



International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

2010



INTERNATIONAL YEAR
for the RAPPROCHEMENT of CULTURES

1. Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and designated UNESCO to play a leading role in the celebration of the Year, capitalizing on the Organization's invaluable experience of over 60 years to advance "the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples".

In line with UNESCO's mandate, this International Year is both the culmination of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the starting point of a new strategy. In a shifting international context, UNESCO gives increased importance to this theme which is at the forefront of the objectives of its Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013: "The fostering of cultural diversity and of its corollary, dialogue, thus constitutes one of the most pressing contemporary issues and is central to the Organization's comparative advantage", that is, recognizing the great diversity of the world's cultures and the links uniting them.



2. Goal

The main goal of the Year will be to demonstrate the benefits of cultural diversity by acknowledging the importance of the constant transfers and exchanges between cultures and the ties forged between them since the dawn of humanity. As cultures encompass not only the arts and humanities, but also lifestyles, different ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs, the protection and promotion of their rich diversity invites us to rise to new challenges at the local, national, regional and international levels. This will involve integrating the principles of dialogue and mutual knowledge in all policies, particularly education, science, culture and communication policies, in the hope of correcting flawed cultural representations, values and stereotypes.

3. Strategy

The success of the Year depends to a great extent on accepting the cardinal principle of the equal dignity of cultures, mutual respect and the strengthening of cooperation for lasting peace. This guiding principle of UNESCO's action was reaffirmed during the consultations of Member States and partner organizations with a view to drafting a plan of action. Four major themes appear to have been identified:

- i. promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity;
- ii. building a framework for commonly shared values;
- iii. strengthening quality education and the building of intercultural competences;
- iv. fostering dialogue for sustainable development.



4. Modalities of implementation

A significant number of specific activities – around 300 – are already being considered by Member States and various international and local partners, as well as the UNESCO Secretariat. All replies received and the new proposals submitted throughout 2010 will be available for consultation on UNESCO's website. The main types of activities scheduled are:

- a. greater opportunities for research, meetings and public debates and broadening of the spaces for intercultural mediation in the form of exhibitions illustrating exchanges and transfers between cultures, as well as fairs and festivals, using in particular places such as museums, art galleries and foundations, and making use of new technologies that specifically foster linguistic diversity and translation;
- b. promotion of the role of creativity, which is a fundamental attribute of innovation, by stressing both individual features and similarities of societies, and in that regard, enhancing the promotion of an integrated vision of all aspects of the cultural heritage as a bearer of history and identity that must be preserved, a resource and engine of sustainable development and tool for intercultural dialogue, which includes interreligious dialogue;
- c. improvement of access to formal and non-formal education, with emphasis on quality education for all, education on human rights, cultural diversity, gender and the integration of marginalized groups and the strengthening of South-South and North-South-South inter-university cooperation, particularly through creating sites of excellence and innovation;
- d. contribution of the media and the new communication and information technologies to change the perception of different cultures and religions through, inter alia, the promotion of dialogue on the Internet where numerous cultural and linguistic expressions can be circulated and shared; or co-production fostering dialogue between media professionals from different cultures particularly on delicate issues;
- e. recognition of and respect for knowledge – including traditional knowledge and the knowledge of indigenous peoples – which contributes to sustainable development; the promotion of human rights, philosophy and intercultural dialogue, with particular emphasis on fighting racism and discrimination as well as on the culture of peace and democracy.



5. Partners

In view of ensuring the broad visibility of the Year and its greatest possible impact at the local, national, regional and international levels, UNESCO is going to strengthen cooperation with its partners: the National Commissions of Member States for UNESCO, the United Nations System agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, Goodwill Ambassadors and Artists for Peace, UNESCO Chairs and Associated Schools, Clubs and Centres, parliamentarians, locally elected officials, the world of culture, science, education and the media, religious leaders and other opinion leaders as well as youth organizations.



6. Contacts

You are invited to inform us at the address below of the activities you are planning in order to celebrate the 2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and the goals you intend to achieve through them. A logo designed especially for the Year is available to download on the Year's website, and we encourage you to use it widely.

- **Focal point for Year 2010 in UNESCO:**
Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue
Director: Katérina Stenou
(Tel. +33.1 45.68.43.03)
- **Information on the presentation of projects, the logo and website:**
Sasha Rubel
(Tel. +33.1.45.68.46.06, email: s.rubel@unesco.org)
Susanne Martin-Siegfried
(Tel. +33.1 45.68.42.75, email: s.martin-siegfried@unesco.org)
- **Year 2010 website:**
www.unesco.org/culture/dialogue

