend this Conference as the Guest of Honor accompanied by a delegation of senior officials from UNESCO Headquarters.

The Conference has gained stature from the attendance of Honorable Ministers and other high level representatives from all the regions of the world. We are extremely encouraged by their presence here today. I am confident that their contributions, spanning a vast panorama of civilizations, will provide the desired impetus to the deliberations.

The presence of so many distinguished invitees, scholars and eminent persons both from abroad and within India, will certainly enrich the discussions, especially on the three sub-themes chosen for the Conference.

My heartfelt thanks are also due to all the other invitees who have assembled here today to make this inaugural function such a success.

We are extremely grateful to the press corps and the representatives of the media who have evinced keen interest in this Conference.

For all the numerous others who have contributed to make this Conference possible, and the list is truly long, we extend our deep sense of gratitude.

We look forward to your valuable contribution to take this dialogue forward through development of such mutual understanding which would foster a harmonious and enriching experience of living together among people of diverse civilizations in this world.

Thank you all once again.

Messages



A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

President of India

Dialogue among Civilizations is possible only through three definite actions. First: there is a sizeable young population out of the 6 billion world population. It is essential that children below 20 years should have education with value systems and with national character. Second, religions are all beautiful islands. We have to use love and compassion to connect religions and transform them into spiritual forces. Third: citizens with hunger are not worried about civilizations and dialogues. Economic development is essential for people to progress. All three of these ingredients will encourage civilizations to co-exist and have dialogue. On this occasion of the conference, I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to all those associated with the Conference.

Seyed Mohammad Khatami

President of Iran

I am cognizant of the fact that an 'International Ministerial Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations: Quest For New Perspectives' inspires a ray of hope in the issues of peace, and coexistence at this sensitive and precarious juncture in the history of our current world. Consequently, I desire to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India, UNESCO and all the honorable participants at this conference for their consequential effective measures. From time immemorial, India being a world founded on pillars of an ancient civilization, diversity, farsightedness and forbearance has invariably served as a model for the exchange of dialogue among civilizations and cultures. I am exulted to observe such a great land of ancient civilization has embarked upon a novel path for the attainment of such a worthy goal.

Though the concept of dialogue among civilizations is old, it is a product of the modern world being definitely associated with fresh discernment and exigency of the current world status. In the era of globalization, should our world optimally exploit the transcendental innovative power and simultaneously attempt to rein up its potentially destructive force so as to minimize its deleterious influence, it would be able to create an ideal atmosphere to embark upon the path of dialogue among cultures and civilizations in all possible human aspects. A dialogue, in reality, is a universal endeavor to attain the objective of a more profound mutual understanding, a greater insight, and a much wider communicative capability in the fields of humane and social conduct. As a result, such an achievement could possibly be effective in inoculating the whole world against a variety of catastrophes.

Cooperation among nations can assume its true meaning in our world only when we are made capable of accommodating a commonly shared global meaning of this worthy concept.

Dialogue as a process and a tool can instill new ideas in our thoughts and concepts which can eventually not only pave the way for a far wider cooperation among nations but also open up new dimensions for more effective coordination of our common affairs. In a dialogue, real victory is attained with the party involved in the process; it is certainly not achieved by trouncing the contending party in the dialogue. This happens to be a stark reality that our current world is in dire need of comprehending such circumstances. Such a worthy objective can be attained through a wide variety of ways like dialogue among civilizations, dialogue among

religions, dialogue among generations, dialogue among rulers and the ruled, dialogue among the intelligentsia and even through a dialogue among antagonists.

The world entered the third millennium with the hope that dialogue among different nations would bear the fruit of mutual understanding, peace, security, cooperation and progress across the world. It was due to this fact that the members of the U.N. unanimously endorsed the year 2001 as the year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

Sad to observe that with entry into a new millennium, the world has been overcast with new ominous waves of terrorism, raging outbreaks of violence and towering flames of war that have pushed the world community to the edge of a horrendous precipice of an unpredictable state of affairs. The world has become infested with the perils of monologues and unilateral actions, which, all in all, have jeopardized the concept of the dialogue among civilizations.

In the domain of politics, shortly after the inhuman 9/11 tragic event, the world gasped with anxiety, despair and fear. I pointed out the necessity for the creation of a coalition for peace on the basis of justice to advocate the idea of the dialogue among civilizations in all domains-national, regional, and global levels.

Today, at a time when the world, specifically our region has suffered the ravages wrought by war, continued occupation, unrelenting terrorism and incessant outbursts of violence, I wish to once again restate and reaffirm my belief in the necessity for the creation of a coalition for peace definitely not against any particular country or entity. This concept is based on a real and sustainable coalition working for the eradication of violence, terrorism, and war mongering at the global level. A world structured on the basis of peace is undoubtedly a world of politics for all. It is also a world built by all of us. It is a world of fair and just diversity where peaceful coexistence is predominant - and not the world of a monologue and extreme sense of otherness. Real peace can reign only if justice prevails over the world. It is only under such circumstances that it matters not where man makes his abode, and he is the master of his own destiny enjoying full and unimpeded rights, respect and human dignity. It is this world where people, open-minded, unprejudiced and impartial thinkers, justice-seeking statesmen and politicians, and democratic governments of the world aspire to establish and live in such a community. We should, therefore, concentrate all our efforts in the direction worthy of mankind.

From the perspective of the culture of dialogue, the cultural and social differences among the people are not regarded as the sources of

conflict and antagonism. On the contrary, their attitudes are viewed as the provenance of diversity and dynamism. The vistas for peace and dialogue have an inseparable basis. The enhancement of dialogue among civilizations and the coalition for peace share the same determinative results. Both provide equal opportunity for all, and just and fair development for all. Since the norms of advancement, dialogue, and coalition for peace constitute a global process based on insight, ethics, knowledge, and cultural tenets, the role and function of intellectuals and scholars are much greater than that of politicians and military brass. Simultaneously, when the role of the domestic civil institutions, national and international agencies is assessed, their role is much more consequential than those of the governments and sovereign states.

It gratifies my conscious to observe this fact that the sponsors of this conference, too, have designated ethical and spiritual values, education and cultural diversity, and scientific advances, technology, social and human sciences as the pre-requisites and the essential elements for the realization of dialogue among civilizations. I sincerely hope that the discussions and the adopted document of this gathering will elucidate many things and will render very clear strategic guidelines and a course of action for the future.

Today we are all in need of learning about the achievements of both ancient and modern civilizations. Those who are either incapable of listening or at least showing tolerance to what other civilizations have to say or offer, benefit nothing but a biased outlook, tendentious rationalization and domineering conduct towards others. The end result of such an attitude is nothing other than the degradation of meaning, the stagnation of culture and the incapacitation of scientific achievements in our world. Prejudiced outlooks are the root causes, which foment norms of duality, and discrimination in the domain of international politics that subsequently breeds norms of domineering monologues rather than promoting logical norms of dialogue among civilizations. Let us join hands in rescuing our malign world infested with injustice, insecurity, subjugation, despotism, dogmatism, intolerance, violence, terrorism, molestation and war. Let us believe that the convictions and the civil institutions, national and international agencies shall overcome and succeed in the attainment of this worthy objective. I pray for the accomplishment of this highly valuable conference and for the success of all distinguished participants at this gathering.

Jacques Chirac

President of France

I am happy about the initiative taken by the Indian Government to organize, on July 9 and 10, in partnership with the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture, a conference on the dialogue among civilizations. This theme is, in fact, of cardinal importance to me. That is why I wish to write to you in order to show France's support for the efforts expended by India to strengthen the international dialogue around this issue which is so important for our democracies.

In fact, this fortunate initiative seems to respond to the expectations of today's people who wish to live, together, in a world which is freer but which also shows more solidarity. A controlled and humanized globalization is only possible if we combine our forces to build a more united world. This effort will be made, especially, through dialogue among civilizations. The alternative to the clash of civilizations is the dialogue of cultures.

For my part, I am also convinced that there will not be a humanized globalization without respect for cultural diversity and there is dialogue only when everyone's identity is ensured and respected. It is in this spirit that France proposes the adoption, in the context of UNESCO, of a world convention on cultural diversity.

I am also happy that this meeting is taking place in New Delhi. Because India, which is aware of its own diversity, is itself fortified by an identity drawn from the roots of a long and admirable dialogue between civilizations.

Globalization will be an opportunity if we can put our willingness at the service of this ambition: creating a more open world, which is respectful of others and of their diversity. The organization of this conference in New Delhi incontestably partakes of this effort. Therefore, I express the wish that its efforts make it possible to further strengthen the consensus of the international community around this essential idea of dialogue of civilizations, which respects the diversity of cultures.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Prime Minister of Turkey

The September 11th tragedy has drawn attention to the magnitude of the threat of terrorism and the need to take a common action to counter this threat globally.

Terror in all shapes and forms is a global issue that has no boundaries. It cannot be linked to any religion, ethnicity or culture. Lack of basic needs, unfair distribution of wealth among the nations of the world, hunger, marginalization, poverty, unemployment, poor housing, illiteracy, oppression, totalitarianism, violation of human rights, minorities' problems, corruption and disorder can in no way justify but only provide the grounds that breed terror and violence. In combat against terrorism, these underlying ills must be addressed urgently.

With the growing interdependence among countries and the emergence of new and multi-dimensional threats, the concept of dialogue among civilizations has assumed even greater importance than ever.

As a response to the threat of terrorism, Turkey took the initiative and gathered together the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union member countries. This joint forum, which met in Istanbul on 12 and 13 February 2002, under the title 'Civilization And Harmony: The Political Dimension' demonstrated the determination of the European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to enhance the international harmony between different cultures, religions and concepts.

The meeting was unique in the sense that it was the first ever high-level meeting devoted to the need to intensify multicultural dialogue. There were frank and open-minded discussions on the topic, which focused on the need for enhancing mutual knowledge and respect among civilizations. The discussions reaffirmed that global peace, harmony among civilizations and elimination of prejudices can only be achieved through dialogue. The forum, named 'The Spirit of Istanbul', showed the readiness of all participants to work together to achieve these goals.

I believe that with India's multi-cultural and multi-ethnic structure and its vast experience fostering dialogue among different communities, cultures and civilizations, New Delhi is an ideal venue for this important conference which I'm convinced will provide a fruitful opportunity for the exchange of views and experiences. In this spirit, I extend my sincere wishes for a successful meeting, which I'm confident will make a positive contribution to international efforts in this respect.

Statements by Ministers and Other Representatives



From left to right: L.M. Singhvi, Representative of India to the Executive Board of UNESCO; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Neelam D. Sabharwal, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of India to UNESCO; Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development; Ahmad Jalali, President, General Conference, UNESCO (2001-2003).

Ghulam Rasoul Yusufzai

*Deputy Minister for Information and Culture
Afghanistan*

With its traditional policy of peace and tolerance that finds its origins in the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru, India has always been considered a peace-loving country key to peace and stability in the region and in the world. The convening of the present meeting is a clear manifestation of India's continued quest for peace and understanding among nations of the world.

The Government of Afghanistan, which also traditionally pursues the policy of peaceful co-existence, non-violence and reconciliation among nations with different socio-economic systems, attaches great importance to this gathering. Situated at an important junction of the ancient Silk Road, Afghanistan has been home to many different civilizations and cultures.

Its unique geographical position at the crossroads of diverse cultures has given a distinguished place to this country's drive for peace and understanding. Afghanistan, which suffered greatly as a result of twenty-three long years of war and national unrest, considers maintaining peace and stability an urgent task of the international community in which all countries, big or small, should actively cooperate. This noble objective of solving differences peacefully is attainable only through dialogue and understanding among nations.

This valuable point has been emphasized on several occasions in the speeches of H.E. President Hamid Karzai. It is through dialogue and understanding that we can bring different societies closer to each other to build trust and confidence among them while preventing hatred and enmity.

To love is to be fully human. Here, I want to quote H.E. Dr S.M. Raheen, Afghan Minister of Information and Culture, who has said that the love which is inspired by the teachings of Maulana-i-Balkhi is the only assured way to bring nations closer and make them live in peace and tranquility.

You may remember that in the first days of the establishment of the interim administration under the wise and dynamic leadership of H.E. Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, an international seminar was held in Kabul, under the initiative of our enlightened Minister of Information and Culture, Dr Rahim, on Islamic Sufism. The main purpose of this seminar was to emphasize that the message of Islam is to live in peace and

understanding with each other. The seminar emphasized that the sacred religion of Islam is strongly against terror, killing and violence, instead it emphasizes equality, brotherhood and social justice.

We live in a very sophisticated era today, i.e. the computer and Internet age, which is rapidly changing. Due to the revolution in information and communication technology, globalization is felt everywhere. Because of this fact, our problems are related and our responses to them should be related and coordinated. This is only possible when we respect diversity and take into consideration others' wishes and aspirations. Real respect for pluralism, diversity, tolerance with human dignity, and cultural and spiritual values is a solid base for the much-needed dialogue. This point has been clearly reflected in the new Constitution of Afghanistan. To also provide equal educational facilities and opportunities to all in Afghanistan and train the new generation in needed professional skills and modern know-how is the basic object of our curriculum.

A war-torn country like Afghanistan needs so many things at once. The revival of cultural heritage, rebuilding of the destroyed system of health, education, agriculture, industry, housing and so on are the most urgent of our country's needs, which require international technical and financial cooperation.

It was just last week that we got the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan on the World Heritage List. Thanks to UNESCO and other information agencies for their continued efforts in safeguarding cultural heritage of Afghanistan.

With the revival and rehabilitation of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage, we will be able to contribute more to the international efforts to build sound and reliable dialogue among nations for the benefit of all human beings irrespective of their sex, race and language to live in peace and to enjoy a meaningful life.

Lea D. Ahougbenou-Hounkpe

Minister for Technical Education and Vocational Training

Benin

Two important things make today's world a global village. Those two things are technology and language. Despite the efforts to make the planet a unique, frontierless world, the gap between the developing countries and the rich countries led by the G8 is widening. Such a situation brings discredit on human society, for what we do is seldom in tune with what we say.

Dialogues among civilizations in the quest for new perspectives are therefore most welcome. For all human beings, it is the only place and the best occasion to acquire resources to fight away, together, the tears, death, cries of pain, hunger, misery and poverty which are all our common enemies.

I would simply say that such dialogues are of paramount importance. It is not a secret to anybody that during the colonial period, Africa paid a heavy tribute that favored the development of the rich countries through the slave trade and the two world wars which completely deprived her of her worthy sons and valid labor that are her most important resources.

As a reward, Africa never ceases to receive from those she helped to plunge into abundance and development: arms to maim her sons and destroy herself; help to keep alive corruption and political intrigue; and humiliation through poverty, contempt, and technological isolation.

I find it necessary to remind you of those things because, as Paul Houé put it, 'only those who found in the intelligence of their past the meaning of the present, are able to invent the future'. In fact, this reminder helps to point out the responsibility that the selfishness of nations, peoples and men capable of securing peace in the world bear in the events that menace our planet today. It also justifies the necessity to establish a true and sincere dialogue between the north and the south for the advent of a new world order because no one can be happy all alone.

This meeting in New Delhi must be a meeting of truth, full of sincerity and brotherhood without which it will miss its *raison d'être*. I say no to a dialogue among nations that will be but a forum of hegemonic identity strategies but yes to a dialogue for development and peace in the world.

Dialogue, the theme of this meeting, to my mind, does not only aim to restore peace in the world through the reduction of poverty, a better distribution of the resources generated by technological progress, the

eradication of social inequalities and religious conflicts, but also to discourage support for destructive technologies.

The groups of the population that put themselves to death in order to defend a shameful cause, the groups that are ready to maim or kill their brothers in order to live, are those who stagnate in ignorance, misery, hunger and unemployment.

To reduce the poverty of both men and women equitably and sustainability, to do away with the tensions and conflicts, and the violence exerted on the poor, the women, the children and the adults, we must absolutely succeed in securing education and vocational training for all citizens in the world. Education and training, the creation and production of material goods and social services should be extended to all social classes in our communities. Globalization should take into account education for all, vocational training for all, employment for all and the right of all to protection, food, and security - in short, the right to the fulfillment of these basic needs. This is only a matter of good will, because we can achieve all these objectives if the rich countries want it.

As for me, Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training, I do not think it possible to guarantee today the recession of poverty and the cooling of the hotbeds of tension in the world if the majority of people do not have access to the process of social and economic development, which is possible only through technical education and vocational training.

What we have come to look for at this conference in the quest for new perspectives for justice and peace in the world is very simple. It is true, frank, sincere, honest and committed support to technical education and vocational training in the developing countries through technical, material and financial assistance and the training of the trainers.

Finally, I call for a frank and honest dialogue free of profit, selfishness and racism among the laboratories in the world, to fight efficiently against our common enemies such as AIDS and malaria; among schools and universities of all countries; and among educational programmes

The new perspectives will neither mean an attempt to silence others or to prove that there is peace in the world. Nor will they be synonyms for tranquility between the rich and the poor.

I am a girl, a sister, a spouse and a mother. As such, I call on all the girls of the world, all the sisters of the world, all the spouses of the world and all the mothers of the world to fight by the side of all the men of good will for the advent of a more equitable world.

The dialogue among civilizations is therefore an occasion to look for and put in the service of humanity the progress of education, science and technology for sustainable social and economic development and lasting peace in the world.

Dasho Sangay Wangchug

Secretary of the National Commission for Cultural Affairs

Bhutan

As we talk about fostering greater dialogue among ourselves to promote global peace and development, we should reflect on why, despite impressive economic and technological advances, the world today continues to be confronted by conflict and deprivation.

Globalization presents real opportunities for bringing us all closer together. However, the relentless onslaught of the compelling forces of this same phenomenon also poses unprecedented challenges to the diverse and time-tested cultures and value systems of the world.

Conventional development policies of countries lay emphasis on the achievement of tangible results. Individuals are engaged in the pursuit of material wealth as an end in itself, rather than as a means to attain true happiness. The quest for knowledge is guided more by compulsions of economic and social advancement, and not so much by a desire to acquire spiritual realization.

As a small, landlocked, least developed country, one of the main challenges facing Bhutan in its development is assimilating the positive forces of change without losing its unique culture and identity. We have to carefully consider how we can benefit from what the world has to offer towards our overall development efforts, without being overwhelmed by negative external influences.

Within this context, my country's development philosophy of 'Gross National Happiness' emphasizes a balance between material progress and spiritual fulfilment. This approach recognizes that development has many more dimensions than those associated with gross national product, and that development should be understood as a process that seeks to maximize happiness rather than economic growth alone.

We must strive to achieve a balance in all our endeavours, with national policies consciously geared towards obtaining the ultimate goal of human happiness. Perhaps this could be an important element in preventing the conditions that breed misunderstanding and discontent at the individual level, which eventually translate into global conflict and insecurity. I am confident that our collective wisdom will enable us to devise holistic approaches to forge a better world.

Ketumile Masire

Former President

Botswana

Since the euphoria generated by the end of the Cold War came to an end, the world has witnessed many armed conflicts. The international community has also become actively involved in finding a solution to this challenge to humanity - lasting peace.

It is my firm conviction that lasting peace can only be founded upon dialogue, the objective of which should be to reinforce tolerance, solidarity, mutual understanding and respect, and to promote pluralism and democratic values in a society. But, at the heart of such a dialogue, there should be full recognition of the need for the promotion of local and regional cultural diversity.

In order that people of the world can live in harmony, they need to recognize and respect each other's cultures. But, in order to survive, our cultures must also be dynamic, adaptive, and responsive to the changing local, regional and international environment.

There is no doubt that cultural diversity is a source of strength when properly managed and encouraged. Thus, in shaping cultural policy, Governments should seek ways of liberating, rather than constraining individual choices and economic well-being.

I am, thus, much encouraged by this Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations. I believe that, consistent with resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the Declaration on a Culture of Peace, people throughout the world will recognize the immense benefits that can be derived from dialogue as a means for achieving the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Vladimir Atanassov

Minister of Education and Science

Bulgaria

The questions we ask ourselves concern what we can do in a world confused by injustice and violence. Obviously, we have to try something substantial and radical. We should start with education, and I am not saying it because I myself am a minister of education, but because I do believe that, in coming to know foreign cultures and civilizations, intercultural education is a way to make ourselves party to them, to learn more about them and to try to understand them.

The educational sector of Bulgaria underwent considerable reform in nature and scope. It was integrated and globalized, prompted by national and international factors, such as advances in science and technology and the needs and interests of civil society. The main objectives of this reform have been: raising the quality of education; assuring equal opportunity and access; and developing a sense of citizenship, equal rights and tolerance. The implementation of these objectives can take place through multicultural education oriented to 'the development of free, moral, enterprising and law-abiding individuals, respecting other people's rights, culture, lifestyle and religion', as stated in our Public Education Act.

Basic education or training for the acquisition of professional skills is not sufficient in order for young people to develop the democratic values needed for intercultural dialogue. We have to put emphasis on civic education, more precisely, on education for democratic citizenship. The triptych of 'knowledge - practice - values' is the pedagogical basis for human rights education and prerequisite to setting up global intercultural dialogue. To this end, I would like to express my satisfaction with the new UNESCO initiative 'Education for Democratic Citizenship: From Policy to Effective Practice through Quality Assurance', launched by the Organization for the period 2003-2006.

Education for democratic citizenship aims at encouraging citizens to feel and value 'the power of argument' rather than 'the arguments of power'. In our democratic societies, the issue of education for democratic citizenship is closely connected with the issue of tolerance. Every citizen is respected and every opinion is heard. In a democratic society, there exists the right to be different, but no difference in rights. Being tolerant means accepting the other, and what is more important, living with what you do not approve of and with those of whom you do not approve. Knowing

foreign cultures, lifestyles and customs means learning to respect the diversity of mankind.

We should not forget dialogue with different ethnic minority groups. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria guarantees equal rights for national minority groups. Their socialization is among the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science, and emphasis is put on providing minorities equal access to quality education and integrating them into mainstream schools.

One of the main tasks of Bulgarian education is to help young people grow as active and competent citizens of their country, of Europe and of the world. In the implementation of United Nations, UNESCO, Council of Europe and European Union priority programs and initiatives, Bulgaria actively participates in and organizes events related to international projects aiming at: intercultural dialogue; education for tolerance and non-violence; peaceful resolution of conflicts through education; the fight against xenophobia, racism and prejudices; as well as 'learning to live together'. Pupils, students, teachers, academics, representatives of governmental and non-governmental sectors and media participate in these projects. The main goal is to create a culture of peace and tolerance through dialogue and constructive means of understanding.

Building up a culture of tolerance and establishing the prerequisites for preserving cultural diversity are inseparable parts of national cultural policy. Thirteen century-old Bulgarian spiritual contributions have always been part of pan-European heritage. No one can deny that the idea of European integration presupposes the unification of European countries around the principles of democratic governance and the market economy, with the aim of creating a common European area, abiding by rules, respecting human rights, and assuring equal opportunities and competition. However, for many centuries in Europe, different cultural traditions have crossed and enriched themselves. Concerning cultural heritage, Europe is trying to preserve the unique diversity and character of each national culture, to follow the principle of 'unification through diversification' and to consolidate interregional communication and dialogue between civilizations. We are expected to preserve our national Bulgarian identity, thus contributing to cultural diversity in Europe and in the world.

I am convinced that this refers to all national cultures, which constitute this varicolored world of ours. What we should all strive for and what is worth working for, is creative dialogue between cultures in the name of world peace.

Laurier LaPierre

Member of Parliament

Canada

We, in Canada, living as we do next to a most powerful neighbor, ally, and trade partner, have had, over the years of our existence as a nation, to devise a presence in the world that defines us and tells who we are. We have found that presence in multilateralism and cultural diversity/pluralism.

To us, Canadians, multilateralism means to open ourselves to and engage with the peoples of the planet. We are a nation of immigrants. First: the First Peoples of our country, the Aboriginals, who came to our land thousands of years ago; then, the French along with settlers from the British Isles and, after, from western and central Europe. Now most of our new citizens and residents come from Asia, Latin America, and Africa. It is, therefore, important for us to enter into dialogue with the countries of those continents as we have done with the United States, Mexico, and Europe.

As for the acceptance of cultural diversity/pluralism, we have no choice. Coming from every part of the planet, our people must find unity. We do so by embracing cultural diversity/pluralism, for it is for us a condition of citizenship. It is in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We also work hard at achieving it and we try to manage it by incorporating it in our values and in the definition of ourselves, in our culture and way of life, and, constantly, in our national agenda.

Furthermore, cultural diversity/pluralism is the essence of democracy, the essential condition for the safeguarding of human rights, and the definition of our Canadianism.

Over the years, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs abroad and the Ministry of Canadian Heritage at home, under the leadership of their respective Ministers; the Hon. Bill Graham and the Hon. Sheila Copps, we have developed many tools to maintain our objective of a constant dialogue among ourselves and to manage our diversity. And we continue to search for more.

We, in Canada, have found the following useful in the pursuit of the national Dialogue on Diversity:

- it must be people-oriented and involve the young at all levels; I deplore the fact that no young people are in attendance;
- because of the nature of our federalism in which the provincial governments have primary responsibility for the education of the

young, we have tended to work nationally through extra-curricular (informal and non-formal education) activities;

- the telling of stories by the young and the elders is of the highest importance;
- exchange visits between young people are good eye-openers;
- extensive use of the internet is most useful;
- our bilingualism is an effective instrument that has led many of our students to reach out through other languages in order to understand others better;
- through the manifest interest of young people, we are discovering that we need to expand our vision of diversity internationally and to encourage the young to do so. In that regard, I mentioned the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) and the International Instrument on Cultural Diversity (IICD).

There is no doubt that if the nations/civilizations of the planet work hard at realizing the purpose and goals of the conference, we shall insure a better life for the young people in our world.

On the New Delhi Declaration:

- This Declaration, which in the name of Canada, I support, is addressed to the adults of the many nations and civilizations that inhabit our world. Without the adults accepting it and living it, we have not much chance to alter significantly the present negative frame of mind that abounds in too many places and that destroys or makes more difficult the pursuit of the dialogue among civilizations and of cultural diversity.
- It would be well, if you could send the adults back to school! Furthermore, and more importantly, this Declaration, which I hope will be accepted unanimously by the delegates here assembled, is dedicated to the children and the young adults of the planet. It is our commitment that we shall work with them and on their behalf to create a better world. We cannot escape going down that road.
- In the pursuit of our determination to promote dialogue and diversity, I have no doubt that you, through UNESCO, will have all the assistance and means required from the nations, civilizations, and governments of the world.
- What we are doing today, here in the city of New Delhi, in the country of India and on the planet Earth, is the right thing to do.

Zhang Xinsheng

Deputy Minister of Education

China

About two weeks ago, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China. Mr Vajpayee had great talks with Chinese leaders. I think both partners are reinforcing a new form of dialogue between the two neighboring countries with two different civilizations. This dialogue between China and India caught worldwide attention because the two governments and peoples saw it as a historic event. This dialogue is so successful and fruitful because both parties involved have the sincerity to learn more from each other.

Dialogues of this kind among many other nations have justified the critical importance of learning from each other based on free and in-depth mutual understanding. Such learning encourages many to think about the necessity of becoming a learning nation for effective global dialogue.

A learning nation should be receptive, inclusive and ready to learn from other nations. It can be metaphorically compared to an ocean open to all incoming water resources because it locates itself in a modest position. Under such circumstances, it could be said that unity in a patterned mode is far less creative than diversity in a harmonized form. Is this not a debatable approach?

A learning nation is said to be conscious of combating stereotypes, prejudices, and misconceptions. Meanwhile, it incorporates complementary elements of other cultures into its own, and through creative transformation, adds its own contribution to the richness of human civilization and sustainable development.

As far as the cognition of other civilizations is concerned, a learning nation should pursue real knowledge. This real knowledge comes from consciousness of what one knows and awareness of what one does not know. To acknowledge what one does not know is sometimes an even more important aspect of knowledge, because false and presumed knowledge of other civilizations is detrimental to effective dialogue.

It is said that a learning nation draws upon not only the present but also upon the past. It feeds on its own traditions and on the heritage of others. It is also assumed to be devoted to seeking the common values of humanity. Such values are often regarded as the ultimate goal of all civilizations, regardless of their origins. In addition, a learning nation is expected to be a nation that treasures peace and strives for the common development of mankind. Because of this sense of mission, a learning nation is reckoned to be fairly dynamic. It appreciates the conception of

tolerance as a virtue and yet maintains that tolerance is not enough. Furthermore, it is highly necessary to respect pluralism and diversity, and to maintain cultural diversification amidst this rapid process of economic globalization.

In order to shape herself into a learning nation and a full-scaled well-off society in two decades, China has been learning from any viable practices in all human civilizations while promoting dialogue among ethnic groups and people from all walks of life as an important domestic policy; China champions the idea that negotiation through dialogue is a better way to handle any conflict between nations; China has joined the World Trade Organization to play fairly with other nations; China will host the 2008 Olympics to share its wonderful culture with visitors from all over the world and vice versa through this sports gathering.

Moreover, each year, China sends over one hundred thousand of its students and scholars to study overseas. In many countries, the number of Chinese students represents the largest among international enrollment figures. Meanwhile, in order to further facilitate mutual learning, China has become home to thousands of students from almost every nation in the world. China has made great efforts to actualize the mutual recognition of educational credentials with other countries, and the central government has issued a new regulation on China's foreign cooperative schools. Such mass-scale exchange programs create numerous chances for dialogue among students and scholars from different cultural communities. In schools, curriculums are redesigned to expose students to inter-lingual and cross-cultural contents. Students are trained to be globally oriented with high awareness and adequate capability for trans-cultural dialogue, and to do their utmost for world peace and human development.

Traditionally, Confucianism promoted the significance of The Great Learning as the first text of The Four Classics. Now that China is continuously learning to become a learning nation, China needs to look at other nations with more valuable experience in shaping themselves into learning nations. Ladies and gentlemen, can we draw the conclusion here that unless each nation becomes a learning nation, effective dialogue among civilizations is not possible in its true sense?

For this purpose, we should be aware of the danger of fostering teaching nations that undermine the conditions on which dialogue among civilizations is based.

Today, as the world is fast shrinking into a global village, we find it more necessary and urgent than ever before to launch dialogues among civilizations in different countries, nations, and regions. In this context,

many issues bear global universality and require international cooperation. Chinese people feel strongly that we are now living together in a global village. This makes both bordering countries and far apart countries neighbors. It is imperative for us all as global citizens to get along with our neighbors as mutual learners and cooperative partners for common development, which is conducive to sustainable development. This will facilitate the creation of an effective framework of dialogue among civilizations on this little planet.

Heimo Richter

Ambassador to India

Germany

UNESCO was the first intergovernmental organization to redirect its programmes after 11 September 2001. On 20 October 2001, the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism in all fields of competence of UNESCO - in education, science, culture, and communication. Together with this resolution, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted. It is an extremely important standard-setting instrument which provides intellectual and ethical tools for overcoming polarizing and dangerous world-views conveyed by scenarios of a so-called 'clash of civilizations'.

It calls for 'a global and inclusive vision of development based on the observance of human rights, mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and the alleviation of poverty'. Germany is committed to contributing to this task and further developing international intellectual cooperation to this end.

I would like to exemplify the challenges ahead by briefly sharing with you some thoughts on a dialogue which is of particular importance to Germany: the dialogue between the West and the Islamic World. We are convinced we have to do more to bridge a growing gap here.

The West faces some critical basic questions from Muslims around the world. Is the West not applying double standards? Does the West not invoke human rights merely as a means to put pressure on other nations, not to better people's lives?

Our response to such questions must be to intensify the dialogue among civilizations at all levels, to renew our commitment to and our call for the peaceful resolution of differences, mutual tolerance and mutual respect. We believe in the principles of justice and the rule of law. The more prominent their role also in international relations, the greater the benefit for peace and stability.

Internationally agreed norms and human rights obviously have a key role to play. We need to seek a common understanding of those universal values that will guide us through the 21st century. Real dialogue requires a solid consensus on those values and norms we hold in common. I know this is a very ambitious goal indeed. Tolerance means mutual respect for the religion, culture and civilization of all. We do not insist that our own values and philosophy are the only way to live in peace with one another. We believe, however, that there must be a readiness to listen to and to

discuss all issues, whether we agree on them or not, that may be raised. Tolerance is a principle valid for everyone. And it should lead to acceptance of the other being different and being respected in his or her faith and way of thinking as long as such faith is peaceful and poses no threat to others.

To achieve it, we have to start work at home, within our own societies. Dialogue can only succeed with partners who are also committed to dialogue within their own societies. It is important, too, that we in the West should try to better understand the outlook and perceptions of people in the Islamic world. There is a widespread feeling of having been wronged and unfairly treated by the West. Political cooperation and engagement with the Muslim world are for us a key priority. What shapes Europe's strategic culture today are not the traditional tools of power - military might - but the so-called soft power tools such as economics, trade, cultural relations, education and dialogue. So let us further intensify cooperation in these fields.

The globalized world of the 21st century is facing a host of challenges and problems which can only be mastered if we reject violence and work together with a sense of common purpose. We are keen to intensify dialogue and co-operation on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance. This requires that all sides be frank, open and self-critical. Of course there may be different ways to achieve our common goal: to live in peace with people throughout the world as well as with all communities within our own countries. It is vital, however, that we all do whatever we can to make headway towards this goal.

Elizabeth A. Ohene

Minister of Tertiary Education

Ghana

Recently, the conversation in most homes has been about the fate of a set of co-joined Iranian twins undergoing surgery in Singapore. Doubtless, we all said silent prayers for them and were saddened that the surgery did not succeed.

We do not have much control over the subject of conversation in our living rooms. That is controlled by media over which we more often than not have no control. In much the same way, the story has moved on from the twins to the progress of the American President, George W. Bush, on his African Odyssey. You would therefore have heard, because President Bush chose the backdrop of Gore Island in Senegal to make a speech about the evils of the slave trade, that the West African sub-region from which I come, is in turmoil.

Many slaves were indeed taken away from Africa through Gore Island, but many more were taken away from what is now present-day Ghana. It is not a subject that we are very comfortable with, but we have had to confront this reality of our painful past. The forts and castles, through which the millions of slaves were taken, dot Ghana's coastline and are living testimony.

What is more, with the help of UNESCO, many of the castles have been restored and the descendants of the slaves now come back regularly to go through the castles and confront us with this part of our ugly past. The importance of education is thus brought home forcefully to us to ensure we never forget our history and to make sure that we prevent the recurrence of such incidents. In laying emphasis on education, the government of Ghana is of the view that the education of girls should be highlighted. This is not because it is the fashionable thing to do, but because we acknowledge that women hold the key to the cultural heritage of a people.

An educated woman will ensure that her children, be they male or female, have an education. Educating girls today ensures that all children will be educated in the next generation. I am happy to note that so much progress has been made in the education of girls in the countries of the Indian sub-continent. We in Ghana obviously have a lot to learn from them.

As I have listened to many speakers agonize about how to make this conference come out with something practical instead of remaining the

'normal talk-shop conference', it has occurred to me that it is within our power to make this possible.

Mathematics, science and technology hold the key to the rapid reduction of poverty. These are subjects in which there is a very wide gap between the rich and the poor countries, and an even wider gap between girls and boys in poor countries. This conference could take practical steps to popularize and promote the teaching of mathematics, science and technology among girls in poor countries. It will pay quick dividends; it will give hope to the many young people in the poor countries who now think the only future they have is to try and enter the developed countries.

It might help the rich countries stem the immigration from the poor countries and save them from having to deal with a most embarrassing and contentious problem. Mathematics, science and technology are not like religion or language or such obviously cultural subjects. A mathematical formula in any language is the same, as is a scientific formula, and such a powerful tool in the hands of women of the poor nations will make a dramatic difference. I believe it is worth giving it a try.

Arief Rachman

Executive Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO

Ministry of National Education

Indonesia

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 they are in the interstate, international and intercultural contexts. Our choices in relating to others from different cultures, traditions and heritage will shape the societies of the 21st century.

What is dialogue, why do we need it? Dialogue is an instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, a vehicle for diversity and pluralism, especially as an ultimate aim of furthering common good. We need a dialogue among civilizations because it can improve awareness and understanding of the common values of all human kind and respect for differences.

What are the perspectives of a good dialogue? Dialogue among civilizations should have a sense of goals, a sense of regulation, a sense of achievement and a sense of harmony. It should be based on the spirit of respect that allows for different ways of achieving a happy and peaceful society and provides opportunities to work together for a peaceful coexistence.

The perspectives of a good dialogue should also promote the glory of the creator of the universe and glorify the value of humanity and human values of all human beings living on earth by promoting, among others, human rights, gender equity and Education for All, so that healthy development can be achieved.

The importance of having dialogue among cultures: Dialogue as an instrument of transformation, a way for tolerance and peace, a vehicle for diversity and pluralism, hence a means for furthering the common good, presupposes the capacity to listen with accommodating attitudes, which implies taking a moral risk. The effort of listening is one of accommodating the other without changing the self, without abandoning the self.

Thus, dialogue is a testing ground of tolerance. Dialogue and tolerance are closely connected. Without tolerance, one cannot expect to be able to create a healthy dialogue. Through dialogue, mutual understanding can be achieved. The goal of a genuine dialogue is not conversion, but mutual understanding, and it is achieved through conviction, not convenience.

We must attempt to capture the significance of dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world where cultural diversity presents not only difficult challenges but also opportunities for mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.

The three guiding principles of dialogue are universality, diversity and dignity. These principles are closely connected to the values of justice, solidarity, tolerance, sharing, equity, respect for human rights and democratic principles, which can be acquired through education.

How does real dialogue occur? Real dialogue occurs when full recognition of the 'other' generates a preoccupation with and responsibility for the 'other'. In many respects, it is an invitation to rethink the idea of humanity. The capacity of human beings to feel empathy and compassion for others goes deeper than mere coexistence of different cultural ethno-groups. This is possible if three elements are in place:

- a clear picture of one's self;
- a clear picture of one's obligation to communicate with others;
- a clear picture of one's obligation to work and live together with others.

What requirements are needed to have better dialogue? In order to have better dialogue among civilizations, the following requirements should be met:

- A clear understanding of the identities of cultures and their life expectations. Each of those who are involved in dialogue should verify the following questions: Who we are? What are our hopes and concerns? What do we want to achieve? In what ways should we try to achieve a happy life? How do we do it?
- Tolerance of differences among cultures. Equity and cultural recognition are major avenues for turning cultural diversity into an opportunity rather than an obstacle. They hold the key to cultural pluralism. Therefore, differences among cultures should be recognized and respected.
- The need to work together and see the world as one society that should be interdependent; we live in the age of interdependence, therefore, we have to collaborate with each other in solving all problems of mankind.
- The spirit of seeking commonality. We can work together to meet the needs for basic necessities, security, love, respect, and self-actualization only if we respect and accept differences such as traditions, customs, beliefs, religion, language, ways of life and political interests.

- The spirit of respect for difference. The spirit of respect for difference, such as recognizing others' existence and rights; the ambition to have a healthy democratic society that allows people the right to express their ideas, to adjust to different ideas and systems; and finally, to promote human rights, gender equity and the skills for living together.
- Apply the six core values as the moral basis for international relations among nations. The UN Millennium Declaration adopted six core values as the moral basis for relations among nations, namely: Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Tolerance, Respect for Nature and Shared Responsibility.

What kind of education could better involve youth in dialogue?

Education is a process of conscious action through unconscious learning. Thus, educators should avoid learning processes that do not allow motivation to learn. Good educators should love their pupils and love their work and they should be masters of humanity and masters of knowledge. Therefore, the kind of education needed is one which builds character by nurturing certain values that enable individuals to develop awareness of themselves and their environment. It should encourage them to play their social role at work and in the community in order to be future leaders preserving the planet so that the world will be a better one.

In this respect, the task of an educator is to teach students about human diversity and to instill in them an awareness of the similarities and interdependence of all people. From early childhood, the school should seize every opportunity to pursue this approach through the teaching of human history, geography, languages, etc.

Learning should be focused on the following values/subjects:

- Human rights education
- Multilingual education
- International understanding
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Skills for living together
- Peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, friendship
- Inter-cultural understanding
- Universally shared values
- Values forming the basis of social cohesion and respect for human dignity and linguistic diversity/values clarification/shifting values
- History, religion, heritage and customs of other nations.

Education is to help students to grow towards self-actualization in order to develop their full potential: spiritual, emotional, intellectual,

social and physical. Evaluation, therefore, is needed to ascertain the learners' achievements and their potentials. Most of the time, however, evaluation of educational achievement focuses only on intellectual capability rather than other capabilities.

We are living in a critical and transitional civilization. If we do not do anything, the earth will be an unhappy place to live. As we have mentioned above, improved understanding of others has a new urgency in the contemporary international context. Through dialogue, mutual understanding can be achieved. Therefore, UNESCO should facilitate dialogue among cultures and civilizations in accordance with its mandate, since the need for dialogue is relevant and acute at both the national and international levels. Good dialogue should be guided by certain principles based upon universal values such as justice, solidarity, sharing, equity, respect for human rights, democratic principles and tolerance which could be taught through education for international understanding at the earliest stages of human life.

Ghazi Al-Khraicha

Secretary General of the Ministry of Education

Jordan

The United Nations declared 2001 as 'The Year of Dialogue among Civilizations', whereby nations and peoples of diverse cultures, religions, values and beliefs were brought together with the aim of achieving coexistence and international understanding to lead to peace and security in the world. UNESCO, in its last General Conference, adopted 'The Declaration on Cultural Diversity' in which it called for the promotion of cultural dialogue among civilizations, consolidated with intercultural interaction, coexistence, and mutual understanding between the nations on this earth.

I would also like to point out here that the long-term programs, plans, and activities of our regional Arab and Islamic organizations such as The Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), include dialogue among civilizations and cultural pluralism in their agendas. They are aware of the importance of these concepts nowadays for Arab and Islamic civilizations and the need for those civilizations, with their diverse cultures, to have dialogue with other civilizations and cultures in order to appreciate and tolerate diverse cultural values, beliefs, and practices, sustaining integration and respect for others.

The political leadership in my country has recognized the importance of dialogue among civilizations, as well as cultural pluralism, and for many decades it has worked on consolidating openness and cultural, linguistic and ethnic tolerance in Jordanian society. It also endeavored to disseminate the principles of equality, justice and mutual respect in the Middle East region.

Since the beginning of the last century, subsequent governments have been tireless in setting down legislation, upon Royal directive, to create a unified Jordanian society of intellectual harmony, common interests and noble humane goals. Today in Jordan, we are proud that our country has become, under the leadership of His Majesty, King Abdullah, II, an example of national unity based on intellectual unity, common interests and goals, equality of rights and duties, democratic values, preservation of human rights, freedom of expression, and establishment of political parties.

In the educational domain, the Jordanian Ministry of Education has long been translating political directives into empirical educational policies and ambitious plans and programs which have made the Jordanian educational system a model for intellectual and educational development in our society and led to the establishment of dialogue, democracy and respect for other civilizations and cultures.

Let me point out that the philosophy of education in my country has distinct intellectual and humane foundations, the most important of which are the following:

- Contending against ethnic, regional and denominational fanaticism;
- Equality of political, social and economic rights and duties among the members of Jordanian society;
- Establishment of international understanding based on mutual respect, justice and equity;
- Positive participation in building human civilizations and benefiting from its outcomes.

We are at the launch of the era of globalization, knowledge explosion, and information technology and communications (ICT). Our world has become a small village. Hence, we have to carefully consider the future of coming generations, for while endeavoring to arm our citizens with knowledge that will enable them to face the challenges of the future and keep pace with progress, we have to qualify them culturally and sentimentally to acquire positive aspects of behavior, emotions and attitudes towards others in their own community as well as in other communities. This leads to respect for their own culture and those of others. We shall, in this way, realize the human principle of peaceful coexistence, integration of civilizations and respect for cultural pluralism. If we can achieve this, we will create generations who believe in openness as opposed to seclusion. The products of world civilization, manifest in scientific progress and contributing to socio-economic development, will better the welfare of nations.

That is why education is at the core of the process of bringing about these desirable concepts for future generations. Dialogue among civilizations, which aims at integration for the service of humanity, must have a work plan in order to become an effective instrument for bringing nations together and for establishing mutual respect, justice and equity. Respect for human rights constitutes the basic theme of this dialogue and integration. The benefits of economic and intellectual development should prevail among all nations in the world, so that no nation or ethnic group feels that the gap between the rich and the poor is expanding. Therefore,

development tools should be oriented to scientific and technological progress. When the standard of living is raised, people are satisfied and hence find the time to contribute to human civilization.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the great and distinctive efforts of UNESCO to promote cultural pluralism and dialogue among civilizations. I hope these efforts will be intensified to bring about desirable outcomes and support peace.

Dieudonn Michel Razafindrandriatsimaniry

Minister of Primary and Secondary Education

Madagascar

The promotion of dialogue among cultures and civilizations is more than a Utopian idea. It is not only feasible and possible, but also entirely indispensable. Due to its location, Madagascar is a natural crossroads of many cultures and civilizations and it could present new perspectives for a framework to enhance dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

Cultures must be preserved by systematic education within the family and in the schools. Acculturation risks producing hybrid beings without roots, who are easily swayed by the winds of progress and modernities. At the same time, we think it is necessary to use modern means to preserve and defend our knowledge and to make it known to different generations and to facilitate its exchange, for as is often said in Madagascar, 'when an old person dies, a library disappears'.

It is up to us to value cultural diversity, to preserve our identity and to respect the value of civilizations in order that development should be harmonious and sustainable. The thoughtful employment of cultural resources encourages the effective participation of populations in projects, for example, the preservation of sacred places in order to protect their vegetation and wildlife. Based on activities varying from the protection of the environment to the fight against AIDS, we can see the importance of cultural values. Thus, for the future, we propose:

- more exchanges around specified themes;
- effective collaboration between researchers and technicians to propose avenues for reflection while taking into account possible points of shared interest;
- exchange of artists, thinkers, researchers and regular citizens;
- school twinning that accents this type of sharing and emphasizes the key phrase 'unity in diversity'.

Dialogue among civilizations allows us to improve the conditions of human life and to maintain peace and love throughout the world.

Moussa Tour

Minister of Education

Mali

A vast country situated at the heart of West Africa, Mali stretches over 1,240,000 km². A country in transition, populated by nomads of the Sahara and sedentary peoples of the humid zones, Mali constitutes a crossroads of civilizations. The Republic of Mali has a long history and a brilliant civilization that has radiated throughout West Africa from prehistory through to the present day.

This civilization has surpassed the borders of Africa to reach universal dimensions through, for example, Djenné, a center of learning which has become a UNESCO cultural heritage site, as well as Timbuktu, which enjoys mythical status in popular memory.

From the Paleolithic to the Neolithic, through the Middle Ages to modern times, Mali has made its imprint on world history, with its historic remains, empires, kingdoms and its restoration of democracy.

From the third to the 16th century, Mali was the cradle of the greatest empires in the region:

- the Empire of Ghana, which was the first black empire of west Africa;
- the Mali Empire, which eclipsed the Empire of Ghana, reached its apogee under the reign of Mansa Moussa or Kankou Moussa (1312-1337) and of Mansa Souleymane (1342-1360). Kankou Moussa made Mali known beyond Africa when he made his famous pilgrimage to Mecca bearing 12 tons of gold;
- the Songhay Empire, which emerged after the fall of the Empire of Mali.

The brilliant period of the great empires corresponded with the European Middle Ages, which were characterized by political disintegration, war and insecurity. Mali of the Middle Ages, which had given birth to the greatest empires of east Africa, also saw a period of great sadness, namely that of the slave trade.

The 18th and 19th centuries were marked by the collapse of the great empires and the birth of thousands of small kingdoms, whose weakness and politics made Mali ripe for colonial conquest. The colonial conquest of east Sudan, the present day Republic of Mali, began in 1855 and ended on 11 November 1920. Mali became independent on 22 September 1960. The population of Mali was estimated on 30 April 2002 at 10,703,000 persons. The population today stems from the mixture over the centuries of nomads, Arab-Berbers and sedentary black Africans. There are more than 20 ethnic groups in Mali.

Since the times of the great empires, from the fourth to the 19th century, Mali has been a country of migration, open to other countries. The Mali Diaspora, estimated at more than two million, plays an important role. The theme of 'Dialogue among Civilizations - Quest for New Perspectives' is appreciated all the more since this is the path which Mali itself has chosen. This path is illustrated by the history of the country, characterized by the mixing of communities; the goals of citizenship incorporated within the educational system; and the focus upon mechanisms for cooperation and resolution of internal and external conflict. Mali thus positively resolves to support the undertakings of this conference and emphasizes the importance of the future Delhi Declaration.

Michael Refalo

*Former Minister of Culture and Personal Representative of the Foreign Minister
Malta*

At a time when the world is still plagued with conflicts, many of which result from ethnic, cultural or religious differences, no other subject is more relevant for discussion at a meeting of this nature. Moreover, your distinguished guests, in particular H.E. Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, who leads the most important international cultural organization, UNESCO, are certainly the most competent people to contribute to such a discussion. It is really a great honor for me to represent the Government of Malta at such a distinguished gathering.

The call for dialogue among civilizations is not new. Dialogue among civilizations has indeed been an item on the international agenda for quite some time. This notwithstanding, the past few years have been frequently characterized by savage conflicts; conflicts that took various forms and names, ranging from ethnic cleansing, to claims of cultural superiority, to the 'clash of civilizations'; conflicts that were fuelled by lack of understanding and mutual intolerance of cultures, discrimination in all its forms, racism and xenophobia. In short, these years are characterized by conflicts that have resulted from the lack of, or the failure of, dialogue among civilizations.

It is sad to note that the end of the global confrontation based on different political ideologies that characterized the second half of last century has not been followed by an increase in understanding between civilizations and cultures. It is even paradoxical to note that this lack of understanding is so prevalent at a time when we claim to be living in a 'global village', and during a period of history which has been labeled as the 'information age'.

Reason would have made us believe that the process of globalization and the vast improvement in the methods of communication would have contributed to the rapprochement of civilizations, as it creates an ideal backdrop for cultural exchanges. This has, however, not been the case. Globalization has created new forms of inequalities which seem to foster cultural conflicts rather than cultural pluralism. Unfortunately, there are winners and losers in globalization, and the biggest misfortune is that the gulf between the winners and the losers is becoming wider and wider. Too many people feel that their cultures are marginalized and that their religions are not respected. We have now experienced what the reactions that emanate from such feelings can be.

The call for dialogue among civilizations is thus today a most urgent one. Humanity as a whole cannot afford for this dialogue be treated as any other 'item' on the international agenda.

Dialogue among civilizations is by far the most effective way for the peoples of the world to get to know each other better. Such a dialogue is the best medium to help dispel hatred, ignorance, and mutual distrust; hence the best way to build peace. Dialogue is an essential tool to help eradicate the 'us and them' mentality, and to create an environment in which a long-term understanding between cultures and civilizations can be promoted.

The theory that the clash of cultures and civilizations is inevitable is a myth. We must all reject such an assertion, knowing fully well that continuous dialogue among civilizations and cultures is the best guarantee for world peace. This was the spirit which prevailed in Paris when, in October 2001, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted. This declaration was a milestone in the history of mankind. For the first time, Member States of UNESCO took the opportunity to declare the cultural diversities of civilizations as a precious common heritage of humanity. We note with satisfaction the continuous enthusiasm with which UNESCO provides world leadership in the revitalization and regeneration of this dialogue.

My country attaches great importance to the success of this dialogue. Situated as it is in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, a sea which has often been referred to as the cradle of civilizations, Malta has always considered its mission the promotion of dialogue between the great civilizations which have mushroomed over the millennia around this sea.

Since the UN's conference on environment and development was held in Rio de Janeiro over a decade ago, much of the time of the international community has been dedicated to discussions on the promotion of sustainable development. Such discussions have, however, to a very large extent concentrated only on the promotion of economic development in harmony with the protection of the environment for future generations.

The cultural aspect of development has unfortunately not found its rightful place in this international debate. I do believe, distinguished delegates, that this conference has the obligation and the mission to highlight for the international community that no development can be sustainable or successful unless it recognizes the importance of cultural pluralism.

This conference convenes in the home of one of the oldest civilizations, which has throughout its history been a melting pot of civilizations, a country that can be considered a pioneer in the promotion of dialogue among civilizations. I have no doubt that this conference can serve as a catalyst in the promotion of a more widespread dialogue, and will succeed in establishing a framework in which this dialogue can, despite all the challenges it faces, prevail in the 21st century.

In order to succeed, we have to be able to 'humanize globalization', thus making sure that the concept of sustainable development also takes into consideration cultural diversities and different civilizations. So far, the concept of sustainability has been used mainly in environmental and economic discourses about development. Our challenge is to make the world understand that sustainability is a multi-dimensional concept, with economic, political, cultural and human aspects. Therefore, in order to make globalization sustainable on a human level, it needs to be able to give as much importance to the promotion of cultural pluralism as it does to global market integration. The space and the environment to foster new possibilities for dialogue among civilizations must be found. The framework for this dialogue must use education as the main empowerment tool, whilst making utmost use of the new communication and information technologies, and at the same time respecting the ethical and spiritual values of each and every civilization.

B. Enkhtuvshin

Vice-President

Mongolian Academy of Sciences

The role of nomadic society in the development of world civilizations and the changes in nomadic society are, at present, relatively little studied. This report refers to the interrelated issues concerning the role of nomadic society in the development of world civilizations, the methodology of civilizational research, ways of ensuring intercivilizational consensus in the era of globalization and development tendencies within modern nomadic society.

Insightful study of the nature of nomadic life can affect the understanding of all civilizations and the appraisal of history. Some 14,000-10,000 years ago, human beings transformed into socially organized groups which took seven main forms: small-scale societies, unclassified societies, subsistence societies, classified societies, city-states, nation states and local societies, which distinctively shaped life and cultural development. Nomadic society was not the 'barbaric', 'savage' and uncivilized society described by some Chinese and European historians of the seventeenth century. On the contrary, as regards civilizational form, this society emerged at the end of the subsistence period and undertook the first two major divisions of labor in the world, animal husbandry and agriculture. The nomads were pioneers in the dispersion of ancient tangible and intangible cultural forms.

During important phases of world history, the nomads did not pose obstacles to civilization, but on the contrary, served as links between many different civilizations and inspired development. 4000 years ago, after the invasion of the Indo-Europeans, Mesopotamian culture flourished and Toltek and Aztek cities and empires were founded. They were instrumental in developing northwestern Indian Harappian civilization.

The Hunnu nomads made significant impact on human civilization and the development of city-states at the end of classical civilization. They invaded China at the beginning of the fourth century BC, then sacked the Ganta Empire and caused the collapse of the Roman Empire, determining the fate of Indians and Europeans for centuries after. The great push of Mongolian nomads, which continued until the eleventh and twelfth centuries AD, played an important role in the foundation of Mongolian nomadic civilization. The period of the Hunnu Empire gave birth to Mongolian nomadic civilization's traditions of statehood, nomadic cultural development, trade exchanges, writings and customs.

They secured the famous Silk Road and developed the world trade network which reached Mesopotamian cultural centers from western China, winding through the mountainous and hilly regions of central Asia. Furthermore, the great road linking Rome, Muslim countries and Western Europe was under the protection of nomads. This network was not only a trade route but also a route of interaction between different civilizations. Along this road, city-states were created, and Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity developed peacefully. The nomads used the road to introduce Chinese papermaking technology to Egypt and Europe and modern military technology to Eurasia. Therefore, when the Hunnu state led the first drive of Mongolian nomadic society some 2000 years ago, it made an important contribution to the history of world civilization.

Mongolians created the horse transportation network, which was the most expeditious means of communication throughout the territory of the Empire. Western and eastern traders, tourists, monks, and political and military figures used this network, and the relations between Asia, Europe and the Mongolian Empire flourished as never seen before. Western goods went east; eastern goods went west; coin and paper currencies in circulation increased; and trading centers and ports were created. The free trade policy of the Mongolian Empire strongly influenced interaction among different civilizations, cultures and nationalities. In this sense, the transport network and trading road situated in the Mongolian Empire, which linked the major parts of Europe, Asia and Middle East, served as bridge between many civilizations of the eastern part of the world.

History provides evidence that new food, inventions and ideas spread along this road. Kharkhorum was the center where intellectuals and artists from all over the empire gathered. Chinggis Khan's policy was to radically reform the society, to enrich Mongolian nomadic civilization with the achievements of sedentary civilizations, to be open to the rest of the world, to develop comprehensive trade, economic, cultural and scientific relations, to establish an effective state administrative apparatus, to use the knowledge of scholars and scientists in state policy and activities, and to establish the most reliable and operative transport and communication system. Therefore, the Mongolian empire founded by Chinggis Khan played a significant role in the history of world civilization and left an indelible trace upon it.

Historians have asked how the people who created the greatest empire ever known to us, and who strived to advance the wisdom of the rule of law, could be considered as uncivilized. Respect for democracy in international relations and globalization is gaining momentum. This

situation urges Mongolia to preserve its national culture and civilization, to boost its economy and to strengthen its independence.

Although from the second half of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth, the era of classic civilizations ended and western civilization increasingly intervened, it is no secret that alternative civilizations were serving another vector of development. The main characteristics of the twentieth century include the shift from international relations policies based on the primacy of capital accumulation and weapon races, to a system based on information networks and intercivilizational consensus. In this new reality, the development of civilizations will be combined so that global civilization and individual civilizations will come to terms through a consensus-based mechanism.

The future of nomadic civilizations is the subject of ongoing study by scholars and researchers. In the 'National Program for the Development of Science and Technology of Mongolia', which was ratified by the government of Mongolia to be implemented in 2010, the main direction of research is to work out the model of Mongolian civilization in the context of globalization. Scholars are debating concepts and definitions of the further development of civilizations in era of globalization. An overall view of the discussions reveals three lines of transformation of civilizations:

- a. reflections on the paradigm of tradition and preservation;
- b. criticism of western hegemony;
- c. the search for new directions.

As we consider the security of nations and the liberalization of national relations, scientific, technological and religious issues attract more attention. Within traditional understanding, there is a risk of over-emphasis upon national security leading to low-levels of development. On the other hand, liberalization could also have negative impacts on the development of a civilization.

Science and religion are the two directions of human intellectual development. We consider it important to pursue technological-scientific policies aimed at least developed countries such as Mongolia in order to combine the trends of globalization with innovation and tradition, for there is no sense in underestimating any of these directions.

Over-westernization, especially attempts to determine common values for world civilizations according to western civilizations, undervalues the multitude of civilizations, the influences of mutual development and the capacity of any civilization to adapt itself and to develop by coping with emerging common standards. In my opinion, not only western civilization, but every civilization has its own values.

Therefore, the dialogue among independent civilizations must be the driving force for the development of civilizations.

U Than Aung

Minister for Education

Myanmar

The Union of Myanmar is a nation made up of over a hundred national races. Since time immemorial, we have lived in unity through weal and woe. However, due to the divide-and-rule practice of colonial rule, national solidarity declined, and remained elusive in Myanmar even after independence was regained in 1948. Hence, national solidarity and the establishment of peace and stability has become the top priority of our nation. In recent times, due to the government's relentless endeavors to build mutual respect, confidence, and understanding, it has been able to forge solidarity among its brethren. The result is that after 40 years of armed conflict, 17 armed groups have returned to the legal fold and are now participating in regional development activities together with the government. We are now enhancing cooperation with the national armed groups to create national unity while respecting diversity.

With the restoration of peace and stability, the government has been able to give attention to modernization and development tasks. The government has designated 24 development regions and formulated special plans, so that emphasis is on areas that have lagged behind in socio-economic development.

As a priority task, we are developing the infrastructure to overcome obstacles posed by the profusion of rivers and mountain ranges in the country. New roads, railroads and bridges are continuously being built to promote accessibility. We are also developing the agriculture and irrigation sectors by building hundreds of dams and water stations, as Myanmar has an agro-based economy. These activities have not only brought about vast improvements in communication and transportation in all the regions of the country, but have also contributed to the strengthening of national solidarity and to the prosperity of its citizens.

Enormous changes and developments in the world have produced conditions that demand highly skilled and highly educated persons. Therefore, the challenges to be faced by the coming generations are enormous. We must equip our youth to meet the basic requirements of the new century. There are so many areas in which they must perform and gain knowledge, and it has become necessary for our youth to be able to interact with different societies of the world.

Myanmar can take pride in the fact that ours is a strongly embedded culture. Our whole history is one based on culture. In fact, we have helped and taken care of each other. In addition, each of us has taken on his own

duties and responsibilities. We know what compassion and gratitude mean, and we are very reluctant to ask that things be done for us. These are not signs of weakness. These are the qualities which lead to great moral strength. The people of Myanmar have existed for centuries, showing compassion, gratitude and consideration for people. That Myanmar's society has these great lasting qualities, and has been able to exist in such a way is something we can be proud of.

I would like to state another distinctive characteristic of the people of Myanmar. We are very conscious of the need to protect the environment for the future of our planet. Myanmar is carrying out this responsibility with great care and consciousness as we aim to pass a safe, sound and pleasant environment on to the next generations.

At the same time, to be able to meet the demands of the world, we must prepare our youth. Thus, it is the education sector that has the most responsibility and plays the most important role in providing our youth with the knowledge that needs to be acquired and safeguarded. Therefore, it is education that forms the core in reducing the gap between the rich and the poor. What I would like to point out is that today, there are responsibilities facing us, which we, the present generation, cannot avoid.

In its endeavor to build a peaceful, modern, developed and unified nation, the Government of the Union of Myanmar is striving to develop its human resources so that it can face the challenges posed by the Knowledge Age. The government has assigned the task of nurturing highly qualified human resources to the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education initiated the 30-year 'Long Term Education Development Plan' in 2001. The whole of the Myanmar community forms the resource for the education plan, and the education plan forms the resource of the Myanmar community.

The plan is to broaden access to both basic and higher education. It is to provide students with a well-balanced education that will impart the skills, knowledge, understanding and competitive edge needed for a technology and knowledge-driven dynamic workplace. We are also keenly aware that for education to play a useful role in the nurturing of human resources needed by the nation, it must also inculcate in our youth the strong desire to preserve national identity, and to be committed to the safeguarding of our culture, our time-tested traditional values and our environment. However, our education also promotes in our young people respect, understanding, appreciation and tolerance for the culture, traditions and values of other nations, so very essential in this age.

The existence of the developing countries is like that of a gourd growing among thorns. These countries have to bear the pressure of wealthy currency dealers and the monopolization of multinational corporations on the one hand, and on the other, to face the attempts of powerful nations to gain influence on national politics. Hence, developing and poor countries are facing attacks on all their hopes for prosperity. The developing world is also facing the challenges of maintaining peace. This challenge to maintain peace is so important that some philosophers believe that it should be an even more important issue than the challenge of war. In endeavoring to achieve this world of peace, and peaceful society, we feel that our ingrained beliefs and practices regarding moral values and culture will be a great source. Confusion prevails in the world with the threat of terrorism, and the oppression of the weak and the poor. The human race will have to evaluate its wisdom to be able to enter the third millennium and the 21st century with a better culture. Developing countries will have to make preparations to face any kind of challenge with unyielding courage.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that this conference will contribute to the enhancement of genuine partnerships, mutual trust, understanding and solidarity in order to respond to our common challenges and to enhance our capacity for the sustainable development of human resources and to bring peace and prosperity to our peoples.

Said S. Alkitani

Oman

The word 'dialogue' is commonly used to mean conversation between two people or more. However, dialogue means much more than that today. It strongly reflects such concepts as equality, justice, tolerance and peace. In other words, it has become a political concept, which attempts to reduce negative tensions among people in our world and to defeat the forces that are working against human civilization on this planet. This, of course, is likely to bring happiness and joy into our lives. Therefore, dialogue is worth fighting for today.

The state of the world today necessitates the existence of dialogue among civilizations and cultures at all levels. This is because the lack of purposeful organized dialogue among people has created a number of challenges that need to be overcome urgently in order to prevent the world from pain and sadness. Wars all over the world represent the first challenge. Those wars kill hundreds of innocent people every year. We do not need to give illustrations of this; thanks to media, especially satellite and daily newspapers that ruthlessly show pictures everyday of those killed in wars around the world.

Further, globalization and its negative consequences for humanity represent another challenge that necessitates dialogue among cultures and people in the world. Naturally, people like to discover new horizons in the world. They like to find out more about other people and other places but they do not like to lose their cultures, identities, and eventually themselves. The only way to encourage this is by conducting real dialogue among nations; a dialogue that is characterized by equality and the acceptance of differences among people.

A third challenge is street and domestic violence. I believe that UNESCO is playing a great role in raising awareness about this persistent social phenomenon through its conferences and publications. Nonetheless, world reports still reveal that millions of people are affected by violence every year around the world; especially women and children. Enhancing dialogue among people can do a lot to prevent this.

The list of these challenges is too long and I will not go through it all but I would like to indicate school bullying as a concluding challenge in order to complete the continuum of challenges from macro level to micro level. School bullying has become a phenomenon today in many countries. This has led a number of researchers to dedicate their time and efforts to studying this phenomenon and writing about it. I believe that teaching

children how to engage in a productive dialogue can do a lot in solving the problem of bullying as well as in creating better citizens of the world.

As an educator, I believe that education can be of great assistance in enhancing the culture of dialogue among civilizations. In Oman, we adopted the concept of Basic Education. Under this concept we have re-addressed the balance between teaching competition and teaching cooperation among pupils. This has been done through classroom strategies such as grouping pupils so they discuss with each other and engage in a purposeful dialogue. Moreover, the Ministry of Education in Oman has adopted an assessment system that is not based on comparing individual differences among pupils. This, of course, has an impact on the way pupils interact with each other. In addition, learning other languages can play an important role in enhancing the culture of dialogue among civilizations. Thus, Oman's children today start to learn a second language (English) from grade one in basic education (age 6). These are examples of approaches and strategies adopted by the Ministry of Education in Oman in order to render dialogue among civilizations a breathing reality. The ultimate goal of the Ministry is to develop teaching/learning situations that are based on the very concept of dialogue through redefining the relationship between teachers and pupils.

Educationally speaking, we need then to spread awareness of the value of dialogue among teachers, pupils, and everyone who works in the sector of education and to help our pupils to acquire the skills and competences to engage in a productive dialogue. However, due to the seriousness of the challenges stated above, schools' efforts alone are insufficient in this regard; what the world needs is to make dialogue a culture we live in our day-to-day life. In order for this to happen, we need comprehensive approaches to build a culture of dialogue among people in societies. This is to suggest that schools alone cannot do much; other social institutions should be involved in the process. Partnerships must be fostered among families, schools, media, and others.

In conclusion, I would like to indicate the significant role that can and should be played by UNESCO in supporting governments around the world to make dialogue the strong basis for learning to live together. Today, there are many gaps in the world that, I strongly believe, can be bridged by dialogue among cultures. For example, technical expertise can be shared with those countries that do not have it. The challenge of imbalance between demand and supply at the world level can be dealt with through effective dialogue among nations. In short, the solution to the challenges

of sustainable development in the world rests in part, on enhancing dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

Delia Domingo-Albert

Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Philippines

The Philippines supports the Quest for New Perspectives in the Dialogue among Civilizations and believes that such a quest should be based on universally shared values while at the same time safeguarding the diversity of individuals and cultures. We also believe that such a quest should address the urgent needs of the disadvantaged, not only in economic but also in social and spiritual terms. We therefore would like to emphasize the developmental aspect of this quest, in order to ensure the universality of the application of this dialogue.

By citing the developmental aspects of dialogue, I wish to emphasize the need to consciously and assiduously combine and marshal resources so that there will be equal and equitable access by all to these resources of whatever form to promote and serve the well-being of the people of this planet.

Convinced of the recently expressed paradigm of international relations introduced by Iran in its resolution adopted by the United Nations, the Philippines is convening a bilateral dialogue between Iran and the Philippines next month. It is being organized precisely to put substance into dialogue as a process to address common and shared concerns through an exchange of ideas and approaches. We hope at this dialogue to be held in Manila to arrive at identifying commonalities that bind our respective peoples as people.

Moreover, we feel that Iran, as the initiator of the U.N. Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, is a partner that has articulated the Philippines' own search for new approaches to peace and development. Let me now give you an insight into our efforts to find peace and development in our country through education and dialogue.

The Philippines lies geographically and culturally at the crossroads of two cultures. It is where Judeo-Christian tradition, brought about by European colonizers, meets Islam, brought to the islands by Arab traders. Both of these non-indigenous cultures have become pervasive and have dominated our national lives.

To move forward in this complex environment, we have adopted a conscious policy of looking for commonalities in these influences through education and dialogue. It is for this reason that we have placed great importance on providing education for our young population, for our

future lies with youth. To this end, our government has also allotted education the greatest share of our national budget.

We have adopted an education policy to promote values and competence because we believe that education does not exist merely to serve the promotion of economic growth and prosperity, but to enrich the individual and broader society and therefore to bring about peace and development. Moreover, education has been our most important means for social and economic mobility, which has led to our literacy rate of 94%.

Our strategies and values relevant to the education of our future citizens include the principles of equality, respect, reconciliation and, finally, general communication and participation. By equality, we mean upholding the practice of non-discrimination by recognizing diversity so that we can communicate within society at large as equals. As for the value of respect, we believe that respect, in addition to intelligence, is an important principle in our educational system. Education must therefore direct itself in the spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance, respecting at the same time differences of ethnicity and faith. Due to our history of conflicts brought about by various influences, reconciliation and healing of past differences remain an important challenge. We believe that reconciliation means establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. We believe in general communication and general participation because values cannot simply be expressed, but must be debated, synthesized and modified if necessary, in the spirit of dialogue.

In sum, we believe that the developmental needs of all should be taken into account in all dialogues, whether they are internal or international. We believe in the important role of education in promoting peace and development in our societies. Finally, we believe in the importance of looking for commonalities which societies share. We can do this through dialogue.

Encouraged by previous speakers who cited the important role played by women in our present day society, I would be remiss not to comment on a very important dialogue which I attended last week in Marrakech in Morocco, the Global Summit for Women. 800 women leaders from 80 countries, in the fields of politics, economics and culture, attended. In the spirit of dialogue, we met to share experiences and realized that we all share common challenges which could be addressed by learning from each other through dialogue.

It was the consensus that the value of that Global Summit for Women held in the Middle East for the first time was the opening of 800

minds and that women from east, west, north and south, developed and developing economies share common challenges and solutions. We just have to identify them and share them.

I look forward to identifying the commonalities inherent in humankind during our current quest for new perspectives in this conference on dialogue among civilizations.

Boguslaw Zaleski

Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Poland

I am particularly pleased to be here, in India, and to participate in the conference which confronts the idea of dialogue among civilizations. In this dialogue, there is a special place for Hindu civilization and the world's largest democracy. The Indian experience proves that democracy is not a phenomenon confined to Western civilization. Poland has watched the successful development of India's multi-ethnic society with admiration. The Indian experience generated studies worldwide. I remember when Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of moral communication and nonviolent political struggle became an inspiring model of how to avoid imminent confrontation and clashes by endeavoring to find expedient solutions through means of dialogue and compromise.

This conference is held at an important moment under special international circumstances. After successful battles against terrorism, at both state and suprastate levels, we are in a convenient position to search for new perspectives in order to develop a new dialogue based on honest and genuine interaction among civilizations. In the age of globalization, there is no other alternative than to foster the ambitious project of developing a global civilization that is inclusive rather than exclusive, unifying rather than divisive, celebrating diversity rather than homogenizing. To attain these goals, global civilization needs to be based on the contributions of all civilizations. We also have to go through the process of uniting traditional values with new technological imperatives.

However, the most urgent issue is to extinguish the fires of armed conflicts and to heal the wounds of battles. That is why Polish soldiers are assisting Moslem communities to stabilize and reconstruct themselves in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Soon we will perform similar duties in Iraq.

Let me take this opportunity to share with you some observations based on the Polish experience. Poland is located at a European crossroads, where cultures and religions have historically overlapped. We are proud of our tradition of religious tolerance that was exceptional in a Europe torn apart by religious animosities. Over the centuries, Poland has been one of the few countries on the continent where Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, Moslems, Jews and Roma People have lived next to each other. Poland blossomed during times of peaceful collaboration among the nations and suffered when it became the battlefield for the greatest wars in Europe. We thus rightly believe that military conflicts usually bring

nothing more than loss and decline. As a country particularly experienced with this bitter fate, Poland considers dialogue as a historical imperative. We are proud of the tradition of openness. We understand how precious the ability to maintain dialogue and cooperation among different political groups and religious communities is for the country. In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Polish Round Table Compromise of 1989, which led us through the period of transition to become a democratic society.

On the eve of its EU membership, Poland remains an important meeting place. As a stable, democratic and tolerant country, Poland has recently hosted a number of conferences on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Some of these conferences have been organized under the auspices of the Polish authorities. Others have been convened by the Polish Moslem Religious Association and Joint Council of Catholics and Moslems. During these conferences, participants were able to consider that the acceptance of European civilization did not threaten the fundamental principles of Islam. So-called Western civilization, for example, could offer efficient answers to the painstaking problems of social and economic nature that ail non-Western countries. On the other hand, Christian participants learned of Islam's promotion of the social role of the family and respect for human life. The representatives of the Moslem and Christian communities attending the conference agreed that current conflicts in the world could not be referred to as religious wars because this would be tantamount to the misuse of the authority of the holy books of both religions. The dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations must have local and regional foundations. The prerequisites of peace and dialogue are the acceptance of our fellow men, the rejection of prejudice, and respect for otherness, including religious otherness. There is a need to acknowledge fundamental and shared values. The principal conclusion has been that dialogue should go beyond the confines of the intellectual elite and should become the treasure of whole communities of all faiths. The conference in New Delhi is an excellent example of such a global perspective on dialogue.

Poland attaches great importance to understanding among the nations, religions or cultures. We perceive dialogue as an instrument for strengthening peaceful cooperation and stability on the international scene. This is also the background of the Polish initiative introduced in the framework of the United Nations. The concept of dialogue among civilizations is reflected in the Polish initiative of a 'New Political Act for the UN at the Dawn of the 21st Century'.

As a future member of the European Union, we will be able to act as an advocate for dialogue not only for our neighbors and partners in Europe, but also for states representing other civilizations. With her experience, Poland feels especially empowered to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations and a policy of openness towards the East within all European institutions.

Timothy Harris

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education

Saint Kitts and Nevis

The theme of 'Dialogue among Civilizations - Quest for New Perspectives' is pregnant with meaning and expectations. For us in the Caribbean, the theme's emphasis on dialogue has special significance. The Caribbean is host to many indigenous people including Caribs and Arawaks. The Caribbean welcomed the Europeans in 1492. The Europeans then brought Africans and Indians to the Caribbean. Today there is no region more at peace with itself than the Caribbean in which each endeavors and each achieves. In the Caribbean, every creed and every race have an equal place. We, more than any other region, are a product of acculturation and interculturalism. We are willing to share our experiences on how so diverse a people representing all civilizations can coexist peacefully and prosperously.

The world in which we live is changing at a precipitous rate, what with globalization, information and communication technologies and September 11th. Indeed, from a global perspective, the world order and priorities have changed significantly since September 11th. September 11th heralded not just a sense of outrage against terrorism but also highlighted beyond a doubt that in this fast paced world we need each other to defend humanity, our ways of life and living. September 11th highlighted that small states and large ones, poor ones and rich ones, those in the east and those in the west, must work together and ensure peace in the world. It demonstrates that peace is a global public good which benefits all of us.

The changing international landscape has urged greater interaction, trade, and exchanges among all peoples. All of us are aware that education, science and technology impact the sustainable development of nations. Education, when properly purveyed, leads to an enlightened citizen not only of nation states but also of world communities. Education is a cure for ignorance: the new weapon of mass destruction. It is said that a mind stretched to a new idea will never return. Education, which opens the mind to the mutuality and the complementarity of civilizations, impels each citizen to be at peace with diversity and to be enriched by it. All of us then must do all that we can to ensure the realization of the UN Millennium Goals, particularly as they relate to education and poverty.

We must open our systems so that they become more accessible to others for study and training. We must engage in more cultural exchanges among the youth of our countries. We must engage in more person to

person exchanges providing up-close and close-up awareness for our citizens both of our differences and of our commonalities at the human level.

Let the dialogue recognize that civilizations are being threatened by the pandemic of HIV/AIDS. As we reflect upon this, we must acknowledge a key role for mass education of our people on the issue of sexual abstention, and other preventive strategies against sexually transmitted diseases.

Let the dialogue recognize that for many hungry people all over the world, the abject poverty of their situation is so urgent and pervasive that their conversation is first and foremost one about water, food and sanitation. As we reflect upon this, we acknowledge that education presents an escape route from the degradation, indignity and inhumanity of poverty. To be successful, this historic conference must dialogue about these and other pressing practical issues.

Jovan Cirilov

*Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO
Serbia and Montenegro*

Due to the fact that I am coming from Serbia and Montenegro, a country with a wide spectrum of various ethnic groups and nationalities with different and complementary cultures, I am absolutely aware of the importance and the role of multicultural societies in fostering such a dialogue, especially after the difficult period my country passed in the last decades of twentieth century, the period of tragic ethnic clashes. There is no need to assure you that the people of Serbia and Montenegro and our government would never allow such a tragic experience to be repeated.

We know that India has longstanding experience in fostering dialogue among different communities, cultures and civilizations and is a world exemplar of living and lived cultural diversity, which has been sustained through centuries of investment in the process of 'Learning to Live Together'.

This is also an opportunity to underline UNESCO's commitment over the past years, if not decades, to the promotion of dialogue among cultures and civilizations through a wide variety of initiatives, programmes and actions all over the world. In the past two years, since Serbia and Montenegro obtained full membership in UNESCO, we have positioned ourselves to participate in these efforts with all of our cultural capacities.

Serbia and Montenegro is a multinational, multiconfessional and multicultural community of peoples. The war in the territories of the former Yugoslavia has had a drastic impact on the number of inhabitants in Serbia and Montenegro and its ethnic structure. This is especially true of Kosovo/a, Sandzak and Vojvodina. The most dramatic changes took place in Kosovo/a, where casualties among the population caused by inter-ethnic conflicts, 'ethnic cleansing' and forced migrations reached disastrous proportions. The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the war in its former republics have greatly reduced the political, economic, social and psychological space for meeting the needs of national minorities.

Serbs and Montenegrins are usually members of the Christian Orthodox denomination. Most Kosovo/a Albanians, as well as those living in Montenegro, follow Islam. A small number of ethnic Albanians are Roman Catholics or Orthodox. In today's Serbia and Montenegro, the greatest concentration of Muslims as an ethnic group is in Sandak. Croats generally follow Roman Catholicism. The Hungarians of Vojvodina are mainly Roman Catholic and a minority is Protestant. The Slovaks of

Vojvodina are mainly Protestant, while the Bulgarians, the Romanians and the Vlachs are Orthodox. The Ruthenian belong to the Uniate Church (Greek Catholic). The Roma are usually either Orthodox or Muslim. The Romas' religious affiliation is almost always congruous with the Orthodox or Muslim surroundings in which they live. There is also a tiny Jewish community.

There are also small religious communities or sects, which are mostly in Belgrade and Vojvodina. All those mentioned are civilizations in permanent dialogue, which has temporarily been spoiled during past decade. In the rest of our country, except Kosovo, this dialogue continues on the basis of the best tradition of tolerant living together for more than a millennium. We contributed to the world's tradition of tolerance and understanding through the non-aligned movement, which has marked the twentieth century.

Recent developments, such as the adoption by UNESCO's General Conference of the 'UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity' by which the world has committed itself to preserve cultural diversity as a living, and thus renewable treasure, and to prevent segregation and fundamentalism which counter the message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proves that the whole world is basically on the same path.

Important tasks have been set out for the world community, and UNESCO in particular, in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 'Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations'. We must also applaud the ongoing attempts to broaden the scope of the dialogue, calling for new commitments and innovative implementation.

So, allow me to commend the host country and UNESCO for bringing the world's policy-makers and politicians together in recognition of the fact that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations concerns not only the intellectual and cultural sphere but also has a profoundly political dimension.

I must emphasize the growing necessity of identifying contemporary obstacles to a fruitful and constructive dialogue and to assess new forms of ignorance and prejudice in order to reorient the dialogue to make it more responsive and efficient. It is of great importance that we move beyond the stage of general agreement and statements of intent in relation to dialogue. New responses, using the vectors of education, science and technology, ethical and spiritual values with a view to constructing a framework for global dialogue in the 21st century are inevitable.

Education is key to enabling us to develop long-term dialogue between cultures and civilizations and to ensure the participation of all in

this dialogue. The key role of education lies in its inherent ability to release the potential of dialogue, provided it is accessible to all.

On this occasion let me recall the Delors Report, 'Learning: the Treasure Within', which spelled out that education can only promote social cohesion if it strives to take the diversity of individuals and groups into consideration, while at the same time seeking to construct universally accepted philosophies and policies of education.

The above action has been given new impetus by the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, and by the fact that two of the Dakar goals, attaining universal primary education by 2015 and gender parity in schooling, are also Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Education is indistinguishable from democracy when everyone plays a part in constructing a responsible and mutually supportive society that upholds the fundamental rights of all.

We know that advances in communication technologies have had an unprecedented ability to bring together diverse communities, cultures and civilizations, yet many countries and individuals still lack the capacity to participate in the construction of knowledge societies. The new dialogue among cultures and civilizations must take note of this.

The process of globalization coincides with a fundamental transformation to knowledge-based societies that are largely driven by information and communication technologies. The digital divide accentuates disparities in development, excluding entire groups and countries from the potential benefits of digital opportunities in networked knowledge societies.

Let me draw attention to the rapidity with which science and technology have become increasingly vital for economic and social development in a globalized world, and to the fact that the globalization of knowledge must be promoted, particularly in developing countries, where the application of science and technology is vital in the eradication of poverty.

This requires new ethical perspectives and approaches. The notion of scientific progress in its broadest sense must be weighed in ethical terms in order for it to become the keystone of responsibility and solidarity at all levels and for society as a whole.

Ethical values are essential in developing sound international policies and contributing to the creation of norms and structures that are conducive to a more peaceful and just society. Dialogue will be key because

a genuine 'ethical approach' relies on prudence, allowing decision-makers to define and select actions in light of potential alternatives.

Future international efforts will require reinforced commitment to dialogue between different faiths, cultures and civilizations in the search for an authentic and shared universality.

Finally, let me express full confidence in the capacity of the New Delhi Conference to launch a new global dialogue, which will promote respect for pluralism, tolerance and human unity through the central drivers of education, science and technology and ethical values.

B. Ngubane

*Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
South Africa*

The promotion of dialogue among civilizations lies at the very core of UNESCO's constitution, which states that through collaboration among nations, and through 'advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of people, we can build peace in the minds of men'. Several of the organization's activities such as the 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue', the 'Roads of Al-Andalus' and the 'Slave Route' are particularly designed to bring people, cultures and civilizations together. These intercultural projects are in fact based on an approach that takes due account of intercultural dialogue and the dynamic process of interaction in the shaping of cultures and civilizations, and highlights their reciprocal influence. For example, the ASP Net Transatlantic Slave Trade Project, as part of the UNESCO Slave Route Project, is an attempt to improve the teaching of history by telling the whole story of the transatlantic slave trade. It emphasizes the significance of the transatlantic slave trade, the suffering it caused and its social, cultural and economic impact on the Atlantic world. It mobilizes schools in Africa, the Americas/Caribbean and Europe to develop new educational approaches while promoting intercultural dialogue between young people.

In an educational field it may be dangerous to teach from one perspective. We need to avoid coercing our learners to assimilate one culture, which may end up being the dominant one. We need to note that when children go to school for the first time, they are already conscious of their identities. It is thus important for the teachers to acknowledge these differences rather than to try to ignore them or, worst of all, to try and subjugate them to theirs. This will help these learners to learn to love and respect their own identities. This will build the value of reciprocation among learners and they will reciprocate the same love and respect for their teachers' identities.

It is obvious that we need to use our own culture as a starting point. Then we may teach learners about other cultures. Learners will be keen to learn about other cultures if their own cultures have been affirmed. In South Africa, we were taught English and Afrikaans cultures, while African cultures were despised. This was highly contentious and when we became independent, divisions along racial and cultural lines were removed from our socio-political agenda and we began to encourage pride among black and white South Africans regarding their cultural and linguistic differences.

Since then, those things that used to divide us (i.e. racial and cultural lines) have now begun to unite us as South Africans.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that all cultures, as argued from an anthropological point of view, have resources and values. As teachers and leaders we need to foster tolerance and mutual respect for each other's culture. Teaching our learners their cultures is a way of building our society and the future of societies in the world. This will be in line with the old adage that children learn what they live. According to Goodenough, culture provides 'standards for deciding what is...what can be...how to feel...what to do, and...how to go about doing'.

Cultures are like flowers which together make a beautiful bouquet. Cultures serve a common good, hence a notion of fostering tolerance, dialogue and pluralism. Education may be seen as a civilizing measure. Once a person has been educated, s/he does not act out of ignorance, but acts with knowledge. Here, an educated person allows a sense of objectivity which opens up an understanding and acknowledgement of the other. Dialogue does not thrive in an environment where there is no education.

We need to recognize that the 'other' and 'otherness' (i.e. altruism) should be integral components of the legacy of our education system so that all the learners can feel a sense of belonging. Since its independence in 1994, South Africa has been a place of tolerance and dialogue for peoples, races, ethnic groups and religions.

The first Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity of 18 May 2001, by UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura honors forms of popular and traditional expression, such as languages, oral literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, costumes, craftwork know-how and architecture. It also honors cultural spaces, where popular and traditional cultural activities take place in a concentrated manner (sites for storytelling, rituals, marketplaces, festivals, etc.) or on a regular basis (daily rituals, annual processions).

Our educational institutions need to teach our learners to showcase our intangible heritage such as in the case of the eleven official languages and our traditional music. We have, as a country, always had a very good tradition of storytelling, which is the heart and soul of black South African culture. This tradition has been revived in all our media, as we have realized that storytelling is a conduit for the transmission of culture. So, if we have to maintain and develop our culture, storytelling needs to be nurtured. This is one of the ways in which we can contribute to global dialogue.

Understanding and accepting our culture is a gateway towards dialogue with world cultures. Culture is not static, it is dynamic and changes all the time. We know that culture is mediated by people to people interactions. This must increase in the future as we continue to pursue dialogue between countries and communities. We feel that unity in diversity is not only an objective for community cohesion, but an underpinning to being a South African.

Abdulkader Shareef

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Tanzania

Tanzania has a long history of fostering dialogue among and living in harmony with different communities, cultures and civilizations. It has an enviable reputation as an abode of peace for hundreds of thousands of refugees of wars and ethnic conflicts in and around our region. In addition, it has been known as a 'home of freedom fighters' during the liberation movements on our continent. This reputation comes partly from our fulfillment of our international commitment to refugees, but also, and perhaps more so, from our belief in and commitment to peace, security and stability. We believe in freedom, democracy, and human rights as well as people's rights. We believe in dialogue as an instrument of conflict resolution. Dialogue among nations has been the cornerstone of bilateral cooperation and the emergence of world bodies like the United Nations, The Commonwealth, and The African Union, among others.

In the last century, the world experienced incredible discoveries and scientific and technical progress. Nevertheless, it was also a period of ruthless and unjustifiable wars. On the one hand, it was a century that removed barriers between countries, making unbelievable breakthroughs in information dissemination among societies, broadening international cooperation and creating an enabling environment for globalization. On the other hand, however, these phenomena have made international, local and interpersonal, ethnic, religious and economic problems more acute. Contrary to the world's expectations, more conflicts have emerged, threatening peace, democracy, human rights, freedom and values. Our own Great Lakes Region has had, and continues to have, a bitter share of these problems. As a region, however, and a country within that region, we are determined to continue with our efforts to find solutions to those problems through dialogue among and between the concerned parties. We do so because we believe that with such determination and support, we will succeed.

Against this background, we are compelled to look back and reflect on how education, in general, and higher education in particular, can contribute towards the development of peace through dialogue and agreements based on non-violent conflict resolution.

The mission to promote a culture of peace through education has been assumed by the United Nations, and with its mandate, UNESCO has elaborated upon the concept of a 'Culture of Peace' and passed the 'The

Declaration of Principles on Tolerance' (1995). In its Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001, UNESCO embarked on a multi-subject project, 'Towards a Culture of Peace' to build peace in the minds of people. As such, UNESCO deserves our total support.

Tanzania believes that higher learning institutions and universities in particular have a universal role in a globalized world, specifically the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and free inquiry. Higher learning institutions can greatly influence their own future and the process of transformation in their respective countries, regions and continents. They should be initiators of bold thinking, able to fill the vacuum of ideas as to how challenges of globalization in learning, politics, environment and other sectors should be achieved. Furthermore, higher education, in our opinion, can contribute towards the process of world peace in the following ways:

- The internationalization of higher education, by effecting institutional changes, curriculum innovation, and staff development as well as student mobility, can enhance relations among nations, in particular regions;
- The establishment of Centers of Excellence in Peace and Conflict Resolution at the regional or sub-regional level, with a critical mass of scholars and researchers in various fields, can lead to the development of measures to minimize conflicts among peoples and nations, maintain peace, promote and enhance democracy, respect human rights, and people's rights;
- Cooperation between universities and development partners, national and international NGOs and CBOs can be instrumental in encouraging education policies that recognize the right to protection of various interest groups.

In conclusion, therefore, higher education should facilitate the development of strategies on how both the public and private sectors can help to alleviate poverty, fight disease, bring about social and political integration and create employment, subsequently contributing to friendly relations among nations and the removal of threats to peace and stability.

Uraiwan Thienthong

Minister of Culture

Thailand

In a global society of diverse cultures with different levels of development, we all share the same basic goal; that is, we accept the reality of diverse cultures and sustainable development towards peaceful society. The government of each country would have to facilitate all the necessary factors available for the people. This should apply in particular areas of education, cultural transfer, public responsibility, humanity, human rights, the elimination of violence against children, women, the elderly, and the less advantaged, putting emphasis on the cultural promotion of peace for all mankind.

I am sure you would agree with me that in the age of globalization, distance no longer makes a difference. With the advancement of modern technology making fast communication possible for all, there are still cultural differences within each society, which is naturally fascinating. New technology and advanced information systems have made boundaries between people subside while tendering a great deal of opportunity for people of diverse cultures to interact and exchange their knowledge and experience. With the flow of various cultures, previously secluded societies become aware of other cultures, enabling them to adjust, change and develop their societies, particularly regarding issues of human rights, children's and women's rights and cultural rights, etc.

In the present constitution of Thailand, its fundamental policy is based on the importance of ethics, sustainable development, human resource development and protection of children, youth, women, elderly and the disadvantaged. This includes the protection of equal rights for people and communities. Everybody has the freedom to pursue his/her own cultural way of life. Besides, Thai society is open and has always had cultural and educational relations with others. This has led to the continuous development and prosperity of the country. There is also the reform of education, from proposals to actual practices, to provide Thai people with greater access to all education systems; formal, non-formal and informal education, which will transform Thai society into a 'Learning Society'.

This is an important foundation leading towards the learning society and sustainable social development in the long run. We are fully aware of the changes currently happening in global society and realize how meaningful it is to have close cultural relations among nations. We would

like to confirm our intention to cooperate with other UNESCO Member States in the promotion of dialogue among civilizations in a concrete manner which will pave the way for a peaceful society.

I am confident that this conference will bring about collaboration among civilizations in a way that cherishes commonalities and respects differences. It is my hope that we will continue to enjoy a close cultural relationship from the grassroots level, reaching towards a dialogue among civilizations in a world of peace.

E. Khiddu Makubuya

Minister of Education and Sports

Uganda

I bring you greetings from H.E. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. Uganda is a young country that achieved independence from Britain in 1962. Uganda has suffered the rapacious dictatorship of Idi Amin Dada and years of civil war. Uganda has, however, enjoyed relative peace and stability since 1986.

Dialogue among civilizations must be premised on dialogue within civilizations, within nations. Dialogue must, like charity, begin at home. Dialogue among civilizations will progress well if there is dialogue among sub-civilizations (the mini-components which constitute the civilizations that ultimately engage in dialogue). For it to be sustainable, dialogue must not be limited to sovereign states. It must involve all human cultures. The principal agent of dialogue must be the human being: men and women, girls and boys. The value of human capital must be emphasized if dialogue is not to end with us and must be sustained across generations. The brain, the hands and soul must be trained. Youth must be competently prepared for dialogue.

Dialogue must cascade and translate into the public interest, into the village, the town, the council, the city, the nation and the global community. Dialogue among civilizations must be an informed dialogue, which considers the free flow of information a major pillar. To attempt dialogue on the basis of little or no information would lead to blockage and finally complete breakdown. We must be learning nations, as was so ably articulated by the distinguished delegate from China. Above all, each country must be prepared, if not to learn from, at least to learn the truth about, other civilizations.

May those who consider themselves the owners of a civilization be the spokespersons of that civilization. I do not doubt the capacity of critics to articulate the perimeters of civilization. However, it has also been noted that critics have a tendency to set up caricatures and shoot them down. While there is a danger of romance, I propose that the owners of a civilization are likely to paint a more truthful picture of their civilization. We may also allow a little sympathy on their part. Every civilization must be truthfully reported upon.

Civilization is not the exclusive property of the rich, the powerful and the influential. Still, the theme of economics and civilization should be articulated. Poverty and deprivation are major inhibitors of civilization.

Dialogue must contend with poverty and deprivation as factors in the origins, growth and advancement of civilizations. This dialogue should not remain at the level of sovereignties and international organizations. It must definitely involve the private sector.

The role of women deserves more attention. Human beings are borne of women and brought up by women. There is a need to articulate the interface between girlhood and civilization; womanhood and civilization; motherhood and civilization; and widowhood and civilization. The dialogue among civilizations must, therefore, inevitably focus on the role of girls and women in the origin, development, growth, advancement and demise of civilizations. The articulation of the interface between civilizations must be made part of 'The New Perspectives'.

I repeat that I come from a backward, pre-industrialized Uganda. How will this dialogue assist me? For dialogue to be meaningful to me, it must address modalities and mechanisms of transformation from backwardness. The alternatives to dialogue are: violence, intolerance, aggression, armed conflict, conventional war, nuclear war, terrorism, and forceful imposition of preferred value systems over other peoples. Yes, these are alternatives, but I find them unviable and unacceptable. Dialogue among civilizations is the only viable alternative.

Vu Khieu

Vietnamese Hero of Labor

We understand that dialogue among civilizations is an essential need of our time, as it taps the boundless potential of knowledge and spirit of each and every civilization in order to serve the advancement, prosperity and well being of each person, each nation and the whole of humankind.

As for Vietnam, dialogue among civilizations is what we have long desired. It enables us to expand our cultural exchanges with the world community. It helps our culture to develop continuously by further promoting our own values and at the same time absorbing the best values of all civilizations in the world.

Throughout the history of Vietnam, culture has not only been a factor in development but also a sine qua non for the survival of the nation. If you have visited Vietnam or studied the history of the country, you may well see the big challenges that our country has been coping with. Natural calamities have devastated our country year after year. Floods and typhoons have swept countless crops, animals and lives away, while sweltering heat has set fire to forests, dried up rivers, leading to disease and death. Worse still, our country has time and again fallen victim to foreign aggression. One thousand years under foreign occupation were followed by another thousand years during which we had to fight against the mighty armies of the world such as those of the Mongolians, the Chinese Ming Dynasty, the Chinese Ching Dynasty, the French, the Japanese and the Americans. The circumstances forced us to choose either to die or to stand united to fight for survival. Our country chose the latter and surmounted trials and challenges with the help of the most important weapon, the spirit.

This spirit is composed of the solidarity of the 54 ethnic groups coexisting on the land of Vietnam, the mutual compassion, the courageous will and the creativity at work, in the battlefield and at school. Those qualities have constituted the core of Vietnamese culture and Vietnamese identity. What we want to emphasize here, however, are not the internal, but the external contributions to the establishment and development of Vietnamese culture.

In addressing the issues concerning the relationship between eastern and western values, the Vietnamese people bear in mind an immortal quote by Ho Chi Minh: 'Vietnamese culture is the outcome of interaction between eastern and western cultures. We learn good things from both the east and the west in order to create a culture for Vietnam'.

These viewpoints expressed by Ho Chi Minh more than half a century ago remain our code of conduct in this broad dialogue among civilizations of the world. The world is experiencing unprecedented changes. The 20th century marked the biggest turning point of humankind. The scientific-technological and social revolutions of the 20th century have had great effects. Man is witnessing miraculous intellectual development. Nation states are profoundly aware of the rewards of independence and freedom and of their boundless potential.

Globalization is an inevitable trend that is drawing all nations into competition, but globalization also contains an array of injustices. Conflicts of interest are occurring between the rich and the rest of world, the strong and the weak, the north and the south. It is a common desire of nations and human conscience that globalization must have a human face and be aimed at common goals, and realize the best values opted for by the whole of humankind.

The awakening of nations means the awakening of civilizations. Western civilization is no longer the sole player. Other civilizations of the world must share the common responsibility of humankind and assert themselves through the development of their own and of the entire world community.

Vietnam is fully aware of the importance of dialogue among civilizations and has been contributing actively to the promotion of this process. Almost 30 years ago, after the reunification of the country, the Government of Vietnam declared 'Vietnam wants to be friends with all countries in the world'. Realizing this declaration, Vietnam has steadfastly expanded its cultural exchanges and actively sought to learn more about other civilizations and to be known by friends the world over.

Vietnam is grateful to the friends who have approached the history and the society of Vietnam and been sympathetic with the hardships and the restless efforts of Vietnam in its nation building and civilizational development. For thousands of years, the Vietnamese had to resort to weapons to fight against foreign aggressors, but they have always turned their thoughts to peace and friendship. It is for this reason that Ho Chi Minh, who led Vietnam's protracted wars of resistance, was honored with the title of an 'Eminent Man of Culture and Peace'. Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam where the fiercest fighting took place, was honored with the UNESCO City for Peace Prize. The world gets to know us better when they discover that words such as peace and friendship are commonly used to name cities, provinces, and districts in Vietnam. Amidst the tension of war, many parents chose to name their children Peace.

Those countries that invaded Vietnam have found that it did not take Vietnam long to restore friendly relations with old adversaries. They also found that Vietnam always gave humanitarian treatment towards prisoners of war. The Vietnamese people always wish to put an immediate end to bloodshed. Ho Chi Minh once said 'the blood of the French legion troops and the blood of the Vietnamese soldiers are both human blood and both deserve compassion'.

Everyone sees that Vietnamese emotion demonstrates the unity between humanitarianism and patriotism, between just wars and the desire for peace, between national interests and humankind's interests.

We believe that the aforementioned qualities will prove a solid foundation upon which to enter today's dialogue among civilizations.

Ahmad Jalali

President, General Conference, UNESCO (2001-2003)

Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Iran to UNESCO

The Dialogue among Civilizations is intrinsically bound to the questions of identity and otherness through the roles culture and civilization play in composing our identity. We forge our own identity through our culture; those who share this identity are insiders, and those who do not are outsiders. Some understandings of identity conclude in a lack of appreciation for the other's identity, which is necessary to being a genuine partner in dialogue.

At one extreme, personal identity is not conceived as being subject to any changes during an individual's lifetime; while at the other extreme, post-modernism perceives a person or a social group simply as a node in a network of relations. These definitions both suffer from the lack of historical dimension and are based on a unitary conception of identity. The solution, as the reality of history also demonstrates, comes with a pluralistic view of identity, which not only solves some theoretical issues but also forms the only framework within which the possibility of dialogue can be assured. The wonderful consequence will then be that if absolute identity does not exist, neither can absolute otherness.

We should then search for the shared roots between different cultures. It was a common scientific and philosophical culture, for example, that united Avicenna in Iran with St. Thomas Aquinas in the west; a culture going back to the Greek and Hellenistic thinkers. Globality should be understood as a visionary search for the discovery of the common roots of different cultures, rather than the dominance of any one particular culture or value system. The ethnocentric concept of culture and history can then be overcome.

A genuine dialogue comes with the soul's particular willingness to convert itself, to expose and risk one's own ideas and positions. It brings us the possibility of overcoming trans-cultural dissensus on whether a particular practice violates one or another human right. And as we know from Averroës, the human soul comes from a unified universal soul.

Finally, there is an inter-conceptual linkage among cultural diversity, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, sustainable development, human rights and cultural rights. UNESCO, by preserving and protecting cultural heritage, safeguarding cultural diversity, and promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations, is contributing to its axiomatic constitutional

goals, namely the construction of the defenses of peace in the minds of people through moral and intellectual solidarity.

Aziza Bennani

Chairperson, Executive Board, UNESCO (2001-2003)

Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Morocco to UNESCO

As you know, the United Nations system and UNESCO in particular attach the utmost importance to the theme that brings us together today. It was with this context in mind that 2001 was proclaimed United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Subsequently, after the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 31st session, 21 May was proclaimed World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

There ensued a series of important meetings and activities initiated not only by UNESCO but also by various bodies at national, regional and international levels. All this is evidence of a common interest in the issue and a deep need to discuss it, which is not surprising in this period of great turbulence marked by wars and conflicts of different kinds resulting from incomprehension, rejection, the social divide, injustice, contempt for human dignity, and so forth.

Undoubtedly, globalization, while tending to break down national frontiers and having a number of undeniable advantages, also saps our values, robs us of our customary ethical and spiritual bearings and leads some people and/or groups to have no trust in others, in strangers, near to us though they may be. Such sentiments, aggravated by ignorance, intolerance and fanaticism, favor the development of negative and hostile ideas. This in turn leads to the exacerbation of specificities – withdrawal into one's own identity, creating what Amin Maalouf calls 'identités meurtrières' in his work entitled *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*.

At meeting after meeting, various deliberations and analyses have been conducted with a view to understanding the deep causes of the malfunctions and untoward events of our time, despite great mobility, increased exchanges, and an unprecedented development of the communication and information media.

The phenomenon has many aspects – political, economic, social, cultural, psychological, ethical, etc. It can therefore be tackled from different angles. The particular approach chosen for this meeting is an interesting one. In fact, the emphasis is laid on the 'quest for new perspectives', which calls for further debate on the basis of what has already been established. Besides, whereas lack of dialogue tends often to be regarded as a peculiarity of the three monotheistic religions, here in

Asia, with its several age-old cultures and its rich experience of dialogue among them, reflection can certainly not be a matter of oversimplification.

Meetings and debates on this theme are on the increase no doubt, but although everyone recognizes the need for dialogue among civilizations, we are bound to admit that the results are not very encouraging. The dialogue that we should all welcome does not come about. What is more, the proceedings of the various meetings receive little attention from the general public or the media, whose partnership is nevertheless essential if the necessary ideas are to become widespread.

To overcome this drawback, thought should be given to the setting up of mechanisms making possible the transmission of ideas conducive to dialogue.

The task to be carried out is tremendous. There are simple, elementary actions and programmes that can be put into effect in the short term, and others that can be carried out only in the medium or long term. The task largely concerns fields that are at the center of UNESCO's spheres of competence, but it is nonetheless a shared responsibility.

Top of the list is education. Besides its mission to inculcate learning and pass on skills, it has a fundamental role to play in cultivating a way of thinking in which the eradication of poverty, ignorance, injustice, racism, hatred, fanaticism and other ills is regarded as a moral imperative for every human being. Ignorance is not just a lack of knowledge in specific fields or subjects. Also necessary is teaching about human rights, cultural diversity, sustainable development and peace: values conducive to dialogue. Such education, which might be called 'civics', based on a renewed humanism, is essential to prepare people to live together with others in a pluralist society. It should help to build up a form of common citizenship, while preserving differences and turning distinctive characteristics to account, so that we all know our neighbors, understand them and respect their differences. In short, it means that we all regard ourselves as citizens of the world, without ceasing to live our own cultures.

All this, of course, relates to education for all, throughout life – with particular reference to the teaching of the history and sociology of religions and civilizations – in pursuance of the objectives developed at the World Education Forum in Dakar. The programmes targeted for quality education are necessary at all educational levels – appropriate teaching tools, the revision of textbooks, the training of trainers, and so on.

In our time, when so many concepts – such as development, mutual understanding, security, peace and dialogue – are taking on new

dimensions, the concern for quality education means being constantly adaptable and innovative.

In the educational environment, as at home or in society, we need to rediscover the common cultural heritage, based on universal standards and values, while avoiding uniformity, of course, by making the most of differences and respecting them. The reminder inherent in forums of tolerance, dialogue and peaceful coexistence should prepare us to learn once again how to live together in harmony and concord.

Experience has shown that neither politicians nor economists can alone supply appropriate solutions to a number of major problems confronting us today. Culture, in the broadest sense of the term, can certainly help to a large extent. This question is at the heart of the current debates on such issues as identity, social cohesion, economic development and the knowledge society. Already, some time ago, in the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity* (1995), and later in the Action Plan it adopted in Stockholm in 1998, UNESCO stressed the importance of making cultural policy 'one of the main components of endogenous and sustainable development'. More recently, at the Johannesburg Summit, UNESCO highlighted the need to build the cultural parameter into any consideration of sustainable development. This, moreover, was what was adopted in the Plan for sustainable development in the twenty-first century, in which the latter concept is no longer seen in relation only to economic development, social justice and the preservation of the environment. The plan introduces cultural diversity as an essential element in stability. Giving prominence to this parameter will undoubtedly contribute to an increase in mutual knowledge and understanding among individuals and communities alike, which is an indispensable factor in the establishment of dialogue. What is more, it will offset the forces of evil that share the Freudian view of civilization and its discontents and subscribe to S. Huntington's theory concerning the 'clash of civilizations'.

The three sub-themes scheduled at our Conference cover all these topics. They certainly reflect a concern for pragmatism. The Conference is expected to give rise to a declaration of principles and also an action plan – 'a road map' as it is called in the introductory document, alluding to a concept in vogue.

In view of the foregoing, it is apparent that a strategic change is needed to promote dialogue among civilizations. It is a matter of urgency for such dialogue to become not a vague aspiration, but a real project; a matter of urgency for it to be placed at the center of discussions and

debates and not on the fringe; a matter of urgency to conduct it in an organized and constructive way; a matter of urgency for it to be set up as an essential tool in the quest for new balances and the founding of a new world.

It cannot be denied that building a better world, and safeguarding peace, can be achieved only through dialogue among civilizations. The future of humanity is largely dependent on our ability to make such dialogue a reality. May this Conference be a means of opening up new prospects for dialogue among civilizations!

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux

Chairperson, Executive Board, UNESCO (1999-2001)

Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Honduras to UNESCO

The underlying principle of dialogue among civilizations and its promotion implies, preeminently, the recognition of cultural coexistence and unbiased interaction of the peoples, religions and cultures of the world as values that are complementary to one another rather than as distinctive features that are mutually exclusive. We should see this exercise as our moral duty to nurture and promote the intangible heritage of the peoples living together in our global village. I regard these considerations as prerequisite for dealing successfully with the fundamental question of dialogue among civilizations, that is, creating a common universe of discourse, and arriving at common values, while striving to accept and manage cultural diversity, as well as removing prejudice.

The dialogue among civilizations must of necessity be an ongoing, open-ended process, which should be allowed to run its course freely across civilizations. In our present-day world, however, the inescapable phenomenon of globalization impinges upon the realization of this ideal. As this historical process cuts across economic, trade, and cultural boundaries, and pursues objectives that very often run counter to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding among nations, it impacts inevitably and strongly on human interaction and more importantly, on the sustainability or survival of minority cultures. It would be a happy coincidence if globalization were to be holistic and all embracing in its consequences and effects, in that it would, in its wake, concomitantly, promote intercultural understanding and artistic expression through intensive goal-oriented human interactions.

Another major obstacle to the fruitful development of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity is intellectual stereotyping, which has been a perennial evil for centuries. It is not seldom at the very basis of representations and misrepresentations of other cultures and civilizations in respect of one's own. The eruption of hatred, racism, violence, xenophobia, and other atrocities in many societies and across borders can often be traced back to many reprehensible stereotypical conventions. Each and every one of us should find the determination and the tolerance within ourselves to look beyond all the boundaries of civilization in order to better understand and appreciate the richness that cultural diversity comprises, and to become immersed in civilizations and structures other than one's own.

In our thematic deliberations and discussions of this conference we cannot afford to take a narrow, if pedestrian view of civilization and dialogue, but we should rather see these concepts as constituting deep-seated values, as being part and parcel of sustainable living. We must bear in mind that individuals in every society need to be encouraged and accommodated to foster their identities, and that we need to promote and preserve these values, in order to be able to cope with ethnic and cultural diversity in the widest possible sense. Our present efforts and their follow-up may in the long term prove to be the crucible for lasting sustainable development and for the ultimate survival of human kind.

This workshop should be able to pave the way for a total reevaluation and subsequent embrace of different cultural concepts by all parties from all regions and civilizations. I express the hope that together we will make a significant contribution towards giving plural societies the tools and the support necessary to cultivate openness and tolerance, and that we will also succeed in developing objectives and defining concepts, strategies, and social mechanisms for establishing and sustaining a true intercultural dialogue that will cut across all the civilizations of the world.

Papers Presented to the Conference by Special Invitees



From left to right: Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Takashi Inoguchi, Professor, Tokyo University.

Dorothy Randall Gray

Writer/Speaker

'Looking for my Name'

A little girl was sitting in her classroom and getting very restless. She could hardly wait for recess. When the bell finally rang she dashed out of the room, and ran into the school yard. Then, she sat down with a piece of paper and crayons and started drawing.

She was so busy drawing that she didn't even stop to play with the other children. Finally a teacher walked over to her and asked, 'What are you doing?' She answered, 'I'm drawing a picture of God!' The teacher responded, 'but nobody knows what God looks like' and the little girl replied, 'They will when I'm finished!'

Look around you, look into the eyes of all the people around you. That is what God looks like. Now look outside - look at the birds and the sky. Look at the trees and the earth. That is what God looks like.

Good morning, alafia, suba prabhad, guttentag, shalom, bon jour, g'day, buenas dias honored and distinguished guests. Today I come to you wearing the face of God and the faith of my ancestors. I give thanks to my ancestors, and all those who made it possible for me to be here today. I pay homage to my elders and all my relations.

African-American author J. California Cooper wrote a book titled, *Some Soul To Keep*. That is what I have come to bring you this morning - some soul to keep. I come to you as a poet, writer, a teacher and an interfaith minister, but it is my poet heart that would like to speak first. I will begin with an excerpt from my poem, 'Looking For Her Name'.

*What do I call myself?
It is written in the soil
In the talk of the tree
In the curve of the cloud
In the rock walking beneath the sky*

*What do I call myself?
She repeated
casting dreadlocks into the sea
Her hair grew to trees
drinking salt for their wounds
Her trees grew to hands*

*reaching back for their bones
In the midnight water of no names*

*She gathered the bones in the curl of her hair
Each one a life unspoken
Grandmothers of grandmothers
called out of their names
Before tongue could shape itself
Before cornbread was cooked
and the peas were shelled*

*She gathered the bones
Dreams calcified on ocean's floor
No grandmother quilt
to piece lives together again
or warm secrets from the marrow*

*Her hair glistened seaweed and sand
Ancient tears and Olokun's silence
holding on like life itself
She cried, 'What do I call myself'
And the words turned whirlwind
stirring the sea
Until waves moaned like tired feet
Until waters ached but did not answer*

*She shook her head
until ocean opened its legs
and bones rattled thunder
But not her name...*

I come to you this today as Dorothy Randall Gray, but in fact, I do not know my real family name, the name of my lineage. That name was stolen from me 400 years ago when my people were stolen out of Africa. They were sold into slavery in America, in 'the land of the free and the home of the brave'.

My name was taken from me when my ancestors were forbidden to utter its sound or pass it on to their children. A name tells where you belong and who came before you. It speaks of your character and your destiny. It carries the memory and the membranes of a culture. It is often

the only thing that is left when all else has been destroyed. But when even the name is taken away, what do I call myself?

When Christopher Columbus invaded the shores of America in 1492, he planted the seeds of a disastrous era. It was an epoch that would claim hundreds of millions of lives before it was over. Five hundred years later we can still taste the bitter fruits of his harvest. He brought with him diseases that would kill over 70% of the Native American people within three years. Whole tribes disappeared from the face of the earth.

Columbus also brought sugar cane to the New World. Within a few years, the monstrous demand for this crop would call for the blood, bones and sweat of millions of slaves to keep it fed. In order to supply cheap labor to tend these fields, slave traders came to our African villages, stole us from our homes, and put us in shackles. They threw men, women and children into the bowels of foul smelling ships and packed us together like the fingers of a fist.

We would lie there naked in that darkened hole for weeks at a time on the treacherous journey from Africa to America known as the Middle Passage. Many of us perished during that crossing. Those who died along the way were simply dumped overboard like garbage. It is estimated that over 75 million Africans lost their lives during the Middle Passage. We call this the African Holocaust.

In the name of their Christian god, the slave owners reasoned that Africans needed to be brought to America so they could be civilized. This thinking was so prevalent that it surfaced as recently as 1986 when a third grade New England student was taught that, '...Black people were slaves because they wanted to be. They were uncivilized and had no religion. They had to be slaves because they weren't Christian. They were punished by God, and that's why they had black skin so you would know they were bad'.

African slaves were considered savages in need of conversion. We were considered property, not people, and as such we could be bought and sold as easily as you would purchase a horse or a sow. In fact, we were often branded like cattle and chosen for our breeding capabilities. We were placed on auction blocks and sold to the highest bidder. Whole families were torn apart. Mothers and fathers, sons and daughters were sold off to different plantations, never to see each other again. The practice of slavery continued for 360 years and brought over 50 million slaves to the United States.

But the decimation of our lives and families was not enough for the slave owners. They wanted nothing less than the complete destruction of

the African religion and culture of our ancestors. Thus, we were forbidden to speak our own language. Africans who came from the same tribes or regions were separated from each other. They were placed among other Africans who spoke entirely different tongues. And so, in order to communicate at all, we were forced to use English, the language of our oppressor.

Our sacred ceremonies were called 'pagan rituals' and we were forbidden to practice them. We were not allowed to do our dances or sing the songs of our country. They took away our music and gave us their hymns. We were forbidden to play drums. They gave us bibles and the promise of a better life in the next world.

We were forbidden to honor our families. At any time of the day or night, the slave master could come into our cabins, take away our mothers, daughters and sisters, and repeatedly force them into sexual acts. Men who fought to defend their families were considered troublemakers. They were beaten, sold away from their families, then shipped to another southern state, or to Jamaica or Barbados. The ones who perpetrated this travesty are also the ancestors of those Americans who self-righteously tout, 'family values'.

We were forbidden to use our own names. Instead, we had to take on the last names of the people who owned us. So, when I say that I am Dorothy Randall Gray, what I am really saying is that my ancestors had a slave master named Randall and a slave master named Gray. So what do I call myself when I want the name my ancestors might have given me? Dara? Bolade? Adwoa? Awodeh?

I say I am a Black woman but there is no country called Black. If I want to return to my roots, what soil do I bend down and kiss? What customs and traditions can I pass on to my children? What national anthem do I sing and what foods can I claim as my own? Who am I without a flag, without a motherland or a mother tongue? My culture, my religion, my ancestors, traditions, customs - stolen, suppressed, violated, vilified denied, destroyed. Now that is what I call terrorism.

What do you call it when the Portuguese came to these shores of Bharat (India), took away Indian names, and gave people Portuguese names instead? What do you call it when Native American children were taken away from their families on reservations and sent away to missionary schools to be 'civilized' for their own good? What do you call it when mixed-blood Aboriginal children were snatched from their mothers' arms, by law, and sent thousands of miles away to be raised by the British? And

they never saw their mothers again. I can hear their voices saying, 'I too am looking for my name...I too am looking for my name'.

So I come to you to speak about myself, my people and all those who are still looking for their names. All those whose cultures were torn from their souls as they were torn from their mother's breasts. Those whose ancestors cry out for their children to know them, to speak their language, to feel the beating of their hearts. I come to ask you to honor our ancestors and remember them well. To listen for their voices in the wind and in the sky, in the sound of the birds, in the shout of the thunder, in the weeping of the rain.

As an interfaith minister and teacher, I honor all the ancestral spirits that have inspired my life and guided my ways. I include their teachings in my own and sing the songs they send through my soul whether they are in Hindi or Hebrew, Yoruba, Cherokee or Sufi.

As a woman of spirit and substance I call on the energies of Oshun, Shekinah, Yemaya, Buffalo Woman, Baba Yaga, Pele, Kali, Frigg, Lakshmi, Het Heru, my grandmothers Exia Jordan and Adele Aneuil.

As a writer I use the names of my ancestors in the stories I create because it is said, 'One does not die unless one is forgotten'. So every time my work is read, their spirits are fed.

As an African living in America, I keep an ancestor altar on white cloth in my home along with a white candle to light their path to my prayers, and a glass of water so that they may quench their thirst when they visit my spirit. But still, I am looking for my name.

I know that in spite of the horrors, oppression and genocide of slavery my people rose up in revolt in acts of sabotage and subversion. I know that even though our music was taken away, we still gave America its own unique music in the form of jazz, blues and gospel. I know that though America was built on the backs of its African slaves, we have never received any kind of compensation or reparations for our priceless contributions.

I know that the spirit of my ancestors still whispers inside me and that they are with me right now. I stand here as the daughter of the strongest of the strong, a descendent of those who survived the Middle Passage, a child of those who made it through the storms of degradation and still managed to shine. I know all of this, even though I do not know what to call myself. So for now, just call me friend.

Looking for My Name

What do I call myself?
It is written in the soil
In the talk of the tree
In the curve of the cloud
In the rock walking beneath the sky

What do I call myself?
She repeated
casting dreadlocks into the sea
Her hair grew to trees...

...drinking salt for their wounds
Her trees grew to hands
reaching back for their bones
In the midnight water of no names

She gathered the bones in the curl of her hair
Each one a life unspoken
Grandmothers of grandmothers
called out of their names
Before tongue could shape itself
Before cornbread was cooked
and the peas were shelled

She gathered the bones
Dreams calcified on ocean's floor
No grandmother quilt
to piece lives together again
or warm secrets from the marrow
Her hair glistened seaweed and sand
Ancient tears and Olokun's silence*
holding on like life itself

*Olokun - Yoruba god of the deepest ocean waters. Said to be a protector of the slaves whose bones lie at the bottom of the Atlantic.

*She cried, 'What do I call myself?'
 And the words turned whirlwind
 stirring the sea
 Until waves moaned like tired feet
 Until waters ached but did not answer
 She shook her head
 until ocean opened its legs
 and bones rattled thunder
 But not her name*

*She took the space between her legs
 and held it chanting
 This is my everlasting
 My doorway to infinity
 time's portal repeating itself
 If my bones were lost at sea
 If my feet turned to earth
 If my eyes were taken
 and my tongue seized by thunder*

*If honey was water to my mouth
 If birds flew from sight
 and roses hid their smell
 I would still bring new worlds into this
 each child her own planet
 with seeds of another*

*'This is my everlasting'
 She repeated
 dancing in spirals
 Each circle an incantation
 Her hair singing seashell
 mermaid and crystal
 pulling bones into the light
 they crumbled to soil beneath her feet
 spitting rock and tree onto the earth
 The breath of leaves condensing to clouds
 casting their chant towards the sky*

*What do I call myself?
she cried
She wrapped herself naked
inside her hair
and slept chrysalis still
waiting for wings*

This poem is dedicated to the 75,000,000 African ancestors who lost their lives during the Middle Passage. They were stolen from their homes but they cannot be taken from our hearts. Their spirits will forever whisper to the souls of their children.

Takashi Inoguchi

Professor

Tokyo University

'A Couple of Specific Policy Proposals to Inculcate a Culture of Non-Violence among War-Affected Children'

The UNESCO Charter famously enshrines its culture of non-violence, by stating that 'Wars begin in the minds of men...'

We should endeavor to think about how to reshape the minds of men when men are so severely and negatively affected by war and violence. Those whose loved ones, neighbors and friends were killed in war and violence need to be rescued because many of them are haunted by the trauma and some of them develop a deep distrust of men and the strong inclination to use force in the settlement of disputes.

I propose that we focus on children in our endeavor to help reshape this mindset by reducing their trauma: firstly because they are most vulnerable to war and violence as well as to famine, infection and parental divorce; secondly because they are more malleable, i.e., more capable of learning. In other words, children have huge potential and are at high risk. In this brief presentation, I propose two specific action schemes aimed at providing education and a culture of non-violence for war-affected children.

The first is to create a scheme of international NGOs to bring war-affected children to families with children and have them spend time together in family, school and summer camp for one or two weeks. An example exists. A Japanese NGO brought Palestinian and Israeli war-affected children of around ten years old to Japanese families with children, for one or two weeks, during which they experienced family, school and volunteer activities with the host family. The beauty of the proposed scheme is: (1) Palestinian and Israeli children are able to spend time with a third party family in a totally peaceful setting; (2) the scheme is conducted on a small scale. Small is beautiful after all, since that makes the scheme more feasible; (3) The scheme enables one to monitor the development of the children regarding their aspirations and apprehensions about family, school, career, marriage, children and happiness.

The second proposal is to create a scheme of international NGOs and member state governments to send teachers who accord professional skills to war-affected children. Whether those skills are English literacy, judo, computer science, accounting, or health science is of secondary

importance. A number of examples do exist in a variety of schemes conducted by NGOs and various governments, for instance, in Afghanistan. The beauty of the proposed scheme is: (1) the scheme is to induce war-affected children into a less-war-related life and career. Many child soldiers are continuously born and killed because that is virtually the only life and career they have seen and experienced. They are destined to live a life revolving around war. They cannot break out of the vicious circle. We must help them. (2) The scheme is useful in building an economic basis for a society which has less to do with war, crime, and drugs. War-devastated societies often times do not have a strong economic basis on which war-affected populations can survive without being engaged in all sorts of crimes, including illicit drug production and trade and forced prostitution.

With such schemes, UNESCO's International Decade of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) will move closer to the achievement of its goals.

Akira Iriye

Professor

Chair of the Department of History

Harvard University

'Internationalism and the Dialogue among Civilizations'

The question of nationalism and internationalism, it seems to me, is one of the most important issues that confront us as we discuss dialogue among civilizations. The various conferences that UNESCO and the United Nations have sponsored have stressed, quite properly, the theme of tolerance for diversity. We do need to acknowledge the validity of every civilization and refrain from establishing a hierarchy among civilizations. At the same time, however, we should also avoid the danger of failing to recognize certain values and principles that cut across civilizations and that in a sense establish a sense of community among them. Tolerance, after all, is a principle that transcends civilizational differences. If the human community is to survive, tolerance for diversity is an absolute requirement. To affirm this principle is to recognize that there exist certain values that are universally upheld.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, L. T. Hobhouse, the English philosopher, published a book called *Morals in Evolution* and noted, 'With the improvement of communication and the growth of commerce, Humanity is rapidly becoming, physically speaking, a single society – single in the sense that what affects one part tends to affect the whole'. That would be even more true today. Hobhouse then posed what we may consider a central question of the twentieth century, as well as of the twenty-first: whether the coming into closer contact of 'races and classes who are not prepared by their previous history to live harmoniously together' could do so now that all parts of the globe were fast becoming interconnected. He was optimistic, believing that 'ethically as well as physically, humanity is becoming one – one, not by the suppression of differences or the mechanical arrangement of lifeless parts, but by a widened consciousness of obligation, a more sensitive response to the claims of justice, a greater forbearance towards differences of type, a more enlightened conception of human progress'. Optimists among us would reiterate the same faith in human community built upon diversity, but we would have to admit that the world has far from fulfilled Hobhouse's vision.

There are many reasons for that failure, but one fundamental factor has been the persistence of excessive and exclusionary nationalism. Nationalism can, of course, be built upon a recognition of the common good of the whole world. The European idea of reason of state, when it arose in the seventeenth century, was precisely a combination of national and international interests. National rights and interests were considered to be compatible with the public good of the international society. Increasingly, however, national and international affairs began to be disconnected so that, by beginning of the twentieth century, nationalism had come to rule supreme, relegating any conception of international community to a mere footnote in world politics. This, however, was precisely the moment when, as Hobhouse noted, technological innovations and commercial developments were establishing solid connections among various parts of the globe. The age of globalization had arrived. How globalization would affect a world in which nationalism was the predominant force was the question that fascinated him and so many other thinkers.

In such a context, Hobhouse's optimism meant that he believed transnational forces would prevail over divisive forces, that global developments would ultimately create a world of shared sensitivities, aspirations, and obligations. Unfortunately, nationalism remained as powerful as ever, threatening to obliterate any sense of transnational solidarity. The two world wars were among the inevitable consequences of such a development. Internationalism, however, had in the meantime grown as a movement to overcome such excessive nationalism. Even in the middle of the calamitous world wars, individuals and groups worked hard to strengthen forces of internationalism. While we tend to consider the League of Nations, the United Nations, and other international organizations as exemplifiers of such internationalism, we should not forget that among the most successful manifestations of the same spirit have been various regional communities, most notably the European Union. Regional communities are all inspired by the shared need to go beyond the sovereign nation as the fundamental framework for international affairs.

Equally significant have been efforts to promote cultural internationalism through artistic and educational exchanges, conferences bringing together representatives of various religious faiths, and international efforts to solve common problems such as the preservation of the natural environment and of historical monuments. Projects to promote dialogue among civilizations fit into such efforts. More than anything else,

they are significant as an aspect of the efforts to overcome excessive nationalism and to strengthen forces of internationalism.

Internationalism is compatible with cultural diversity. It promotes cross-cultural understanding. Conversely, nationalism impedes such understanding. To engage in a dialogue among civilizations is to celebrate the spirit of internationalism. Today, when that spirit has been shaken by indiscriminate terrorist attacks, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the lack of international cooperation concerning nuclear, environmental, and other issues, and above all by what appears to be the resurgence of national egoisms all over the world, it is particularly gratifying that so many delegates from so many countries have come together to affirm their commitment to inter-civilizational dialogue. Such dialogue can only strengthen internationalism, the only hope for a secure future for the entire human community.

Nicholas Kazanas

Director

Omilos Meleton – Cultural Institute

'Education and Ethics'

One of the first sayings that I learnt when I was studying Sanskrit was that for the wise man 'the whole world is his family'. This is very similar to the ancient Greek saying, 'for distinguished men the whole earth is their grave'. In other words, a distinguished man need not die and be buried in his own country because his own country is really the whole world.

These sayings are for men of wisdom and distinction. I am sure there are similar ones in all cultures. But for common men, even for a philosopher like Aristotle, mankind was divided: there were the superior civilized Greeks and the inferior foreigners, who had no Greek language and culture, and their speech was bar-bar and so they were 'barbarian'. In ancient India too, there were the *_ryas*, the noble twice born and the barbaras or *mlecchas*. Both Greeks and Indians exhibited an astonishing degree of tolerance: they accepted foreigners and their religious beliefs. The Hindus were ever ready to recognize in other religions their own deities and beliefs. The Greeks were no different. They accepted fully the Egyptian and other Near Eastern gods, recognizing similarities with their own, even from Minoan times. In Hellenistic times, many temples for foreign deities appeared in the Greek world. The Romans were just as tolerant: the worship of Egyptian Isis or of Persian Mithras was widespread. Mithraism reached even the Roman colonies of Britain. The persecution of Christians was political, not really religious.

At all times, however, there was this division between 'us civilized people' and the foreign barbarians. Aristotle disagreed with his former pupil, Alexander, who, as the great conqueror that he became, allowed foreign nations to maintain their own cultures and encouraged intermarriage between Greeks and natives.

The two tendencies, tolerance and prejudice, continue today as our world is broken up into many and diverse fragments, often inimical and warring. In addition, today, as in ancient times, we find that ambition and economic greed flare up, causing conflict and bloodshed. It is not just businessmen or trade unions that seek more income and wealth; everybody suffers from it.

Obviously, we are not wise. Democritus, that ancient Greek physicist, the first atomist, said 'Many erudite men have no intelligence'. Our tolerance is thin and brittle. Christianity provides a case in point. Christ taught that one should love one's neighbor as oneself, that one should not do to others what one does not want others to do to oneself and that if hit on one cheek, one should turn the other. Yet I do not know of any Christians - including myself, who behave like this. How might we be able to behave like this?

Surely, education should aim at this. All our virtues are vulnerable and fragile. Scientific enquiry, technology and professional grooming certainly advance very rapidly. But then so does criminality and naked violence. Fraud and crime operate on a large scale, worldwide, under a thin veneer of legality. I think there is something seriously amiss with our education systems. They certainly produce competent scientists, technicians, artists, managers and the like, but do they produce good human beings?

The development of good character, of a good citizen and a good healthy human being is the task of ethics. Today, education is geared towards the sciences and professions, as it should be. This will certainly produce competent scholars, scientists, physicians, lawyers, computer-programmers, financiers, etc. But these are not necessarily good citizens who are honest, truthful and hearty, unshaken in adversity or success, and who care for others.

Plato felt that education should start as early as possible. It did not consist of putting knowledge or information into the mind, but rather of bringing out man's innate power and knowledge. For him, as for Aristotle (despite the latter's many disagreements and differences on other issues), education was avoiding vice and practicing virtue, but also a catharsis, a purification, which frees the soul from the throng of desires that bind man to petty and gross material pursuits. Learning is only recollection since the soul or rational mind has all necessary knowledge. Lao Tze says in the same vein, 'One can know the whole world without going out of one's door. One can see the way of heaven without looking out of the window. The further one runs after learning, the less one knows'. According to Lao Tze too, all true knowledge is in one's nature.

This idea was very powerful in antiquity and is glaring at us in the very word 'education' and its cognates. This word comes from Latin *educare* or *educere* both of which mean 'to draw out' or 'lead/bring out'. What is drawn out is innate knowledge.

How are good ideas and principles translated into sustained, fruitful practice? Normal teaching is obviously necessary; so also is the presence of people with steady, good character, since children learn more easily by imitation. More important, special energy is required.

The Greek natural philosopher, Thales, used to say that the most difficult thing is to know oneself. When asked what was the easiest thing, he replied, 'To give advice to others'. I think we readily recognize both. So I am not making recommendations. I am rather putting forth questions and observations from my experience. Advice should come from someone wiser than myself.

Walther G. Lichem

Director

Department for International Organization

Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Austria

'Societal Development Through Education and Learning for Otherness'

Societal developments over the past half-century have been characterized by profound changes in the way societies and individuals interact, the way decisions are taken and how citizens participate in the public sphere. Such processes of transformation and reorientation have marked the history of the societies of practically all regions of the world, irrespective of national, cultural, geographic or religious contexts.

Key characteristics of these developments have been, on the one hand, the replacement of vertical command and obedience relationships that marked not only the Marxist-Leninist organization of society but also traditional family (patriarchal), feudal, clan and tribal structures, and military dictatorships. On the other hand, there has been a broadening pattern of growing interaction and integration of societies in the economic, social and cultural fields, as well as in terms of information and communication.

Globalization and global interdependence are related developments. Interdependence requires new forms of governance addressing and including new stakeholders and non-state actors. The single citizen becomes victim and actor or perpetrator of global change at the same time.

The traditional single-identity society, which perceived the 'enemy' as entities beyond national boundaries has been replaced by societies characterized not only by a growing plurality of different identities living next to each other, but by pluri-identity personalities who have succeeded in internalizing otherness. Globalization has brought otherness next door.

Citizens are exposed to different forms of being, thinking, and believing within their own societies and within the boundaries of states. The new horizontality implies challenges to identity and to traditional concepts of community. It requires new capacities for dealing with otherness and dialogue among civilizations, but it may require more than that.

An analysis of the situation of violence in the world, the threats to security and survival, reflects these societal developments. Today, more people are killed by their fellow citizens or their own governments than by

enemies from other countries. Of the 102 wars and violent conflicts of the last decade of the 20th century, only three occurred across national boundaries; 99 took place as civil wars or as interethnic and interreligious conflicts within countries. Of the more than 7.6 million victims, 7.5 million were within national boundaries. Related thereto has been a growing individualization in the determination of identities and the evolution of pluri-identity personalities and societies. In fact, the dialogue among civilizations cannot be limited to the global level but has to come down to the courtyards, streets and subways of our local societies.

The challenge to societal policies, therefore, is probably not so much to be found in the military and cultural enmity of another civilization beyond national boundaries, but in the capacity of a society to deal with otherness within. What we have to strive for is a society which is capable of benefiting from plurality and otherness and not perceiving it as a threat. The response to the challenge of otherness will ultimately define the sense of freedom and the ability to change for the better experienced in each society. Societies that see otherness as a threat will tend to build walls. They will lose, rather than foster, creativity and capacity for interaction and will hence lose out on development and growth.

There may be a need for new language. The concept of civilization is not easy to define. It tends to imply a societal reality of a geographically defined single-identity society, which shares culture, history, values, faith and behavioral patterns. Reality seems to develop rather in another direction. The group of Eminent Persons appointed by the Secretary General on the Dialogue among Civilizations was rather hesitant with regard to a definition. While dialogue is certainly more than tolerance, we not only have to move beyond tolerance but also to move on from dialogue to interaction. Only interaction will ultimately assure the essential processes for the acquisition and the internalizing of otherness in the development of a pluri-identity society.

The concept of diversity is also to be questioned in that etymologically it relates to divisions whereas otherness should not be seen as a dividing element but rather as a source of enrichment. Preference should therefore be given to the term plurality. Along this line of argument we may have to give critical consideration to the traditional concepts of majority and minority. Under conditions of plurality, otherness becomes a value in itself, independent of its numerical weight.

The withering away of vertical command and obedience relationships poses new challenges for the provision of societal order and predictability. The empowerment of the citizen through the affirmation of

human dignity on the basis of a culture of human rights requires new capacity building for the citizen to exercise rights and responsibilities.

The traditional myth of a person harboring only one, immutable identity can be seen as an inheritance of the societal concepts of vertically structured single-identity societies where identities were imposed and where identity development was excluded under conditions of lack of education, mobility and communication. Today, more and more elements of human and societal identities are the result of choices and changes. One can reach into other identities, become culturally pluri-lingual and hence acquire dimensions of other identities with which one interacts without losing one's original identity. The change from a zero-sum to a positive-sum game in the identity relationship is basic to liberating individuals and societies from the fear of losing one's own self. On the contrary, the pluri-identity personality resulting from interaction with otherness is in fact the key link within pluri-identity societies.

A comparative historical analysis of the cultural, economic, and scientific development of different societies provides ample empirical evidence that societies which succeeded in internalizing different identities have gone through phases of impressive creativity, growth and projection into a broader international environment: fin-de-siècle Vienna or the impressive evolution and growing cultural leadership of the United States of America in the 20th century are examples in point.

Societal development refers to the processes of capacity building in a society for the individual citizen to move into public space, to interact with society assuming responsibilities in the selection of leadership in bottom-up processes.

In the context of the dialogue among civilizations, societal development must include the affirmation of otherness within society and not only its tolerance, but also capacity building in relating to this otherness and the acceptance and promotion of pluri-identity personalities. In the agenda dealing with the dialogue among civilizations, we will have to move from mere affirmation to conscious processes of change, that is, to development. Education is a key element in a strategy for societal development.

The bases for societal development in horizontalized societies are: the affirmation of human dignity through human rights education, and learning and education for interaction with otherness within a given society and beyond. Any well understood affirmation of human dignity and of a culture of human rights by necessity must include an exploration and affirmation of otherness and plurality. Only in this way will the capacity for

cross-identification be sustained and, as a consequence, the capacity for solidarity and a sense of community. Except that the concept of community in a pluri-identity society will not necessarily be defined by national boundaries or so-called objective criteria of identity. This form of dialogue among civilizations will thus be the very basis for achieving the key objectives of our global agenda: freedom from want and freedom from fear. In other words, societal development through education and learning for human rights and with regard to otherness within in our societies and beyond are the very basis for economic, social and cultural development and for peace and security.

E. Khiddu Makubuya

Minister of Education and Sports

Uganda

'Education and Cultural Diversity: Instruments of Global Dialogue'

One of the major challenges and indeed the most important one for humanity is to create conditions that are favorable to the transition from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, that is, to a culture of social interaction and sharing based on principles of freedom, justice, tolerance and solidarity.

There has been a longstanding and ongoing discussion about the links between culture and development. The two can be combined without one overshadowing the other. They are interdependent and nurture one another. Culture is an aspect and a means of development. The first objective of the World Decade on Cultural Development, 1988-1997, emphasized the recognition of the cultural dimension of the development process, which implied a reshaping of development models for greater impact. The Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, which was approved by the 31st session of the UNESCO General Conference, was a milestone in shaping the world's vision of diversity and wealth of cultures.

Peace and development are inseparable twins in the programmes of the United Nations. While we highlight the role of culture in development, there is also a need to emphasize the role of culture in promoting peace. In a bid to harness all available resources so as to address the transition from a culture of violence to a culture of peace, education remains an indispensable asset to the creation of one world and a future for humankind. Education is truly the gateway to the global dialogue among cultures enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, which reads 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace'.

The Delors Report of the International Commission on Education 'Learning, the Treasure Within' (1996) presents the four pillars of education as 'learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be'. The genuine recognition of the third pillar, 'learning to live together', is crucial to fostering global dialogue.

In Africa, the conference for Ministers of Education (MINEDAF VIII), held in the United Republic of Tanzania in 2002, reaffirmed the global strategy embracing approaches that create international cooperation and synergy between education systems and other sectors from a problem-solving perspective. In particular, the use of African languages, ICTs and human values of peace and tolerance were noted as critical.

It must be stressed that the type of education offered to citizens must be generally for the empowerment of the people, giving them dignity and confidence to enable them to participate in a meaningful and peaceful dialogue process. Any culture of peace is first and foremost a culture and a dynamic current that aims at helping to transform our patterns of behavior and our relations with others. Action in favor of intercultural pluralism and dialogue through education is of crucial importance in building peace in the twenty-first century. History and philosophy reflect essential values that parents pass on to their children through education.

The role of education and cultural diversity in fostering global dialogue cannot be over-emphasized, but the 'road map' is still rough. The Government of India and UNESCO should be commended for joining hands to organize this conference that will go a long way in promoting respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in a climate of mutual trust and understanding.

In Uganda, and indeed the east and central African region, education has been adapted for cultural exchange and understanding. Given the impulse for each ethnic group and community to be deeply immersed in their own culture, education has been used to make learners aware of other cultures. It has, at the same time, promoted sensitivity to the needs and interests of people from other cultures. Without necessarily delving into the complexities and intricacies of traditions, education has enabled learners to comprehend and appreciate diversity and this has strengthened the value of 'unity in diversity' commonly used in the region.

In pursuance of the goal of dialogue among civilizations and cultures, education must play a lead role in projecting dialogue as a mind-set that appreciates diversity as an element of betterment and growth. It is necessary to relinquish the old paradigm, which perceives diversity as a threat. This new mind-set should be the basis for elaborating the new paradigm of international relations, peace and understanding. Achieving this change requires the existence of certain elements, which may include:

- a) recognition of cultural diversity and identity;
- b) ensuring access for all to quality education that encompasses all aspects of human development, knowledge, life skills, values and attitudes;

- c) developing education systems that generate, develop and transfer to younger generations the values of tolerance and negotiation in the context of human rights;
- d) encouraging collective decision-making processes and maintaining individual responsibilities;
- e) establishing social and economic balance between the genders, ethnic groups, religions, nations and regions so as to yield even outcomes of dialogue;
- f) recognizing stakeholders in an interdependent world;
- g) having dialogue that is based on issues rather than ideological alliances;
- h) supporting research so that issues for dialogue are well elaborated, understood, documented and disseminated.

In this era of globalization, global dialogue offers opportunities and challenges. Today, a universal communication network makes it possible to access large volumes of information and data. There is a wide range of scientific facilities and technologies on the world market making universal communication feasible. There is increased access to resources, international justice and opportunities for competitive participation, co-operation and solidarity. Through global dialogue, people are increasingly aware of the rights and duties of citizenship as well as other global issues.

One of the greatest hopes today is the growing harmony between nationalism, regulation and internationalism, as well as a growing interdependence among people and increased respect for equality among nations. There is goodwill towards on-going and future development programmes. Most importantly, there is burgeoning private sector foreign investment and labor mobility that should ease the rigidities and barriers to international cooperation.

All these opportunities and hopes are available to us if we have the right policies in place, the necessary knowledge, appropriate skills and the right attitude towards one another. The main challenges faced by dialogue are:

- a) to ensure that dialogue does not result in cultural conformity where societies and groups lose their cultural identities;
- b) to ensure that countries have strong, well-organized information systems, especially for access to information in the public domain;
- c) to develop education systems that can abolish the distances between peoples and nations while preserving points of reference such as cultural identity;
- d) to build capacities based on the continuous process of reinforcing media, libraries and institutions;

- e) to engender knowledge focused on women's livelihoods, health, agricultural skills, and environment;
- f) to establish ICT infrastructures, develop hardware and software, build capacities for the application and development of relevant content, and to acknowledge multilingualism, especially in disadvantaged rural populations.

It is hoped that the debate on 'Dialogue among Civilizations - Quest for New Perspectives' will continue from New Delhi to other capitals in the search for peace and development.

James R. Mancham

Former President

Seychelles

It is my view that most of us gathered here share a common vision and goal of the establishment of a world in which peoples, cultures, races, religions and nationalities live together in harmony, mutual respect, cooperation and universal prosperity. If this is so, I believe we must all agree that the conference must be guided by the conviction that genuine peace requires integrated, cross disciplinary and collaborative efforts involving politicians, religious leaders, academics and the support of international public opinion.

As the Dalai Lama said, 'If we could love even those who have attacked us, and seek to understand why they have done so, what then would be our response? Yet if we meet negativity with negativity, race with race, attack with attack, what then will be the outcome?' These are the questions which are placed before the human race today. They are questions that we have failed to answer for thousands of years. Failure to answer them now could eliminate the need to answer them at all.

There is no doubt that at this crossroads in world history, dialogue among civilizations has become an essential and indisputable element in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I have a dream that one day, political leaders of all colors will sit together around the table of brotherhood and agree that there are simple and natural laws which work as surely in human affairs as they do in the rest of creation. If you sow mango seed, you get a mango tree. If you sow maize, you get maize. No exception to this simple law has ever occurred or ever will. By the same token, if you sow the seed of contention, violence and hatred, the harvest will be more contention, hatred and violence. But we cannot live in dreams. There is no constancy in history as each moment carries with it its own realities and what therefore are the realities we must face today against the background of the recent US-led war against Iraq? As the 21st century began, at a time when the Cold War had ended, there was great hope that humanity might see a millennium of great peace, prosperity and happiness.

After the Cold War, the United States had become the most powerful nation the world had ever known both from the military and economic standpoint and as such was in a unique position to bring about a more equitable world order but that of course, would have required the USA pursuing power with magnanimity and behaving like a true 'paterfamilias'

vis-à-vis the weaker nations of the world. There was an expectation that from this great and mighty nation would emerge a leadership with generosity of heart and mind that would have been consistent with traditional values and principles of the founding fathers and in accordance with the political philosophy of many actual and former revered US leaders.

It was after all Thomas Jefferson who said, 'We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable that all men are created equal and independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent and inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'

And let us hear President Franklin D. Roosevelt said some generations later: 'In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression - everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way - everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want - which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear-which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor - anywhere in the world.'

The United States is this world's only remaining superpower. Few, if any nation or blocs represent a real challenge to its status. Not since ancient Rome has one nation, one culture become so dominant in world affairs as America is today. Undoubtedly, this puts the USA in a position of grave responsibility towards not only its own future but also the future of the world.

For years, threat of nuclear catastrophe consumed the energy of many activists. Washington and Moscow both seemed willing to risk the lives of millions of human beings in order to maintain nuclear superiority and then the Cold War ended. The assumption was that the weapons were no longer necessary and would be cooperatively dismantled by the now friendly nuclear powers. This was, after all in everyone's interest. But then the focus shifted from Communists to terrorists. And while there was no evidence that terrorists had nuclear weapons, we were led to believe that they were trying to procure them precisely because dismantling never occurred. Russia still possesses nuclear weapons in great numbers although

they are now, we are told, less securely protected. We are back to square one. Nuclear weapons must be preserved as a deterrent. And now, even more frighteningly, we are hearing that smaller nuclear weapons must be developed, which would serve not as a deterrent, but as a useable compliment to conventional weapons. These changes have become history. The Bush/Putin Nuclear Arms Treaty saw the lifting of the ban on developing small nukes a few months ago, and it projected the ugly picture of nuclear war before us. In the US Senate, two well known Senators, Edward Kennedy and Dianne Feinstein, tried to preserve the ban. On the Senate floor, Kennedy asked, 'Is half a Hiroshima ok? Is a quarter of a Hiroshima ok? Is a little mushroom cloud ok? That's absurd. The issue is too important. If we build it, we'll use it', the Senator said.

It is obvious that there will be no world order of any kind unless a certain international rule of law prevails. Thus was born the League of Nations which afterwards was replaced by the more solid United Nations. The USA played a greater part in the foundation of the UN since, at all times, the UN reflected the unhappy state of a world of changes and turmoil; it was never a perfect organization. It was said that it is better to talk 'talk' rather than war 'war'.

The UN was in fact created against the background of the devastation created by World War II which killed over 60 million people. We should not forget the words of Harry Truman as he addressed the world in San Francisco on the day the UN Charter was adopted.

'If we fail to use to use the Charter and the Organization that we have created with it, we shall betray all those who have died in order that we might be here in freedom and in safety to create it. If we seek to use it selfishly, for the advantage of one nation or small group of nations, we shall be equally guilty of that betrayal. This Charter is no more than our own constitution, but like the Constitution, if it must be made to live, the powerful nation must accept the responsibility for leadership towards a world of peace.'

During the Cold War there was tough competition in the area of 'spheres of influence'. The USA projected to the international community the view that moral values, ethics and universal principles would always be at the root of US foreign policy. But against the background of the US-led war against Iraq, this is no time to play with words. This is the time for courage and truth, for it must be obvious to one and all that there will be no better world order, in the circumstances of today, unless the US uses its strength and power in the active cultivation of a culture of peace both domestically and as a prime element of its foreign policy.

Nguyen Thi Binh

Former Vice-President

Vietnam

Our conference takes place in India, the cradle of a time-honored civilization and the meeting point of western and eastern civilizations. It is in this country that we could so far expect our Indian friends to share with us their seasoned experience in promoting dialogue among different communities, cultures and civilizations.

Let me also take this opportunity to praise UNESCO for having over the years studied and put forth a great many worthwhile initiatives and projects to reinvigorate the dynamics of interaction and convergence between cultures by highlighting common heritage and shared values.

At this important forum, allow me to share with you some of my views on dialogue among civilizations, an issue of both strategic significance and topical urgency, an all-encompassing theme of both theoretical and empirical nature that has been drawing special attention from people the world over.

We have entered a new century, the 21st century, and a new millennium. Ahead of us is the most important era in the history of civilization of mankind, an era of breakthroughs in sciences and technologies, of unprecedented opportunities for robust economic development, of political reforms driven by democracy and social equity, where culture plays an increasingly large role. Although the main colors of mankind's panorama of civilization are bright, there remain places where the scourge of war, local conflicts, terrorism, environmental catastrophes, diseases, and the widening rich-poor gap are casting a shadow.

Against that backdrop, our reflection and discussion on dialogue among civilizations demonstrate a timely and meaningful response. Civilization is a widely used concept, yet there is no single and universally accepted definition of it. The interpretation of this concept also varies from case to case. There would be no contradiction between culture and civilization if civilization were understood as a product of culture and a component of culture. Civilization is a state where culture has generated forms of social management, governance and human improvement; civilization is a result of the evolution of culture, the means and at the same time the end of culture. Along those lines, we do not see civilization as 'a sad outcome' of the evolution of culture but, by contrast, a logical product of culture, and concurrently an indispensable tool and a sine qua non for the development of culture at higher levels. By then, civilization could be

understood as an achievement of civil society that manifests the nature of culture.

We have witnessed, throughout thousands of years of human history, various forms of civilization. Today, traces of those civilizations are still recognized and reflected to a greater or lesser extent in the civilizations of countries and regions.

It is not hard to see the difference between the civilization of developed countries and that of developing and under-developed ones. In today's process of globalization, no country could stand completely isolated and independent from the rest of the world. The interactions and exchanges among nations in various fields such as politics, economics, trade, tourism and cultural exchanges are the concrete manifestations of dialogue among civilizations.

It can be assumed that in this dialogue, the civilization of each nation is just like the double-faced God of Janus. The face of civilization turns to other civilizations while the other turns to itself for its own adjustment and improvement.

We are now witnessing the making of a new type of civilization: global civilization, a logical result of dialogue, interactions and exchanges among civilizations. Global civilization is most clearly seen, first and foremost, from the enthroning of advanced sciences and technologies that vigorously boost productivity; from the appreciation of human and democratic values; and from the homogenization of consumption demands for food, clothes, houses and entertainment such as music and movies.

It is a fact that during this process of dialogue, the civilization of rich countries has been put in an advantageous position over others owing to their huge economic and technological potentials and to their possession of powerful information and communication media. This situation presents the world community with the urgent task of a quest for measures to mitigate the adverse impacts that may arise from the process of unbalanced dialogue among civilizations.

First and foremost, it is essential to eliminate the habit of using force to impose a country's will on others even when it is justified as the protection of the lofty values of freedom and human rights, anti-terrorism or the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Such attempts and actions are of no help to the global civilization, not to mention that they could set human civilization backward and directly destabilize international security.

The trend towards homogenization in global civilization and the one towards uniformity and the affirmation of national identity are taking place

concurrently. The affirmation of the uniqueness in a civilization and culture should not be converted into cultural isolationism whose ambition is to assert an absolute superiority of religious, ethical values and life styles practiced by a nation over those of others. Such an ambition could only lay fertile ground for fanatic and extremist activities and a disguise for political separatism to break out and thus inflict instability upon many nations and regions as we have seen during the past years.

In an era of intensified scientific and technological development, mankind is once again experiencing the truth that science and technology by themselves cannot bring about peace and well being for every person and nation. Besides the rewards of science and technology, human beings all recall clearly the tragic catastrophes caused by science and technology in the hands of hegemonists who used weapons of mass destruction, from atomic bombs more than half a century ago to the hardware of clever bombs just some months ago. All this bears an eloquent testimony to this truth.

The genuine civilization that the nations on this planet have been striving for is a harmonious combination of technological civilization and ethical culture. Learning to be human with all the noble values imbedded in the intellectual foundation, including mutual compassion, respect and cooperation in creating material and spiritual values, is what contemporary civilizations need for the dialogue process.

Boasting a thousand-year-old traditional culture and a civilization characterized by patriotism, love for peace, industriousness, and a sense of community, our Vietnamese nation has always been open to adopt the quintessence of the civilization of mankind to enrich our own culture without losing our national identity.

Together with other nations in the world, Vietnam is strongly convinced that peace and cooperation for development in a sincere friendship constitute a vital environment for every nation, every person and a goal to be reached by the process of dialogue among the civilizations of our world today.

Jorge Polaco

Poet

Argentina

I come from the South

From the heart of the Utopia of that old Europe, whose paradigm was and will continue to be Guernica. Because hundreds of thousands reposed their faith in it and, in times of extreme precariousness, they huddled together in the bellies of the sea-faring ships of the time, to be reborn on the beaches of the New World and thus: 'to begin once again'. It was thus that during the first half of the century, families of Spaniards, Italians, French, English, Russians, Turks, Syrians, Lebanese, Christians, Jews, Muslims or atheists kept on arriving; at times, the least of times, contingents of whole families arrived; at others, as in most of the cases, they arrived little by little: first the father, then the adult sons, and then, the rest. And they called themselves immigrants, and they populated the land that gave them shelter, from the north to the south.

I come from the South

Son of immigrants, me too, of immigrants in the third generation. And from there, today, I feel that this world is becoming strange. And I say strange, because the names by which just yesterday we gave meaning to things, are today just a pest, a pain. And, almost unmoved, we are witnessing a kind of Babel since, as far as communication is concerned, only a sham remains.

How else to understand this humanity without a fixed address that wanders from place to place, from the remote confines of the planet, running away from war and hunger: millions of refugees, millions of people without documents who see on the beaches of the rich countries their new 'Land of Hope'.

But the North has been in the process of losing its memory for some time now. And, engrossed in its own opulence, it formulates laws to balance the migratory quotas and thus pretends to seem reasonable to the waves of the dispossessed coming in.

The words still ring in my mind of a Cambodian refugee who escaped the massacre in the seventies. Words that appeared in a newspaper of my country two Sundays ago, while observing The World Refugee Day. The Cambodian said, 'During the day we walked over dead bodies. At night, we used to sit with them'. How does one ask these brothers for an identity card?

And this is just one example of why I say: 'The world is becoming strange for some time now'.

How does one try to build a bridge again after having crossed the limit? And here, once again, Guernica, but not anymore only for its narrative value to narrate the destruction war is capable of, but also because it is a universal indicator in view of its concrete uniqueness as a work of art. And plastic art (sculpture), literature, cinema, theatre and poetry respond to this pulling power.

Some time ago, I found myself writing:

*We live in a square,
We spend hours seated here,
watching how the evening changes the fragrance
of the air or a joy that passes and stops by
our house in this square.*

*We never were anything, but all the same at night
I caress you, I restrain myself, although I keep
begging, sleeping in the boxes, amidst cans,
in feeding bottles of wine in winter in this square.*

*Mummy went to heaven,
Mummy took away my milk, my tears,
And in the early morning I search in the trash, I eat alone, I sleep
She comes, she arrives, she enters*

*My eyes cannot see her,
Her memory occupies the whole space,
all the squares, all the plants.*

*I will not let you go,
I will fill you with kisses, with wine,
I will rot by your side.*

*Now, go to sleep, put me to sleep
I will go on crying:*

*Put me to sleep,
In the distance, I will occupy all the space
In the distance, I will embrace your life.*

I called this poem, The Glass Zoo. Perhaps, it was the atmosphere of the rough times that permeates the verses, the expression of the intimate solitude amidst the dustbins, or a kind of a sixth sense that allows us to sniff and identify those whom we perceive intuitively as our fellow travellers.

Bravo! Old man Tennessee Williams, it was a tribute to you.

And a square, my square, the one which is round the corner of the place in which I live, and where legions of shadows come everyday at sunset, almost like robots that come from nowhere, and whom the city calls 'the shelterless'. This square best describes for me, more than anything else, the universe. To be able to contextualize my text with another, with this square at the centre, is to provide a link that makes writing a fraternal exercise. And thus, without any prior assumptions, we may ensure that each little thing of the common familiar world, as is - for me - each bench, each moment, each inhabitant of San Martin, the name of my square, is placed - through the intervention of the literary space - in the orbit in which the whole world may feel at home.

This poetic experience brings into play the entire existential power and contrasts with the globalization process, to which I have made reference, in which every single life fades out and disappears in view of the indifference that is so characteristic of the global, mean and epidemic whirlpool.

I pit all that against the radical spell of the poem, which I called, In Honour of Julio Cortazar.

G emes Passage

*The road to home was deserted
amidst shadows, in the throb of shadows,
I made love with all blind men;
the morning was not arriving,
the night was not arriving:
I gouged out the eyes.*

*I loved immensely, skin against skin
we were it all.
I lived without light and without words.*

*The rest of my life I looked for the deaf,
people without arms, without legs.
the forms were different, where there were no sexes,*

prohibited ages or ugly smells.

*The passage to home will be my gallery,
the road to home is my desert.*

Like all passages, besides being a link, a communicating duct between spaces, this one has the extra meaning which the rituals possess and, as such, the worlds to which it opens out are of a different nature; on the one hand, profane; and on the other, sacred. It is a ritual and something of the sacred is hidden in that experience which attracts and, at the same time, unleashes innumerable fears. The Güemes passage, for many, is a synthesis of fear and desire and is in absolute unison with a universe populated by the tattered, disabled and beggars: a 'court of miracles', all macabre stories, falling in the line of the aesthetics of horror, portrayed by our times.

I dedicate the following poem to you all and to the beings coming from nowhere, with a kind of attraction for the fall.

At my age

*Like time that makes one's look appear yellow
as nails
As an old feather duster
I love you and I cannot throw you out.*

*In the blue that time discolours
I move forward and back
inventing new skies.
trying to arm myself*

*I put the mirrors against
the first flower; the smell of that music
defying
the impunity of life.
offering it a bird, a song,
My wing.*

*Most intense
Black and striking white.
At my age, I smile and wait*

K.L. Seshagiri Rao

Professor Emeritus

University of Virginia

A prominent feature of our times is the unprecedented mingling of peoples of different races, cultures and religions on a global scale. This phenomenon has brought to the attention of thinking people all over the world the inescapable feat of interdependence of peoples and the solidarity of human kind. Although religious seers and prophets have all along upheld the essential unity of the human race, it has nevertheless taken a long time for human kind to arrive at even a notional acknowledgement of that unity.

These days, we have been hearing a lot about the clash of civilizations and cultural conflicts. We are being exposed to religious extremism and terrorism here, there and everywhere. Innocent persons are being victimized. Such ignoble acts have deformed religion and degraded humanity. Wars fought in the name of religions have not brought peace and happiness to any society, or nation or to humanity at large.

It reminds us of what Mark Twain wrote nearly 100 years ago in his *Letters from the Earth*, 'Man is the only animal that has the true religion - several of them. He is the only animal that loves his neighbor as himself, and cuts his throat if his theology is not straight. He has made a graveyard of the globe in trying his honest best to smooth his brother's path to happiness and heaven'. His view is further supported by the recent tragic history of religious conflicts in the Middle East, Bosnia, Northern Ireland and the Indian subcontinent.

On the threshold of the third millennium, we are witnessing an era of globalization. The various cultures, creeds, and communities living on this planet have started interacting with one another in a thousand different ways. Every part of the world is increasingly becoming multi-religious and multicultural. Powerful forces are at work. In the emerging global culture, the world needs a fresh approach that takes into account the diverse currents of world religions and their contributions to the welfare of humankind as a whole. Each civilization bears its own unique strength and has contributed to the development of mankind in different ways. If religious conflicts, bloody riots and widespread terrorism are to be avoided, truthful and unreserved intercourse between the great cultures and religions has become an urgent necessity. The resources of all the worlds' religions are needed to eradicate evil and injustice in human society.

The discoveries in science, developments in technology and communication and industrial revolution have changed the face of the world. At the same time, social ideas like individual worth and inalienable human rights are positive and significant cultural developments. But the problems of crime, drug abuse, and environmental exploitation are serious and widespread. They suggest that our technological advances have outpaced our spiritual ones.

War and economic exploitation have been great enemies of individual freedom and human welfare; they create barriers and inequalities in human society. They result in unequal distribution of wealth and stand in the way of the emergence of a society based on love, compassion, and justice. The destruction and waste of human and material resources involved in wars are staggering. No wonder people are getting sick of war and its myriad atrocities. People may differ in their creeds, beliefs and ideologies; but any attempt to convert one another by force or threats of force will lead to catastrophe for all.

Humanity hungers for peace today. The question of peace and security concerns every person most intimately. We have reached a stage in history where we are called upon to make a conscious effort to establish universal peace. All human beings share the same planet; the whole world is a family. Real security consists of guaranteeing the continuation of the human race and preserving the earth's resources for posterity.

Desire for peace should come from faith and fearlessness. The essential aspiration of faith traditions is for freedom, reconciliation and peace. All religions emphasize love and goodness. The Vedic command runs 'Do not injure any human beings'; the Buddha taught 'Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the greedy by liberality and the liar by truth'; Jesus Christ declared 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that spitefully use you'. An early Christian Father said 'Violence is not the attribute of God'. In the Qur'an it is stated that if you are good and kind to your fellow men on earth, Allah will be gracious to you on the Day of Judgment, and the Prophet of Islam has declared 'He who digs a pit for his brother man, falls into it himself'. The religions of the world, most of which emphasize the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man and love in all human relationships, can and must take humanity to a creative, dynamic and nonviolent society. Gandhi once remarked 'It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of religion. The other is mere business'.

Peace is meaningless without nonviolence. The eruptions of conflicts and war in the human family are to be prevented. Democracy is impossible without nonviolence; and reason cannot function without nonviolence and democracy. If humanity is to have a future, the law of love and nonviolence must replace the crude law of the jungle. Just as within a state, parties are not allowed to 'take law' into their own hands, and establish rights by might, but are required to go to law courts for adjudication, arbitration, etc., similarly, nations must agree to be 'citizens' of 'one world' and solve their disputes without recourse to violence and war.

All spiritual literature glorifies truthfulness as the most important cornerstone in the edifice of a noble life. The different ways through which humans pursue truth should be of absorbing interest to all. Our concern for truth should make us receptive to the currents of truth coming from other sources. To ignore any one of them is to ignore the richness of multi-dimensional truth. Truth includes what is true in knowledge, what is right in conduct, and what is just and fair in human relations. Truth is God. The pursuit of truth makes life meaningful. The path to truth lies through truth; it integrates one's thoughts, words and actions. It harmonizes life individually and collectively.

Truth is eternal and infinite. The finite human mind can only grasp some aspects of truth, limited by space, time, and circumstances. As new aspects of truth come to light, ideas change and new symbols are used to express it, but the core remains the same. Our understanding of truth has ever to be renewed and reshaped in the light of growth and development of human life and consciousness. Only then does it become living truth for humanity, providing guidance for life. Truth and love are inseparable. Love is compassion and self-sacrifice. Injury to God's creatures, therefore, is an offence against God and the universal moral law.

The conception of unity behind diversity has been a fundamental factor in Hindu religious consciousness. It springs from a concern for truth and values, wherever they are found. If the faiths and scriptures of other persons are not respected, genuine communication and consequent world community will be at best a dream.

Ancient India has bestowed many practical gifts to our common human heritage, including rice, cotton, sugar cane, many spices, the game of chess, and, not least, the Hindu numerals and the decimal system. But India has exercised its greatest influence on the world in the area of spirituality. The authentic heritage of India's civilization, its ethical, legal, artistic, medical, and scientific achievement, but above all its spiritual

insights, values can make a significant contribution to the emerging global society.

The essential aspirations of religions are for reconciliation, human fellowship and peace. By awakening the spiritual consciousness of humanity, we can establish a moral order in society. Dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions ought to be used as vehicles of constructive cooperation. Religion is religion only when it reconciles and unites, not when it divides. Peoples of different religions and cultures should work together, at local, national, and international levels for peace projects. The best of the world religions are to be brought to the attention of everyone and their wisdom and insights are to be utilized for building a peaceful and prosperous world.

Eliane Toledo-Karp

First Lady of Peru

'Indigenous Peoples in Peru: An Alternative for Sustainable Growth in Development Based on Solidarity and Reciprocity'

The indigenous peoples living in Peru today are the Quechua and Aymara speakers of the Andes, and the over fifty ethno-linguistic families living in the Amazon area. The indigenous population exceeds six million people, that is 25% of the total population of Peru. In addition to the indigenous peoples, a high percentage of the population (around 60%) is of mixed race or indigenous background, but does not recognize this because of socio-cultural prejudices.

The republic developed while ignoring the great majority of indigenous and mixed race people. The breaking down of the production and culture of Peru's indigenous peoples meant the destruction of traditional production methods, which had been efficient methods of redistribution that prevented the existence of the poverty and hunger we see today. The breakdown of traditional communities brought with it mass migration from the country to the cities, and consequent cultural mixing. At the start of the second half of the 20th century, the indigenous population represented more than half the population of Peru. This process implied the progressive exclusion of these peoples and consequently, their isolation and reduction in numbers, culture, economy and territory.

The paradox is that the indigenous peoples of Peru lived and live today in those regions of the country which contain the greatest natural wealth. This paradox has to be inverted in such a way that indigenous peoples benefit from royalties based on the exploitation of their own resources. This has to be done by building consensus within the private sector. In order to do that, we need to develop an international legal system in which patents are given in recognition of traditional knowledge and the exploitation of biogenetic wealth.

In the Andes, for example, great mineral deposits lie beneath the surface. The mountains give rise to all the water which irrigates the country's fields and makes life in the cities possible. As far as the Amazon area is concerned, the tropical forests contain the most valuable timber, flora and fauna, and oil and gas deposits demanded by international markets, especially the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. The indigenous peoples have an ancestral relationship with the earth and the environment. They believe in the principal of a harmonious relationship

rather than a destructive one, as this is the only way the continuity of life can be assured. The land is sacred to all the indigenous peoples.

The models for the development of the nation, particularly in the republican era, have excluded the indigenous peoples. They have only been considered as labor for agricultural work in a semi-feudal agricultural system. The state has never had a policy towards indigenous peoples. There have only been sporadic attempts by governments which have viewed the problem in an integrated manner and have not considered them as peoples with rights.

The exclusion of the indigenous peoples from development models and the absence of state policy have divorced people from their lands and from the produce of these lands (minerals, timber, animals and plants, seeds). This divorce has meant complete alienation from their territorial, economic and cultural heritage.

There is now a commitment on the part of the government and those sectors of politics and society which participated in the process of recovering democracy to design and implement a model for inclusive development. Any development model, which aspires to include the indigenous peoples, should consider and be based upon two aspects that are central to them: culture and territory.

Within the subject of culture, it is of vital importance to include and strengthen the concept of community and its traditional leaders. The inclusion of the indigenous peoples must start with the communities, since this is their competitive advantage in an alternative development model. The final model to be implemented must strengthen the ancestral community's elements of solidarity and co-operation.

The concept of ayllu, which is a structural institution in the Andean world, can be expressed as a community of relationships. The communities are based upon the principle of solidarity which is fundamental throughout the Andean world. It is solidarity between members of a community, between family members and the interaction between people who know each other. The solidary community develops mechanisms for cooperation between its members, based on principles of reciprocity and redistribution.

Ayllu is also the community of all the members of the Pacha land. It is a community which expresses the three communities forming the cosmic vision of the Andean world. These three communities are: the community of Sallqa, being the community of living creatures in nature; the community of the Huacas, which is the community of the divinities; the community of the Runas, which is the community of human beings. These three communities interact in equilibrium and harmony on a plane known

as chacra. This term is also used to refer to land for cultivation. Such pieces of land only have such a meaning if the natural community is present, interacting with the community of humans protected by the Huacas. For such an interaction or dialogue between the three fundamental communities to exist, there must be mechanisms of operation and complementarity which are, in turn, based on reciprocity and redistribution. This also applies to the community of relationships.

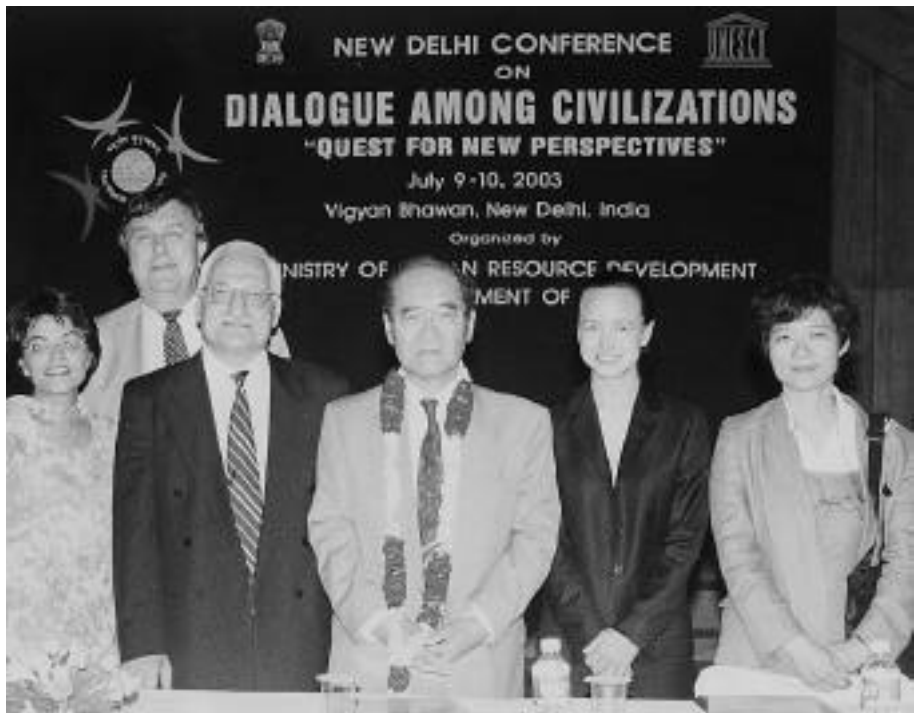
It is also essential to recognize the right to territory from the viewpoint and values of the indigenous population. Recognition of territorial rights that includes the sub-strata is currently being discussed in the drafting of a new constitution. As part of the process of drawing up a new model for development, discussion groups have been formed in which all those involved in a given conflict can participate. The first example is that of timber concessions. An agreement has been reached between the government and the representatives of ethnic communities of the Amazon region concerning timber extraction which includes a commitment to preserve the environment and monitoring by the communities, assisted by the FAO.

The reform of the Constitution marks a pivotal moment in history where the majorities of provincial Peru are reunited. The recognition in the constitution of the rights of indigenous peoples is expressed fundamentally through the recognition of social, cultural, territorial, legal and economic rights. Among the proposed reforms, three are worthy of mention. The first reform is the right of ownership over the land the people inhabit, what that land produces and what lies beneath it. The second reform, deriving from the first, states that in virtue of this ownership, those who exploit the wealth of this territory must compensate the community. This will be done by handing over to the community part of the surcharge (a tax paid to the state for the right to exploit). This mechanism combines the recognition and protection of these rights with that of cultural value, as it is handed over to the community. The third reform involves quotas of congressmen from indigenous peoples and the creation and regulation of indigenous municipal bodies.

Reform of the constitution and the state also includes the process of administrative reform. For this to be sustainable, the process of decentralizing regional and local governments must be linked to the indigenous peoples' traditional and community structures, so that traditional forms of organization can permeate the structure of the state, particularly at regional and municipal levels. We believe that the promotion of such values and processes in our society could finally help to

reach a level of pacification, unity in diversity, harmony and a real prospect for sustainable growth with equity.

Reports by Working Groups



The UNESCO Secretariat

Ethical and Spiritual Values Underlying the Dialogue among Civilizations

Many lucid presentations were made by the panelists and distinguished speakers on different aspects of the theme. It is indeed a daunting task for any rapporteur to make a brief summary of the comprehensive deliberations that took place during this session. I have, therefore, not attempted to summarize the views expressed by different speakers. In my own way, I have tried to outline some of the points which emerged during the course of the presentations made and deliberations thereon.

The discussion was admirably prefaced by the statement of the Chairman, Sir James Mancham. His statement can be seen as humanity's hymn to God or to the consciousness of compassion, universal love and justice. He asked, "what is the use of man conquering the universe, if a man cannot conquer his own frivolities, his base- self and personal vanity?" The co-chairperson, Dr Mrs Eliane Toledo Karp, the First Lady of Peru, illustrated the acute state of problems that confront civilizations by stating the history and contemporary scene in Peru. She asked for a framework for reconciling the conflicting interests, such as interests relating to indigenous communities, industry, business, and influences that are

emanating from dominant styles of living and thinking. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, also the co-chairperson, referred to the necessity of dialogue and the role that universal values can play. He made an appeal to identify the common universal values so that the crisis of double standards is avoided. He referred to the concept of Dharma and described it as a matrix of universal value.

Interventions that continued from the beginning to the end highlighted the following important issues:

- a. The context in which dialogue among civilizations has become indispensable.
- b. The role which ethical and spiritual values can play in promoting dialogue of civilizations and enhancing the highest ends of civilization, not only in terms of theory but also in terms of positive action.
- c. The third issue related to the understanding of the meaning of ethical and spiritual values and clarifying the subtleties, which are sometimes confusing and misleading.
- d. Next, there was wide convergence on the need for all religions of the world to come together in the spirit of promoting the inner core of religion, namely, mutuality, universality, oneness and contemplation and practice of harmony, goodwill and peace.
- e. Lastly, important insights, observations and practical recommendations were made that would enhance the climate, not only of tolerance, but of acceptance and of respect for diversity.

It was underlined that the present situation of the world confronts serious problems of critical nature and that, considering the presence of nuclear weapons, the situation can even be described as dangerous. While humanity has progressed enormously in science and technology and the development of structures of outer life have grown enormously in their size and complexity, not enough progress has been made in quest of values, particularly ethical and spiritual. It was pointed out that while the world has shrunk and the entire earth has become a global village, human egoism has not shrunk, and human smallness is incapable of dealing effectively with problems with global dimensions. It was underlined that human consciousness has to widen itself into global consciousness and holism and integralism need to be promoted. The present situation was described as a situation of crisis, crisis of double standards, crisis of character, and crisis of conflicts that seem almost inseparable. It was suggested that the most effective way of dealing with crisis rests with the right understanding and

practice of ethical and spiritual values and with education that promotes ethical and spiritual values.

It was noted that while science has to be fostered, there is a need to develop this dimension of values. It was also noted that the recent developments in the physical sciences have opened up an enquiry in the realm of consciousness. References were made to quantum physics, and it was pointed out that even in the realm of matter, inter-connectedness has been demonstrated. It was further noted that social sciences, too, have become more inter-disciplinary, and they have also become fields of enquiry into the realm of consciousness. As a result, the theme of synthesis of science and spirituality was underlined for new exploration and for formulating new perspectives.

Important statements were made which centered on the exploration of clearer statements on civilization, culture and ethics and spirituality. It was pointed out that language often causes difficulties, when words like Dharma and religion get confused with each other. It was pointed out that while religions are related to systems of beliefs or dogmas, Dharma relates to the inner law of development of individuals and societies which bring out the inner truth and nature of this relationship among individuals, and between individuals and society. It was also pointed out that ethics and ethical values are based upon the sense of oneness, and as result, ethics arising from the sense that one should do unto others what one expects to be done unto oneself. It was also clarified that spirituality is the deepest sense of religion, that it manifests through the consciousness that is supraphysical and the consciousness which is recognized in the sense of mutuality interdependence, universality and inner oneness.

It was noted that ethical and spiritual values should unite religions and bring about the end of conflict of religions. It was also contended that a true life of ethics and spirituality is a life of self-sacrifice, and it is centered on the service of man, even while perceiving that in every human being and in every form in the world, there is an underlying divine presence.

It was also felt that civilization is not merely a state of civil society but that its special characteristic is the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of spiritual and ethical values. In that sense, Dialogue among Civilizations should be seen primarily as a dialogue of spiritual and ethical values.

Spiritual consciousness was defined as the consciousness and sense of infinity, and it was pointed out that there can be infinite approaches to infinity. Each approach is, therefore, as valid as any other. In this light, it

was pointed out, difference among religions should be understood, and difference should be respected.

An important issue that was presented related to nationalism, imperialism and power politics. It was felt that the contemporary problems could be more easily resolved if universal humanism was promoted and if transnational bonds were built and nourished. It was suggested the dialogue among civilizations should be a dialogue beyond political interest.

It was pointed out that religion should not be used as a justification for violent conflicts and that the predominance of force, political power and selfishness should be combated, while the solutions of mankind should be sought in true humanism. It was suggested that man is the medicine of man. Referring to the African proverb, it was said that in the forest, while branches fight with each other, the roots kiss each other.

Conflict and dialogue, it was suggested, have a dialectical relationship, and conflicts should not be seen as final terms, but as terms that call for reconciliation and harmony. This is reflected similarly in the way that one must always move from darkness in order to reach the light.

It was also suggested that inter-religious dialogue should be preceded by intra-religious dialogue, and the dialogue should aim at the discovery of universal sources of consciousness. It was further suggested that all religions can come together in joint service to man. It was then pointed out that this joint service to man will be manifest in the promotion of human rights, justice and development that is sustainable and development that creates constant movements of harmony and good will.

A suggestion was made that peace will come when we can accept in our own temple the divine presence celebrated in the temples of other religions. In a remarkable poetic expression, it was declared that as one advances in age, one learns more and more how to smile and wait. It was also felt that a truly spiritual being wishes sincerely that a Christian should become a better Christian, that a Muslim should become a better Muslim, that a Buddhist should become a better Buddhist, instead of wishing that one should be converted from one religion to the other. True conversion, it was underlined, is the inner conversion from egoism to universality, to the realization of the divinity of man, and to the program of action of developing good individuals and enlightened citizens. An important suggestion related to the conditions that should be established for fruitful dialogue. Individuals should be so trained, it was suggested, that they become ready to appreciate different points of view. Referring to the theory of Syadvada it was suggested that one should always be ready to see any

situation from several points of view in the contention that each point of view has the possibility of truth in it.

One has to move from the path of conflict to tolerance, from tolerance to acceptance, and from acceptance to mutual respect.

The theme of wisdom received special attention. It was pointed out that the modern world is too crowded with data and information and there is too much emphasis on fragmentation and compartmentalized thinking. It was held that it is in holism that one can find the roots of wisdom. It was further pointed out that dialogue among civilizations should be based on cumulated wisdom. A suggestion was made that there should develop in the world a code of inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue. Religious leaders of the world, it was urged, should commit themselves to stand against the use of violence and terrorism in the name of religion.

A special appeal was made to invite non-governmental organizations and to seek their services in the interest of promoting dialogue among civilizations. It was felt that there should be an international alliance of non-governmental organizations. Such an alliance, it was pointed out, would be able to appeal more effectively to religious leaders and also to leaders of the creative world.

Ethical and spiritual values, it was urged, should infuse the process of education so that education becomes a process of transmutation. It was pointed out that while there are schools which train people in the use of armaments and in the techniques of violence, there should be schools which train individuals in the art and science of a life of non-violence and everlasting peace. It was also felt that real spirituality is an effort of the outer self to meet the inner self and to unite matter and spirit.

Tracing the history of recent times, it was pointed out that while science and socialism have been prominent so far, the contemporary process of modernization should be based itself on the foundations of spirituality. It was urged that religion now should be graduated into spirituality, and that each religion should extol other religions. It was felt that civil societies by themselves remain weak, unless they receive an electric force of higher sensitivity, ethical motivation and spiritual sense of unity. It was felt that rights and duties could be rightly enjoyed and pursued by common people only in a society infused with ethical and spiritual values.

The themes of evolution of consciousness, human unity, service to mankind and universal growth of world citizens were underlined while developing the idea of spirituality as a new synthesis of materialism and

spirituality. It was suggested that dogmas should be transcended both in religion and in materialism.

In the end, suggestions were made for the development of forums for political and spiritual leaders and for developing new types of books so that children are properly trained in the spirit and methods of dialogue, in the understanding of human civilization as a great march in a common adventure of self-exceeding.

Finally, it was reiterated that the “clash of civilizations” was only a beginning, which has invited the dialectical movement towards dialogue and harmony. The road map to the future, it was underlined, is a road to cultural diversity and global unity.

Education and Cultural Diversity: Instruments of Global Dialogue

It was unanimously agreed that education and the promotion of cultural diversity play pivotal roles in the dialogue among civilizations. In the present global scenario, the need to bring about interaction between peoples of different civilizations and cultural groups relies substantially on the education of the young.

UNESCO, together with other international agencies and partners has, in pursuance of this goal, initiated the Education For All programme, which was enunciated in greatest detail at the conference in Dakar in April 2000. The Education For All programme places great emphasis on the expansion of early childhood education and the universalization of primary education for all children up to the age of 16, with special emphasis on vulnerable groups such as the very poor, the handicapped and girls. This has been defined as the central goal for education today. The target date for achievement of this goal has been set at 2015. Along with the universalization of primary education, it is the aim of the international community to bring about functional literacy and to meet the learning needs of young adults, who have for various reasons not enjoyed the benefits of education. This is particularly essential in sub-Saharan Africa. The Education For All programme places particular emphasis on quality education, which strengthens knowledge.

Another millennium goal is the elimination of gender disparities at the elementary and secondary education levels. Since half of the population of every country is female, the gender discrimination that has affected girls' education must be changed.

To enhance the capacity of people to participate in this dialogue, local languages should be developed and fostered. Emphasis should also be laid on the learning of other languages, as this is an essential instrument for all dialogue in the exchange of ideas. There are countries today, which, because of the plurality of their societies, have a three-language formula. Participants expressed their support for the development of multilingualism to promote international and intercultural dialogue. Along with this, a spirit of cultural fluency should be encouraged. Education For All also implies the reform of curricula, teaching methods and textbooks, which will give a non-partisan interpretation of history. Participants in this group discussion agreed that apart from formal education, informal and non-formal education also promote learning processes at all levels, for all ages. This is where the cultural exchange and acceptance of other groups will help to promote dialogue.

There can be no doubt that education can be a pre-requisite to dialogue among civilizations. It has also been recommended that the progress made in information technology and communications should be harnessed to bring about the dissemination of knowledge of different cultures and of different peoples, which would promote greater international understanding. The entire educational process, it was agreed, should be holistic in approach.

All participants have emphasized that the promotion of dialogue among civilizations must go hand in hand with a greater commitment to fight poverty, since it is poverty, hunger and deprivation, which lie at the root of civil strife and war. The responsibility to fight poverty rests on the developed nations as well.

A suggestion was made by one of the delegates that the problems of children from areas which have been traumatized by war and discrimination have to be given special attention. A delegate suggested that a programme could be formulated to bring such children into an environment of relative peace and taken care of by skilled teachers. He mentioned how Palestinian and Israeli children have been brought together in a Japanese summer camp to reduce their levels of trauma. A Japanese NGO is carrying out this experiment. The delegate emphasized that one of the causes for discord and violence is the memory of violence and cruelty which children carry into their adult lives.

Participants recommended that these meetings could be expanded to include regional institutions and other international organizations or forums so that dialogue among civilizations becomes an integral part of sustainable development programmes at the global level. Private sector partnerships in this endeavor will strengthen the process.

Another delegate emphasized the growing relevance of dialogue among civilizations on the contemporary scene. He asked for the replacement of concepts such as 'civilization,' 'tolerance' and 'diversity'. Civilization has come to imply a society with a single identity, whereas in fact, civilization is a complex and composite entity. Tolerance, he said, is a negative virtue. What should be emphasized is increased positive interaction among peoples of the world. The semantic nuance of diversity implies divisiveness. So it would be wiser to talk of cultural pluralism. The terms 'majority' and 'minority' groups should be avoided because these imply dominance of numbers.

In today's world, the media has a large and growing role in the dissemination of knowledge to promote cultural understanding. With the aid and sponsorship of international organizations, it should be possible to have programmes that demonstrate and give information about different civilizations and cultural groups as well as different ways of life. Ignorance and misinformation create suspicion and hostility.

Other participants emphasized the key role that teachers play in promoting dialogue among civilizations. It is therefore, imperative to improve their status in terms of salaries and working conditions and the general attitude of society toward teachers. The role of principals in school management has to be one that is more supportive of initiatives.

Finally, it was repeatedly stated that dialogue and respect for diversity begins at home as well as in schools where children learn to interact with others in a spirit of co-operation and comradeship. It is this spirit that can then extend to the national and finally, the international scene.

Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences: New Frontiers of Global Unity and Connectivity Between Civilizations

The dialogue started with inaugural, brief points made by the Chairman about the rate of scientific and technological advances that the world is witnessing today and is likely to continue to witness in the near future.

What follows is a summary of the discussion of this sub-group, which obtained considerable consensus.

- a. Science has been responsible for major advances which touch on each aspect of our life.
- b. At the same time, the rates of advance in science and technology are creating a sense of insecurity and threat and hence a need for wide-based dialogue and the devising of suitable mechanisms for handling the ethical, political, social, economic and environmental dilemmas arising from these advances.
- c. The capacity for human action in all dimensions, not just science and technology, is strengthened through dialogue and human agency remains essential in development.

- d. A number of obstacles to dialogue were mentioned e.g. language, poverty, illiteracy, weak democratic processes, the threat of terrorism.
- e. The development of science and technology must be related to social needs and conditions. Public participation in technological decisions especially at the grass-root level is vital. The making of science and technology policy requires contributions from other disciplines and sectors.
- f. Capacity building must be conducted not only in the technical terms of specialists but also on a much broader basis in order to empower citizens, especially in relation to the applications of science and technology.
- g. There were several interventions regarding the definition of civilization. It is obvious that civilization has not progressed in a linear fashion. Even today there are sizeable populations in diverse regions of the world with their own distinctive ways of life, such as nomadic groups, which have contributed to the enrichment of the civilizations they have interacted with.
- h. In the face of globalization, accelerated by science and technology and tendencies towards the homogenization of cultures, dialogue is a vital instrument for preserving cultural diversity. At the same time, new ICTs are creating opportunities to conserve and utilize valuable indigenous knowledge in all societies.
- i. To pursue the quest for new perspectives on inter-civilizational dialogue, there is a need for new modalities, methodologies and opportunities.
- j. The need for dialogue within a society as well as between societies is clear.
- k. Dialogue can best flourish where overlapping consensus occurs and where it is based upon knowledge of the other. If we do not know the background of other people we cannot have dialogue. Particular circumstances may stimulate multilingual and cultural exchange and learning: the example of the Mir Space Station was used to illustrate that circumstances themselves can promote dialogue between people from diverse regions, groups, languages, and nationalities.
- l. There are issues of global concern, such as climate change, bio-diversity, and pandemics of infectious diseases which require joint international programmes. These require dialogue and action across national boundaries.
- m. In the past century, democracy has been the institutional framework for all dialogue. Due to global trends, we may be entering a post-

democratic era. If that becomes a reality, the space for dialogue is threatened.

- n. From a historical perspective, violence rather than dialogue has been a dominant feature over the centuries, but dialogue has been ultimately determinant.
- o. Stress was placed on the need for political will, if dialogue is to take place and succeed.
- p. In this connection, the value of holistic approaches was strongly emphasized.
- q. When discussing strategies for development, the need for inclusive development that takes into full account the deprived and marginalized was pointed out. The importance of dialogue in the framework of conflict resolution was stressed. Development should not only be material but also spiritual.
- r. The pursuit of dialogue means influencing minds and thus requires a better understanding of human consciousness.
- s. Dialogue is necessary in order to influence how science and technology are used to meet social needs and to aid in the development of civilizations. The contribution of social scientists is vital for these purposes.

Conference Background Paper



Ambassador Sabharwal, Ambassador Mendieta de Badaroux and the UNESCO/BSP Team

Hans d'Orville

Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning

UNESCO

'International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations: Quest for New Perspectives'

Introduction – the global setting

1. The Delhi Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations represents a milestone in international cooperation and exchange as it squarely inscribes the efforts to define a new agenda for future international activities in the global agenda of ministers and senior policy-makers. The concept of a 'Dialogue among Civilizations' has assumed even greater salience in the face of new and multidimensional threats to global peace and security. The dialogue of civilizations calls for strong political will at the highest level in all regions and cultural areas of the world.
2. In past years and especially so since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the activities promoting a dialogue among civilizations have attracted renewed attention at the highest political levels throughout the world. Coinciding with the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001: Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations – capping the global observation of 2001 as United Nations Year for the Dialogue among Civilizations -, UNESCO has also intensified its activities in this area. Though this has been an effort of long standing in its work programme, it has received new impetus through the resolution by UNESCO's General Conference on the fight against terrorism, adopted in November 2001.
3. Civilization represents the manner in which human society has evolved over a long period of time to become what it is today. This has been through the use of the great powers that characterize the human brain, and continuing creative activity in many directions. Naturally this has led to the evolution of diverse civilizations each characterized by its own history, circumstances and thought processes. The challenge in today's international environment is to move beyond general agreement about the value of or need for dialogue or beyond historical analysis, to concrete approaches. How,

in the context of globalization, can dialogue become a tool to bolster peace and security and to advance sustainable development?

4. New and multidimensional challenges abound and demand innovative modalities, which call for common reflection and commitments. At the heart of any dialogue is the objective to reinforce justice, tolerance, solidarity, mutual understanding and respect, sharing and equity. Likewise, obstacles to a constructive and fruitful dialogue must be explicitly identified and tackled, such as old and new ignorances and impediments to the preservation of cultural diversity. The identification and promotion of commonly shared ethical and spiritual values is at the core of many dialogue-related activities. Moreover, the role of education as well as science and technology are increasingly considered to be of crucial importance in the quest for new perspectives and a framework for a global dialogue at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

UNESCO's role and activities

5. Dialogue in the present global circumstances needs to address a complex range of socio-political issues and parameters, cutting across all fields of competence of UNESCO – education, the sciences, culture and communication - and all regions and cultures. But it must be recognized that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations not only concerns the intellectual and cultural sphere but has a profoundly political dimension.
6. Promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures is indeed a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities. The Organization's Constitution provides that peace must be founded 'upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind', and that UNESCO has been created 'for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims'. UNESCO has pursued the concept of a Dialogue among Civilizations since its inception. India was host to UNESCO's Ninth General Conference in New Delhi in 1956, where the historic precursor to the Dialogue among Civilizations, UNESCO's 'Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values', was launched with strong support from the Indian Government.

7. The Organization was also designated by the United Nations General Assembly as lead agency for the International Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and the Non-Violence among Children (2001-2010), a role which it has also fulfilled for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). Overall, this has enabled UNESCO to design numerous and innovative education activities at regional, national and local levels.
8. In UNESCO's medium-term strategy for 2002-2007 (document 31 C/4), the dialogue among civilizations has been designated as one of only twelve strategic objectives for the Organization, within the Programme defined for the Culture. Reference to the pivotal role of the dialogue among civilizations is also well anchored in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, unanimously adopted by UNESCO's General Conference on 2 November 2001. By this Declaration the world has committed itself to preserve cultural diversity as a living, and thus renewable treasure, and to prevent segregation and fundamentalism which counter the message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
9. In the past, the Organization has sought to strengthen the processes, both historical and contemporary, that are conducive to a favorable interaction, mutual understanding and even convergence between a wide range of cultures through the discovery of a common heritage and shared ethical values. By analyzing the dynamics of interaction between cultures and highlighting their mutual contributions, borrowings and interactions, the aim was to acquire a better understanding of the long-term processes that are the mainspring of the memory of peoples. Yet, cultures and civilizations are not immutable, they continuously redefine themselves through new interactions. They are invariably the source of prejudice and incomprehension, if not tolerance, of others and yet, almost paradoxically, they lay the foundations for a dialogue between different civilizations, cultures, religions and spiritual traditions. This approach transcends the traditional, reductive approach to intercultural dialogue addressing only the mutual knowledge of cultures and civilizations and enables an analysis of the basic concepts of heritage, identity and creativity as they take shape and illuminate their composite nature. Unity in diversity is the hallmark of many societies and nations that have reached the zenith of prosperity and continue to cope with the ravages of time despite internal diversities. Here, history demonstrates the power of

tolerance and acceptance of differences within such societies amidst many persistent socio-political and economic challenges.

10. More recently, UNESCO aims to broaden the scope of the dialogue and to make it more relevant to contemporary challenges by reviewing and assessing the concept and past approaches, identifying and overcoming obstacles to dialogue, including new and old ignorances and prejudices, potentially leading to new fractures and conflicts, especially at local and community levels. The challenge is to chart novel approaches to dialogue beyond established frameworks, also drawing on information and communication technologies (ICTs) so as to reach out to often excluded segments of society. Different dimensions must be included, drawing also on belief systems, cultural parameters, scientific expertise, civil society resources, such as parliamentarians, and especially young people. Effective new modalities and tools are being designed to enhance international encounters, such as through hearings presenting contradictory viewpoints, the use of old and new media and ICTs to broaden the outreach, and the production of studies and interactive media materials.
11. What then is the expectation from the Delhi Conference? It is to emphasize the importance of moving beyond the stage of general agreement and statements of intent in relation to the dialogue, and to seek new responses using the vectors of ethical and spiritual values, education and science and technology, with a view to constructing a framework for global dialogue in the 21st century.

Values – at the core of a dialogue among civilizations

12. Certain values and principles are universally shared and cut across all civilizations and establish a sense of community among them. Tolerance is a principle that transcends civilizational differences. Any dialogue must therefore focus on the importance of shared values, which give meaning to life and provide form and substance to identities. It must also foster tolerance and respect for the other and acknowledge and uphold diversity.
13. In all the domains in which dialogue is crucial, it is necessary to promote a constantly renewed awareness of the ethical principles, values and attitudes that lay at its very foundation. Respect for all human rights, inclusiveness, and the search for unity in diversity need to be constantly reinforced in the light of the major social and economic transformations induced by globalization. Furthermore,

ethical values are essential in developing sound international policies and contributing to the creation of norms and structures that are conducive to a more peaceful and just society. Dialogue will be key because a genuine 'ethical approach' relies on prudence, allowing decision-makers to define and select actions in light of potential alternatives.

14. As such, dialogue nurtures a common base for human existence rooted in history, heritage and tradition. But how can one best build and sustain such a base, in which all people should be enabled to participate with equal dignity and mutual respect – especially under conditions of globalization? New ethical perspectives and approaches are called for. The notion of scientific progress – in its broadest sense – must be weighed in ethical terms in order to become the keystone of responsibility and solidarity at all levels and for society as a whole. It must be acknowledged that ethical values are essential in developing sound international policies and contributing to the creation of norms and structures that are conducive to a more peaceful and just society. Dialogue will be key because a genuine 'ethical approach' replies on prudence, allowing decision-makers to define and select actions in light of potential alternatives. Future international efforts will arguably require a reinforced commitment to dialogue between different faiths, cultures and civilizations in the search for an authentic and shared universality.

Education – the precondition and pivot

15. There is a growing realization that survival of humankind depends also upon forging a unified perspective transcending historically evolved perspectives of religion, ethnicity, ideology, etc, and at the same time showing due respect to the past and drawing inspiration from such differences. Education is a unique instrumentality and process to help forge such unity in the midst of differences and to ensure sustained and continuous dialogue.
16. The Delors Report *Learning: the Treasure Within* (1996) spelled out that education can only promote social cohesion if it strives to take the diversity of individuals and groups into consideration, while at the same time seeking to construct universally accepted philosophies and policies of education.
17. Thus, education can help the world's population to develop and conduct a long-term dialogue between cultures and civilizations as

well as to ensure the participation of all in such dialogue. Indeed, education at all levels – through formal, non-formal and informal approaches – has an inherent ability to release the potential of dialogue, provided it is accessible to all.

18. The development of rights-based and values-oriented national approaches will be at the heart of educational efforts. Major focus should be on specific measures at various educational levels, including strategic approaches like Education for All (EFA), literacy promotion, curricula and textbook revision, use of traditional and new media as well as action with respect to the international framework, in particular the impact and opportunities of globalization. Once these issues have been addressed, it will be incumbent to confront new challenges, such as how to translate norms into values, how best to move to action, how to build partnerships and work together effectively.
19. The necessity to develop quality education is paramount. The notion of quality education does not merely encompass aspects of educational attainment, but especially the aspects of curricula and their content focusing on peace, shared values, human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual understanding. Educational institutions and educational materials should serve as a vehicle for peace, dialogue and intercultural understanding, but not be instrumentalized for and used as vehicles to spread misunderstanding, intolerance and hate. For its part, UNESCO has deliberately placed programmes related to *education for peace and human rights within the area of quality of education*, emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues in any long-term education strategy.
20. Quality education for peace and security should focus in particular on:
 - improving knowledge of cultures, civilizations, religions and traditions;
 - developing an understanding of universally shared values;
 - encouraging the development of key competencies for peace and the prevention and resolution of conflict.
21. Education ought to be of such a quality that it is capable of fostering the establishment of a positive identity based on respect for the self and for others. A quality education should counter the trends of marginalization and exclusion within and between societies. It must be recognize however that to teach understanding is not in itself a sufficient remedy to conflict.

22. A key modality of intervention to that end is the improvement and revision of textbooks and teaching materials and the training of teachers. Revisions should aim to provide impartial, dispassionate and comprehensive knowledge about cultures and civilizations, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, and promote the necessary forums for research and dialogue among concerned specialists (history, religion, literature, sociology, etc.). Moreover, focus on human rights education and civic education are essential, especially in deeply divided and/or post-conflict situations, where the process of textbook revision and educational reform is a key element of reconstruction and reconciliation processes and where it can encourage students belonging to different communities to develop a new sense of shared destiny
23. The incorporation of human rights into education curricula and the use of human rights approaches in education is pivotal. Human rights education should not only impart knowledge about rights but should also be directed to related practice and capacities ('learning for human rights') and promote a learning environment conducive to peace and dialogue.
24. Education's contribution to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity is undeniable. Thus, educational programmes should not focus on differences, but rather on the ways in which diversity enriches lives, on 'learning to live together' – the fourth pillar of education for the 21st century identified in the Delors Report. This may also include improving dialogue with marginalized groups and promoting tolerance and conflict-resolution programmes in schools, which could be furthered through cooperation with civil society organizations already working on good practices for conflict-resolution. Dialogue nurtured within the minds of human beings through appropriate education can inform and shape overt dialogues among individuals and among groups brought up in different cultural environments leading towards new harmonious existence capable of defining and meeting mutual interests. Education structured as dialogue in which participants re-examine different perspectives in relation to survival needs without undermining the validity and dignity of diverse societies and cultures is the essence of an 'education for living together'.
25. The rediscovered role of education as facilitator of dialogue on perspectives within and between individuals and groups requires injection of universally accepted human values into the philosophies

- of education. It requires the definition of quality of educational outcomes involving accepted levels of knowledge, life skills and core values. Its processes need to be characterized by human dignity and human worth. It should empower individuals with rights, inform their duties to the collectives and bestow a sense of self-esteem in immediate and in larger social contexts in which they participate.
26. The existing frameworks such as the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (Dakar, April 2000) and the just launched United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) place special emphasis on providing access to the most disadvantaged groups, in particular women and girls, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants and refugees, out-of-school children and youth, and persons with disabilities – and the upcoming United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) will also seek to promote values and ethics through education at different levels in order to make an impact on people's lifestyles and behavior and help to build a sustainable future.
 27. The universal – political - commitment to the six goals of Education for All (EFA) adopted in Dakar in April 2000 has created a particularly powerful base for a range of initiatives and approaches, among others to attain universal primary education by 2015 and gender parity in schooling by 2005.
 28. The inevitable long-term processes of human rights education and conflict resolution point to the necessity to extend these actions to lifelong education, which encourages learning beyond formal education, in informal and non-formal settings.
 29. Mass media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are highly effective learning vehicles and have a growing influence on the perceptions of increasing numbers of individuals in all age groups. While mass media and other forms of can be misused to propagate messages of intolerance and hate, they constitute equally major vehicles to promote messages of peace, tolerance and dialogue.
 30. At the national level, the incorporation of such approaches necessitates substantial and substantive educational reforms. Purposes and goals of national education policies must be redefined, curricula, textbooks, school and teaching learning materials must be reviewed and revised, the precepts of sustainable development must be upheld and extolled, appreciation for and the practice of democratic values, human rights, pluralism and non-violence must be taught, all

complemented and enriched through the use of ICTs. Strategies to educate new generations of teachers and a reorientation and education of serving teachers must complement this agenda.

31. Increasing access to quality primary and secondary education among rural children, youth and adults; offering opportunities for non-formal basic education, basic vocational skills training, adult community education and extension; supporting girls' education and women's empowerment in rural areas – all these are activities that are central to ensure progress in that direction and to draw benefits from dialogue.
32. It will be of immense value to share the experiences educational reforms by different groups and nations interested in the promotion of peace, prosperity and dignity of human beings. The benefits will be in the form of collaborative and concerted efforts to resolve differences, support each other in elimination of poverty and ignorance and secure dignity with prosperity of humanity.

Science and technology – a neglected pillar for the promotion of dialogue

33. Knowledge and its application in science and technology has always been a key component of development for all cultures and civilizations – yet its potential to advance and inspire dialogue has often been neglected. However, in a period of accelerating globalization, the generation and application of the sciences and technology and scientific and technological interchange, sharing and networking have become increasingly vital for economic and social development. Many countries still sorely lack the capacities to fully participate in the building of knowledge societies, and this at a moment when the digital divide also accentuates disparities in development, excluding entire groups and countries from the potential benefits of new opportunities. Thus an authentic global networking is not yet a reality for many. As emphasized by the World Conference on Science held in Budapest in 1999, international cooperation in the application of science and technology are crucially important in development, for both developed and developing countries. Science and technology can promote intercultural exchange and dialogue, create bridges and networks which link people, knowledge, and societies more closely together. Science and technology must increasingly be recognized as central components of knowledge systems and cultures around the world. In

pursuing this important path, the recognition of ethical standards and principles that should, in future, guide scientific and technological advances, must be explicitly addressed.

34. Science and technology have been defining aspects of all civilizations. Indeed, without science and technology, no civilization could have evolved. The speed of scientific and technological progress poses nowadays new sets of challenges. On the one hand, there has been an enormous increase in our understanding of nature in all its aspects; and on the other, tremendous opportunities keep opening up for the application of this knowledge and understanding in diverse areas of human needs, relating to food security, water resources, health, sustainable development, energy and much else. Likewise, the advances in life sciences are having a profound and revolutionary impact on areas of food, health, environment and industry; indeed they are posing questions as profound as the origin and meaning of life.
35. The advances in information and communication technologies add a special new dimension to this complex picture. They have an unprecedented ability to bring together diverse communities, cultures and civilizations; yet many countries and individuals still lack the capacity to participate in the construction of knowledge societies. The new dialogue among cultures and civilizations must take note of this.
36. Despite rapid technological transformation in these fields and the ICT-induced shrinking of physical distances between the different parts of a world without frontiers, the world community is experiencing an intensive feeling of economic, social and cultural insecurities. There is also a wide disparity, if not a multiple divide between different parts of the world and different strata of society, including with respect of access to the knowledge base that exists and which is growing rapidly.
37. Persistence of acute poverty and destitution among large segments of the world's population, large and growing sections of excluded and deprived, including women, absence of social empowerment, lack of basic needs of life, such as housing, safe drinking water, education and health facilities etc. in large parts of the world, an ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor, both within and across the nations – topped by unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. All these developments have raised doubts about a future of human survival with dignity and peace. Dialogue among

the proponents of different perceptions and models of development in a framework of mutual understanding and respect needs to be encouraged.

38. Any dialogue among civilizations must take note of all these circumstances that are part of the human condition today and will increasingly affect all of human life and the functioning of society as we move into the future. The daunting challenges confronting the world community support the quest for a globalization of knowledge, particularly in favor of developing countries, where the application of science and technology is vital for the eradication of poverty.
39. Science represents the unceasing quest to understand nature and the way it functions. Technology derives from this scientific knowledge and understanding, but also has a self-propelling ability of its own. Technological capabilities can be used for good and for evil. It is therefore important to understand the ethical dimensions in the development of science and technology and the manner in which one can ensure its use for human welfare.
40. The potential to harness resources to positive or negative effect is greater than ever today. At this crucial phase of rapid growth in technology and science, governments must be committed to cooperation at the international level. UNESCO is the only agency of the UN system to combine in its mandate education, natural science, social science, culture and communication, all disciplines which are essential to the understanding of the ethical dilemmas haunting science and technology today. We are thus aware of the urgent necessity of establishing a mechanism for dialogue and coordinating issues of growing ethical concern. Bioethical issues, by their very nature, must be dealt with at the international level. International organizations are prepared to support scientists in these endeavors, but their efforts must have firm political support at home if they are to be meaningful in the long run. The UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology agreed in 1999, that 'all scientists should commit themselves to high ethical standards and a code of ethics based on relevant norms enshrined in international human rights instruments'. It goes on to state that 'the social responsibility of scientists requires that they maintain high standards of scientific integrity and quality control, share their knowledge, communicate with the public and educate the younger

generation. Political authorities should respect such actions by scientists...’

41. While there is only one science which involves rational, objective thinking with rigorous standards and methods of scientific research, as also ethical rules that govern scientific practice, the thought processes that have evolved in different civilizations with respect to science have been quite diverse. Whereas developments in the industrialized countries have been principally based on pushing analysis to the limit, and using a reductionist approach which has yielded great success, Eastern civilizations have evolved thought processes in which completely different aspects of holism and harmony between different components play an important role. These are concepts that would apply to science and technology as well as to the functioning of human society.

Conference Programme

The International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations: Quest for New Perspectives, in New Delhi, India, 9 and 10 July 2003

Organized by UNESCO
and the Government of India
Held at the Vigyan Bhawan Conference Center, New Delhi, India

Programme

July 8, 2003	Local sight seeing (by coach)	14 00-17 00 hrs
	Cultural Programme (at Kamani Auditorium)	18 30 hrs
	Return to Hotel	
	Dinner at Hotel	2030 hrs
July 9, 2003	Registration at Vigyan Bhawan	0900 hrs onwards
	Arrival of Delegates at Vigyan Bhawan	1000 hrs
	Arrival of Ministers at Vigyan Bhawan	1030 hrs onwards
	Inaugural Plenary Session	
	Inauguration by Honb'le Prime Minister of India (Guests to be seated by 1040 hrs at Plenary Hall)	1100-1200 hrs
	Tea/Coffee Break	1200-1230 hrs
	Plenary Session 1	1230-1330 hrs
	Lunch	1330-1430 hrs
	Plenary Session 2	1430-1615 hrs
	Tea/Coffee Break	1615-1630 hrs
	Plenary Session 3	1630-1900 hrs
Reception/Dinner	2030 hrs	
July 10, 2003	Thematic Round Table Discussions	0900-1115 hrs
	Tea/Coffee Break	1115-1130 hrs
	Thematic Round Table Discussions (continued)	1130-1330 hrs
	Lunch	1330-1500 hrs
	Plenary Session (Reports of Thematic Discussion)	1530-1630 hrs
	Tea/Coffee Break	1630-1700 hrs
	Adoption of Delhi Declaration	1700-1800 hrs
	Press Conference	1800 hrs
	Cultural Programme	2000 hrs
	Dinner	2100 hrs

Annexes

167 EX/Decisions
PARIS, 14 November 2003

DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AT ITS 167th SESSION

(Paris, 15 September-15 October 2003)

excerpt

Action pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures

The Executive Board,

1. **Recalling** 31 C/Resolution 39 on the “Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism”, the United Nations Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the General Conference in 31 C/Resolution 25,
2. **Further recalling** the lead role played by UNESCO in the observance of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations 2001, during which a series of important international and national events were organized by UNESCO and several Member States,
3. **Also recalling** 164 EX/Decision 6.2 by which the Board approved the use of the unspent balance of funds carried over from 2000-2001 to the 2002-2003 biennium, inter alia for the purpose of intensifying the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and identifying new perspectives and approaches relating thereto,
4. **Expressing its appreciation** to the Director-General for his introductory statement to the general debate of the 167th session and, in particular, his reference to the future orientation of the activities of the Organization with respect to dialogue among civilizations and cultures,
5. **Welcoming** UNESCO’s action with respect to dialogue as reported in paragraphs 405 and 406 of document 167 EX/4 Part I, and in document 167 EX/INF.8,
6. **Convinced** that, in the age of globalization, one of UNESCO’s central tasks will be to build new bridges between civilizations and cultures,
7. **Expresses its satisfaction** with the broad range of activities undertaken, including the pursuit of new perspectives and innovative modalities as well as with the emphasis placed on follow-up and implementation of concrete activities in all of UNESCO’s domains;

8. **Welcomes** and **endorses** the New Delhi Declaration on “Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for new perspectives”, adopted by the International Ministerial Conference held in New Delhi, India, on 9 and 10 July 2003;
9. **Also welcomes** and **endorses** the “Message from Ohrid” adopted by the Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations, held in Ohrid, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 29 and 30 August 2003;
10. **Welcomes** all initiatives and actions undertaken by governments, National Commissions for UNESCO, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the academic community, the private sector, religious and spiritual leaders and communities and various actors of civil society in the pursuit of the dialogue among civilizations and cultures;
11. **Invites** the Director-General to review continuously all programmes and work plans with a view to integrating approaches and recommendations adopted by the New Delhi and Ohrid meetings and to shape future approaches by UNESCO, which should focus on concrete activities and modalities;
12. **Requests** the Director-General to bring to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly the New Delhi Declaration and the Message from Ohrid;
13. **Recommends** to the General Conference that it include an item in its agenda for the 32nd session entitled “New perspectives in UNESCO’s activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures”.

(167 EX/SR.7)

32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO

Item 5.18 of the agenda

New perspectives in UNESCO's activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures, including in particular follow-up to the New Delhi Ministerial Conference¹

The General Conference,

Recalling its Resolution 31C/39 on “Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism”, the United Nations Global Agenda for the Dialogue among Civilisations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in its resolution 31C/25,

Taking note of Executive Board decision 167EX/Decision3.1, part III on “Action pertaining to the Dialogue among Civilizations”,

Taking also note of the report by the Director-General on the item (document 32C/60) and the information document (32C/INF.15) related thereto,

Recognizing that all civilisations celebrate the unity in diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilisations,

Also recognizing the value of each civilising experience as an invaluable and integral part of the commonly shared human experience,

Affirming that complementarity of civilisations is strengthened by constant interplay and exchange of ideas as well as by creativity in science, art, philosophy, ethics and spirituality, and allows for the highest attainments of civilisational diversity;

Welcoming the lead role UNESCO has taken at all levels in promoting a dialogue among civilisations and cultures and highlighting its unique role in building new bridges between civilisations and cultures,

Conscious of the broad range of activities undertaken by governments, National Commissions for UNESCO, non-governmental organisations, the academic community, the private sector, religious and spiritual communities and various actors of civil society with a view to fostering the dialogue among civilizations and cultures as reflected in document 32C/60 and welcoming all such initiatives and actions;

Aware of the need to respond to new challenges to the dialogue among civilisations and cultures, especially in the context of globalisation, through action in UNESCO's domains, especially by integrating addressing new perspectives and innovative modalities;

1. **Endorses** the New Delhi Declaration on the Dialogue among Civilisations – Quest for New Perspectives;
2. **Endorses** the Message from Ohrid adopted by the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilisations, held in Ohrid;
3. **Affirms** that tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for diversity, respect for the Other, human rights and democratic principles are core values underlying any meaningful dialogue and underlines the need to address and overcome ignorance and prejudice about the ways of life and customs of peoples;

¹ Resolution unanimously adopted on 16 October 2003

4. **Reasserts** the principle of openness of each culture to all other cultures;
5. **Further affirms** that the respect for diversity of cultures, including the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, values of tolerance and mutual understanding are fostered through multi-civilisational discourse and are the best guarantors of peace in the world;
6. **Stresses the need** for enhanced intercultural dialogue through international cooperation in order for all peoples and nations to share with one another their experience, knowledge and skills;
7. **Reaffirms** that all acts of terrorism represent an attack against humankind, are strongly rejected by all religions and are despicable to the values of all civilisations; and emphasizes that a commitment to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures represents also a commitment against terrorism;
8. **Recognizes** the need to translate agreed-upon principles and agreements inspiring a dialogue among civilisations and cultures into concrete activities and action permeating all UNESCO programmes;
9. **Considers** that UNESCO should henceforth in its action be guided by the framework provided by the New Delhi Declaration and place emphasis on pursuing concrete activities in the following key areas:
 - a) education, especially through the pursuit of the six Education for All (EFA) goals and efforts to promote quality education;
 - b) the sciences and technology, including the role of traditional and local knowledge systems;
 - c) cultural diversity in all its dimensions, including world heritage;
 - d) the media and information and communication technologies;
10. **Enjoins** all governments and civil society to support actively a dialogue within and among civilisations and cultures so that it will become an effective instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, and a vehicle for diversity and pluralism;
11. **Calls upon** governments and civil society to ensure the empowerment and full participation of women and youth in efforts to foster dialogue within and among civilisations and cultures and to generate equitable, inclusive societies where mutual understanding may flourish and people may learn to live together in peace;
12. **Commits** itself to a broad-based collaboration with Member States, organisations of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organisations, civil society, the scientific, academic and artistic communities, the private sector and other partners in the implementation of the present resolution;
13. **Invites** the Director-General to strengthen and intensify accordingly UNESCO's activities in favour of the dialogue of civilizations, particularly at the regional and sub-regional levels, focusing on concrete activities and modalities in the areas referred to in para. 9 above.

This is not an official document of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is issued for information purposes only as an excerpt in advance of the official decisions of the Organization as found in Records of the General Conference, 32nd session, Paris, 29 September to 17 October 2003, v. 1: Resolutions yet to be published.

	<p>Conférence générale 32e session Document d'information</p>	<p>Генеральная конференция 32-я сессия Информационный документ</p>	
Paris 2003	<p>General Conference 32nd session Information document</p>	<p>المؤتمر العام الدورة الثانية والثلاثون وثيقة إعلامية</p>	
	<p>Conferencia General 32ª reunión Documento de información</p>	<p>大会 第三十二届会议 资料性文件</p>	

32 C/INF:15
11 October 2003
Original: English

Item 5.19 of the agenda

**NEW PERSPECTIVES IN UNESCO'S ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO THE
DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS AND CULTURES, INCLUDING IN
PARTICULAR FOLLOW-UP OF THE NEW DELHI MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE**

Information document by the Director-General

The present information note provides complementary information to assist the General Conference in its deliberations of the item. The note contains a summary of the salient points presented by the Bureau of Strategic Planning in background documents prepared for the New Delhi Conference and the Ohrid Forum, focusing on possible action in UNESCO's domains.

SUMMARY OF THE SALIENT POINTS PRESENTED IN BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS PREPARED FOR THE NEW DELHI INTERNATIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AND THE OHRID REGIONAL FORUM

INTRODUCTION

1. The concept of a “Dialogue among Civilizations” has assumed even greater salience in the face of new and multidimensional threats to global peace and security. In past years and especially so since the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the activities promoting a dialogue among civilizations have attracted renewed attention at the highest political levels throughout the world. Coinciding with the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001: Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations – capping the global observance of 2001 as United Nations Year for the Dialogue among Civilizations –, UNESCO has intensified its own activities in this area. It has received new impetus through 31 C/Resolution 39 on the fight against terrorism adopted by the General Conference at its 31st session in November 2001. The challenge today is to move beyond general agreement about the value of, or the need for, dialogue or beyond historical analysis, to concrete approaches and activities. How, in the context of globalization, can dialogue become a tool to bolster peace and security and to advance sustainable development? New and multidimensional challenges abound and demand innovative modalities, which allow for common reflection and commitments.
2. The United Nations Action Plan for the Dialogue among Civilizations emphasized the necessity of defining “civilization” as a universal, plural and non-hierarchical phenomenon, for the simple – yet often neglected – reason that civilizations have always been enriched by contact and exchange with other civilizations, hence always involved in a dynamic process of change and redefinition of “self”. Civilizations are inherently “intercultural”. Cultural monologues or cultural fundamentalism, which freeze “the other” as an alien, and as such a potential enemy, run counter to this constitutive feature of human civilization and social organization. Many of the problems faced by today’s world have arisen as a consequence of differences within nations. Dialogue therefore must begin at home. While globalization is creating new opportunities for cultural exchange, conflicts arising within nation states have turned out to often involve cultural matters. The Action Plan explicitly stressed that the manner in which diversity is defined and acted upon by governments and civil society determines whether it is to lead to greater overall social creativity, cohesion and inclusion – or to violence and exclusion. As the General Conference stated in 31 C/Resolution 39, efforts will need to be redoubled, not only to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the world’s diversity of cultures, but also to reinforce our capacity to accept and accommodate the different “other” and accommodate “the other” in an overall desire to live together.

UNESCO'S ROLE AND ACTIVITIES

3. Dialogue in the present global circumstances needs to address a complex range of sociopolitical issues and parameters, cutting across all fields of competence of UNESCO – education, the sciences, culture and communication – and all regions and cultures. But it must be recognized that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations not only concerns the intellectual and cultural spheres, but has equally a profoundly political dimension.
4. Promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures has become a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities. The Organization's Constitution provides that peace must be founded "upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind", and that UNESCO has been created "for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims". UNESCO has pursued the concept of a Dialogue among Civilizations since its inception. India was host to UNESCO's 9th session of the General Conference in New Delhi in 1956, where the historic precursor to the Dialogue among Civilizations, UNESCO's "Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values," was launched.
5. It should also be borne in mind that the Organization was designated by the United Nations General Assembly as lead agency for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), a role which it has likewise fulfilled for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). Overall, this has enabled UNESCO to design numerous and innovative activities at regional, national and local levels.
6. In UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007 (31 C/4), the dialogue among civilizations has been designated as one of only 12 strategic objectives for the Organization, within the programme for culture, and intercultural dialogue has been an important main line of action in Major Programme IV (Culture) both in documents 31 C/5 and 32 C/5. Reference to the pivotal role of the dialogue among civilizations is also well anchored in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by UNESCO's General Conference on 2 November 2001.
7. In the past, the Organization has sought to strengthen the processes, both historical and contemporary, that are conducive to a favourable interaction, mutual understanding and even convergence between a wide range of cultures through the discovery of a common heritage and shared ethical values. By analysing the dynamics of interaction between cultures and highlighting their mutual contributions, borrowings and interactions, the aim was to acquire a better understanding of the long-term processes that are the mainspring of the memory of peoples. Yet, cultures and civilizations are not immutable, they continuously redefine themselves through new interactions. They are invariably the source of prejudice and incomprehension, if not tolerance, of others and yet, almost paradoxically, they lay the foundations for a dialogue between different civilizations, cultures, religions and spiritual traditions.
8. More recently, UNESCO has sought to broaden the scope of the dialogue and to make it more relevant to contemporary challenges by reviewing and assessing the concept and past approaches, identifying and overcoming obstacles to dialogue,

including new and old ignorances and prejudices, potentially leading to new fractures and conflicts, especially at local and community levels. The challenge is to chart novel approaches to dialogue beyond established frameworks, also drawing on information and communication technologies (ICTs) so as to reach out to often excluded segments of society. Different dimensions must be included, drawing also on belief systems, cultural parameters, scientific expertise, civil society resources, such as parliamentarians, and especially young people. The overall challenge is to move beyond the stage of general agreement and statements of intent in relation to the dialogue, and to seek new responses using the vectors of ethical and spiritual values, education, science and technology and cultural diversity and heritage with a view to constructing a framework for global dialogue in the twenty-first century.

VALUES – AT THE CORE OF A DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS

9. Certain values and principles are universally shared and cut across all civilizations and establish a sense of community among them. Tolerance is a principle that transcends civilizational differences. Any dialogue must therefore focus on the importance of shared values, which give meaning to life and provide form and substance to identities. It must also foster tolerance and respect for the other and acknowledge and uphold diversity. In all efforts, it is necessary to promote a constantly renewed awareness of the ethical principles, values and attitudes that lay at its very foundation. Respect for all human rights, inclusiveness, and the search for unity in diversity need to be constantly reinforced in the light of the major social and economic transformations induced by globalization. Furthermore, ethical values are essential in developing sound international policies and contributing to the creation of norms and structures that are conducive to a more peaceful and just society.
10. As such, dialogue nurtures a common base for human existence rooted in history, heritage and tradition. But how can one best build and sustain such a base, in which all people should be enabled to participate with equal dignity and mutual respect – especially under conditions of globalization? Future international efforts will arguably require a reinforced commitment to a dialogue between different faiths, cultures and civilizations in the search for an authentic and shared universality.

EDUCATION – THE PRECONDITION AND PIVOT

11. There is a growing realization that survival of humankind depends also upon forging a unified perspective transcending historically evolved perspectives of religion, ethnicity, ideology, etc., and at the same time showing due respect to the past and drawing inspiration from such differences. Education is a unique instrumentality and process to help forge such unity in the midst of differences and to ensure sustained and continuous dialogue. The Delors Report, *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996), spelled out that education can only promote social cohesion if it strives to take the diversity of individuals and groups into consideration, while at the same time seeking to construct universally accepted philosophies and policies of education.
12. Thus, education can help the world's population to develop and conduct a long-term dialogue between cultures and civilizations as well as to ensure the participation of all in such dialogue. Indeed, education at all levels – through formal, non-formal and informal approaches – has an inherent ability to release the

- potential of dialogue, provided it is accessible to all. The development of rights-based and values-oriented national approaches will be at the heart of educational efforts.
13. The necessity to develop quality education is paramount. As was emphasized also at the recent Round Table of Ministers held in the context of the General Conference, the notion of quality education does not merely encompass aspects of educational attainment, but especially so the aspects of curricula and their content focusing on peace, shared values, human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual understanding. Educational institutions and educational materials are uniquely able to serve as a vehicle for peace, dialogue and intercultural understanding, but should not be instrumentalized for and used as vehicles to spread misunderstanding, intolerance and hate.
 14. Quality education for peace and security should focus in particular on:
 - improving knowledge of cultures, civilizations, religions and traditions;
 - developing an understanding of universally shared values;
 - encouraging the development of key competencies for peace and the prevention and resolution of conflict.
 15. Education ought to be of such a quality that it is capable of fostering the establishment of a positive identity based on respect for the self and for others. One key modality for quality education is the improvement and revision of textbooks and teaching materials and the training of teachers. Revisions should aim to provide impartial, dispassionate and comprehensive knowledge about cultures and civilizations, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, and promote the necessary forums for research and dialogue among concerned specialists (history, religion, literature, sociology, etc.). Moreover, focus on human rights education and civic education are essential, especially in post-conflict situations, where the process of textbook revision and educational reform is a key element of reconstruction and reconciliation processes and where it can encourage students belonging to different communities to develop a new sense of shared destiny. For its part, human rights education should not only impart knowledge about rights but should also be directed to related practice and capacities (“learning for human rights”) and promote a learning environment conducive to peace and dialogue.
 16. Education’s central contribution to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for cultural diversity is undeniable. Thus, educational programmes should not focus on differences, but rather on the ways in which diversity can enrich lives and on “learning to live together” – the fourth pillar of education for the twenty-first century identified in the Delors Report. This may also include improving dialogue with marginalized groups and promoting tolerance and conflict-resolution programmes in schools, which could be furthered through cooperation with civil society organizations already working on good practices for conflict-resolution. Dialogue nurtured within the minds of human beings through appropriate education can inform and shape overt dialogues among individuals and among groups brought up in different cultural environments leading towards new harmonious existence capable of defining and meeting mutual interests.
 17. The universal – political – commitment to the six goals of Education for All (EFA) adopted in Dakar in April 2000 has created a particularly powerful base for a range of initiatives and approaches, among others to attain universal primary education by

2015 and gender parity in schooling by 2005. At the national level, a systematic incorporation of dialogue approaches necessitates substantial educational reforms. Purposes and goals of national education policies may need to be revised, curricula, textbooks, school and teaching learning materials reviewed and revised, the precepts of sustainable development promoted, appreciation for and the practice of democratic values, human rights, pluralism and non-violence taught, all complemented and enriched through the use of ICTs. Strategies to educate new generations of teachers and a reorientation and education of serving teachers must complement this agenda. The inevitably long-term processes of human rights education and conflict resolution point to the necessity to extend these actions to lifelong education, which encourages learning beyond formal education, in informal and non-formal settings.

18. It may be of value to share the experiences of educational reforms by different groups and nations interested in the promotion of peace, prosperity and dignity of human beings. The benefits will be in the form of collaborative and concerted efforts to resolve differences, support each other in elimination of poverty and ignorance and secure dignity with prosperity of humanity.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – A NEGLECTED PILLAR FOR THE PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE

19. Knowledge and its application in science and technology has always been a key component of development for all cultures and civilizations – yet its potential to advance and inspire dialogue has often been neglected. However, in a period of accelerating globalization, the generation and application of the sciences and technology and scientific and technological interchange, sharing and networking have become increasingly vital for economic and social development. Policies to address contemporary challenges increasingly demand scientific advice based on analysis, understanding, sharing and anticipation. More than ever, decision-making and policy formulation require understanding of the scientific underpinnings and consequences must be fully informed as to their scientific basis and consequences, drawing on input both from the natural sciences and the social and human sciences.
20. Many countries lack the human, institutional and technical capacities to fully participate in the building of knowledge societies, and this at a moment when the digital divide also accentuates disparities in development, excluding entire groups and countries from the potential benefits of new opportunities. Science and technology can promote intercultural exchange and dialogue, create bridges and networks which link people, knowledge, and societies more closely together. Science and technology must increasingly be recognized as central components of knowledge systems and cultures around the world. In pursuing this path, the recognition of ethical standards and principles that should guide scientific and technological advances must be explicitly addressed.
21. Science and technology have been defining aspects of all civilizations. Indeed, without science and technology, no civilization could have evolved. The speed of scientific and technological progress poses nowadays new challenges. On the one hand, there has been an enormous increase in the understanding of nature in all its aspects; and on the other, tremendous opportunities keep opening up for the application of this knowledge in diverse areas of human needs, relating to food

- security, water resources, health, sustainable development, energy and much else. Likewise, the advances in life sciences are having a profound and revolutionary impact and are posing questions as profound as the origin and meaning of life.
22. The advances in information and communication technologies add a new dimension to this complex picture. They have an unprecedented ability to bring together diverse communities, cultures and civilizations; yet many countries and individuals still lack the capacity to participate in the construction of knowledge societies. The new dialogue among cultures and civilizations must come to terms with this reality.
 23. Despite rapid technological transformation in these fields and the ICT-induced shrinking of physical distances between the different parts of a world without frontiers, the world community is experiencing an intensive feeling of economic, social and cultural insecurities. There is also a wide disparity, if not a multiple divide between different parts of the world and different strata of society, including with respect of access to the knowledge base that exists and which is growing rapidly.
 24. Persistence of acute poverty and destitution among large segments of the world's population, large and growing sections of excluded and deprived, including women, absence of social empowerment, lack of basic needs of life in large parts of the world, an ever increasing gap between the rich and the poor, both within and across the nations – topped by unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. Dialogue among the proponents of different perceptions and models of development in a framework of mutual understanding and respect needs to be encouraged.
 25. The potential to harness resources to positive or negative effect is considerable. UNESCO is the only agency of the United Nations system to combine in its mandate education, natural science, social science, culture and communication, all disciplines which are essential to the understanding of the ethical dilemmas inherent in science and technology today. Hence the necessity of establishing a mechanism for dialogue and coordinating issues of growing ethical concern. Bioethical issues, by their very nature, must be dealt with at the international level. For its part, the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology agreed in 1999 that “all scientists should commit themselves to high ethical standards and a code of ethics based on relevant norms enshrined in international human rights instruments”. It goes on to state that “the social responsibility of scientists requires that they maintain high standards of scientific integrity and quality control, share their knowledge, communicate with the public and educate the younger generation. Political authorities should respect such actions by scientists ...”.
 26. While there is only one science which involves rational, objective thinking with rigorous standards and methods of scientific research, as also ethical rules that govern scientific practice, the thought processes that have evolved in different civilizations with respect to science have been quite diverse. Whereas developments in the industrialised countries have been principally based on pushing analysis to the limit, and using a reductionist approach which has yielded great success, Eastern civilizations have evolved thought processes in which completely different aspects of holism and harmony between different components play an important role. These are concepts that would apply to science and technology as well as to the functioning of human society.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE – THE COMMON BOND OF SHARED VALUES

27. Countries should also be encouraged to rediscover their common heritage of shared values –beyond the diversity of languages, cultures and religions. This may require the creation of a common cultural space entailing full participation by civil society. Such space may benefit from mutual knowledge and understanding, improved commitment to human rights, tolerance and respect for others, respect for cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism, non-violence and, most importantly, dialogue. In that context reference could also be made to the culture of peace as “a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations”.¹
28. The furthering of mutual respect and tolerance among citizens of different ethnic origin is a principle to be sustained in the development of inter-ethnic relations in the region, where the absence of powerful, cultural, historical norms of cooperation, or structural incentives to cooperation, have generated conflict, violence, deadlock, and secessionism. The challenge of the dialogue – and of the capacity to dialogue—is therefore significant in both national and regional terms, in the continuing transition towards stability and human and material prosperity. In particular, it holds a key for countries wishing to establish national harmony while at the same time coming to terms with very significant minorities living within their borders.
29. Cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Cultural pluralism refers to the ways in which different nation-states, civil groups and national and international institutions understand and organize cultural diversity, and it implies a sustained dialogue between meaningful pasts and desirable futures. Thus, cultural pluralism should not be seen as a constraint imposed by historical circumstances or an end in itself, but as an objective, which has been chosen and on whose development it is possible to exert influence. As such, it cannot operate strictly within national boundaries and must profit from the dialogue between societies.²
30. The construction of a genuine cultural pluralism supposes the abandonment of intercultural antagonisms and the rise of a shared culture based on the acceptance of diversity. The ability to manage cultural pluralism determines the maturing of society and makes the latter evolve from a state of political unawareness to a rational choice of building a democratic society capable of integrating differences. In this sense, cultural pluralism is an opportunity for the future and a motor for the present. It is this potential, which makes it a constructive force.
31. In areas that have experienced ethnic wars the emergence of multi-ethnic states, built on a commitment to democratic principles, protection of human rights and the rule of law, as well as respect for and protection of minorities, and the development of good neighbourly relations and cooperation are prerequisites for regional peace

¹ United Nations resolutions A/RES/52/13 “Culture of Peace” and A/RES/53/243 “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”.

² The World Culture Report, UNESCO Publishing (2000), Towards a Constructive Pluralism. UNESCO/The Commonwealth Secretariat (2000); The Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).

and stability. Under conditions of open communications and equality, contact between groups generates mutual understanding and cooperation, not conflict. Contact in shared institutions is not necessarily an agent of cultural assimilation; but sustained contact under conditions of open communications and equality can contribute to the emergence of a shared culture of interaction and cooperation – or what has been termed a “civic culture”.

WORLD HERITAGE – HERITAGE AS A SHARED EXPERIENCE

32. Sites on UNESCO’s World Heritage List are receptacles of memory for cultural heritage – both in its tangible and intangible forms –, embody the symbolic values of cultural identities and constitute a fundamental reference for structuring society. As a shared experience, the foremost constituent value of the heritage is diversity. Insofar as it enables people to understand themselves, the cultural heritage is one of the keys to understanding others. In certain circumstances, the heritage of others has and may become the symbolic target of aggression, ignorance and rejection. The protection of the heritage, and its presentation and transmission to future generations, are therefore ethical imperatives, inseparable from respect for the dignity of the human person and the “desire to live together” on the part of people and groups with different cultural identities. Today, heritage must be made a cause for the protection of the diversity of cultures and of dialogue between them.
33. This is particularly important in situations where claims to heritage – turning into disputes over national symbols – remain a potential source of conflict, instability, and human suffering. The challenge everywhere lies in associating cultural heritage with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful symbol of a people’s identity can become a unifying factor for national reconciliation – not only as the mark of a common acknowledged past but also as the foundation of a shared future.
34. The linkages that unify the defence of cultural diversity, the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the respect for sustainable development must be maintained. This was also one of the important lessons of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where cultural diversity was acknowledged as inseparable from the economic, social and ecological concerns, and qualified as a “collective force” at the service of sustainable development.

INFORMATION AND THE COMMUNICATION MEDIA – BUILDING NEW BRIDGES

35. The openness of inter-group contact and communication is an essential element in the pluralist paradigm. From this perspective, efforts to ensure the openness and freedom of mass media to inter-group communication are a potentially powerful means by which to begin to construct the social foundations for identities and behaviour that transcend ethnic communities. In some countries, the transition from state-controlled media to an information system, which respects press freedom, has been – and remains – a significant challenge. Among others, it implies the adaptation of media legislation and policies to internationally recognized standards of democratic media environment, involving relevant citizen’s groups; sensitization of decision-makers and media professionals on editorial independence – notably in the print media, new agencies, public service broadcasting and community multimedia centres – especially in a context of increased internationalization of the media and trans-national information flows.

36. Cultural and linguistic pluralism and the vitality of the various forms of cultural expression should also be encouraged through support to the production and dissemination of media products at the local, national and regional level. Creative endogenous television productions and promotion of the expression of cultural diversity through audiovisual media are equally vital tools for informing and alerting society to the existence of intercultural issues, questions and problems.
37. Moreover, the production and dissemination at the local, national and subregional level of educational, recreational and cultural products that meet the expectations of particular social groups constitute important means of ensuring authentic cultural diversity and promoting cultural pluralism. This requires genuine awareness-raising among governmental authorities and professional circles, as well as the promotion of partnerships among the public and private sector and civil society.
38. Mass media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are highly effective learning vehicles and have a growing influence on the perceptions of increasing numbers of individuals in all age groups. While mass media and other forms of communication can be misused to propagate messages of intolerance and hate, they constitute equally major vehicles to promote messages of peace, tolerance and dialogue.
39. Intellectual cooperation and dialogue are key tools for mobilizing public opinion for the promotion and defence of the freedom of expression and the right to information – which is closely linked to the right to education. The objective is self-evident: anchoring communication at the heart of national democratic processes, increasing diversity and plurality of contents as well as catalysing development issues.

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On 9 and 10 July 2003, UNESCO and the Government of India organized the International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives, in New Delhi. Attended by ministerial figures from over 40 nations, this conference defined global interaction through the lenses of intercultural dialogue and mutual interaction between cultures and civilizations. Focusing on issues at the heart of UNESCO's mandate - education as an instrument of dialogue; science and technology as the new frontiers for global unity and connectivity and preservation of cultural diversities and spiritual values in an era of globalization, this conference paved the way for a new framework of action promoting dialogue among civilizations in the 21st century.

The future of mankind is not going to be determined by a conflict among civilizations; rather, as some people have beautifully put it, humanity's future will witness a concert or a confluence of civilizations...We need answers on how to create a future without wars and violence; how to achieve sustainable development, so that industrialization does not become a curse to the environment; how to impart a much-needed cultural dimension to development; how to preserve the unique cultural identity and artistic wealth of nations, especially of small communities, who are genuinely concerned about the onrush of uniformity in the name of globalization.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee,
Prime Minister of India

The role of education and cultural diversity in fostering global dialogue cannot be over-emphasized, but the 'road map' is still rough. The Government of India and UNESCO should be commended for joining hands to organize this conference that will go a long way in promoting respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in a climate of mutual trust and understanding.

E. Khiddu Makubuya,
Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda

of stigmatization, discrimination and ignorance that impede mutual respect and understanding, governments and their partners are called upon to respond in ways that are relevant and effective. We must seek new perspectives on dialogue and new modalities for conducting it. In this, we must not be afraid to be innovative and creative.

Ko chiro Matsuura,
Director-General of UNESCO

The trouble right now seems to be that there is no "dialogue" between these people who genuinely believe in the importance of cross-cultural understanding and the realists for whom national security and interests narrowly defined are everything. There is all the more reason why UNESCO and other organizations should carry on their important tasks with a sense of mission, also with a sense of history.

Akira Iriye, Chair of the
Department of History, Harvard University

For further information about UNESCO's activities related to the Dialogue among Civilizations, please see:
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/>

We must broaden the scope of our dialogue. As fresh problems and obstacles arise, such as new forms