

Dialogue among Civilizations

The Regional Forum on
Dialogue among Civilizations

Ohrid, 29 and 30 August 2003



REGIONAL FORUM
ON DIALOGUE AMONG
CIVILIZATIONS
Ohrid, 29-30 August 2003

Boris Trajkovski
Ko chiro Matsuura

Alfred Moisiu
Dragan Čović
Georgi Parvanov
Stjepan Mesić
Janes Drnovšek
Ferenc Mádl
Svetozar Marović

Giandomenico Picco
Arthur Schneier
Ilinka Mitreva
Kiro Gligorov
Zhelyu Zhelev
Harri Holkeri
Ahmed Jalali
Mongi Bousnina
Ara Abramian

Dialogue among Civilizations

*This book is dedicated to the memory of
President Boris Trajkovski,
who tragically died in an aircraft
accident on 26 February 2004*



*I send a universal appeal to silence the weapon
and let hope prevail in everyone's heart.
After all, we are all but guests on this Earth!*

Boris Trajkovski
1956-2004

Statements

Boris Trajkovski

Koïchiro Matsuura

* * *

Giandomenico Picco

Arthur Schneier

Ilinka Mitreva

Statements by Heads of State

Alfred Moisiu

Dragan Ćović

Georgi Parvanov

Stjepan Mesić

Janes Drnovšek

Ferenc Mádl

Svetozar Marović

Other Statements

Kiro Gligorov

Zhelyu Zhelev

Harri Holkeri

Ahmed Jalali

Mongi Bousnina

Ara Abramian

Elisabeth Rehn

Vladimir Petrovsky

Malgorzata Pawlisz

**Messages by Representatives
of Heads of State and Government**

Dialogue among Civilizations

The Regional Forum on
Dialogue among Civilizations
Ohrid, 29 and 30 August 2003

Organized by the Presidency of the
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the
United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

The 'Dialogue among Civilizations' series is directed by
Hans d'Orville, Director
Bureau of Strategic Planning

Edited by
FW (Russ) Russell
Bureau of Strategic Planning

The statement by President Svetozar Marovic was translated
by Boris Falatar, UNESCO Sector for External Relations and Cooperation

The organization of the Forum and this
publication were also supported with funds
provided by the Government of Japan,
the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and Ara Abramian.

The authors are responsible for the choice and the
presentation of the facts contained in this book and
for the opinions expressed therein, which are not
necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit
the Organization.

The designations employed and the presentation of
material throughout this publication do not imply
the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the
part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any
country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or
concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or
boundaries.

Published in 2004
by the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP France

Composed by JD impressions
Printed by JD impressions
90, rue Vergniaud
75013 Paris

© UNESCO 2004
Except where otherwise stated photos
© Hans d'Orville for UNESCO and
© FW (Russ) Russell for UNESCO
Back cover image © Jadran Adamovic

Printed in France

Foreword

The Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations was an exceptional event. It was a truly *regional* summit in which a large number of Heads of State of the region participated actively, thereby demonstrating their commitment to and endorsement of the principles underlying the dialogue among civilizations - understanding, forgiveness, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for the Other - so as to build a more peaceful future. The 'Message from Ohrid' is the policy statement agreed upon by all eight participating Heads of State and contains several concrete measures for further co-operation in the region in the areas of values education, cultural heritage and scientific collaboration. Indeed, it is an exemplary document blending vision, political declarations and commitments to undertake concrete actions. Both UNESCO's Executive Board and its General Conference, in a landmark resolution adopted at its 32nd session on 16 October 2003, fully endorsed and supported this text.

The Ohrid Forum was the high point in a process that I launched at the High-Level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe, held at UNESCO Headquarters on 5 April 2002. The Ohrid meeting crystallized the will of an entire region to move beyond intolerance, misunderstanding and conflict towards a brighter, more prosperous and peaceful future.

The proceedings of the Ohrid Forum are being published shortly after the tragic accident that took the lives of President Boris Trajkovski and several of his collaborators, some of whom had been closely involved

in its preparation and conduct. This has been a terrible loss, not only for the Macedonian people, but also for the region and the entire international community. President Trajkovski was a good friend of UNESCO - and of me personally - who epitomized our common values and the ideals of the Organization. A man of international stature and an ardent promoter of inter-state and intra-regional co-operation, he was the driving force behind the Ohrid Forum. This book, therefore, forms part of the abiding legacy of this outstanding leader. It is a testimony to his vision of and desire for a more peaceful future, not only for South-East Europe, but for the world as a whole.

We at UNESCO are committed to an active follow-up to the agreements reached in Ohrid, thereby ensuring that the dialogue among civilizations will be pursued in the region.

It is my honour to dedicate this publication to the memory of President Boris Trajkovski.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "K. Matsuura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ko chiro Matsuura

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

Contents

- 5 Foreword
- 13 The Message from Ohrid

PART I

- 19 Introduction

Statements

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--|
| 21 | Boris Trajkovski | <i>President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i> |
| 24 | Koïchiro Matsuura | <i>Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Science and Culture Organization</i> |
| 29 | Giandomenico Picco | <i>Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Dialogue among Civilizations</i> |
| 34 | Arthur Schneier | <i>President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation</i> |
| 38 | Ilinka Mitreva | <i>Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</i> |

Statements by Heads of State

- 43 **Alfred Moisiu** *President of Albania*
- 46 **Dragan Covic** *Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- 51 **Georgi Parvanov** *President of Bulgaria*
- 57 **Stjepan Mesic** *President of Croatia*
- 60 **Janes Drnovsek** *President of Slovenia*
- 61 **Ferenc Madl** *President of Hungary*
- 65 **Svetozar Marovic** *President of Serbia and Montenegro*

Other Statements

- 69 **Kiro Gligorov** *Former President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*
- 72 **Zhelyu Zhelev** *Former President of Bulgaria*
- 76 **Harri Holkeri** *Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)*
- 78 **Ahmed Jalali** *Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO and President of the General Conference of UNESCO*
- 80 **Mongi Bousnina** *Director-General, Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO)*
- 85 **Ara Abramian** *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Dialogue among Civilizations*
- 91 **Elisabeth Rehn** *Representative of the Stability Pact*
- 93 **Vladimir Petrovsky** *Chairman Dialogue among Civilizations Association and Former UN Under Secretary-General*
- 96 **Malgorzata Pawlisz** *President International Academy of Dialogue Among Cultures and Civilizations, Poland*

Messages by Representatives of Heads of State

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|--|
| 99 | Vladimir Voronin | <i>President of Moldova</i> |
| 102 | Aleksandar Kwasniewski | <i>President of Poland</i> |
| 104 | Ahmed Necdet Sezer | <i>President of Turkey</i> |
| 106 | George W. Bush | <i>President of the United States of America</i> |
| 109 | Ion Iliescu | <i>President of Romania</i> |
| 111 | Tassos Papadopoulos | <i>President of Cyprus</i> |
| 114 | Romano Prodi | <i>President of the European Commission</i> |
| 120 | Jacques Chirac | <i>President of France</i> |
| 123 | Johannes Rau | <i>President of Germany</i> |
| 126 | Rolandas Paksas | <i>President of Lithuania</i> |
| 128 | Jan Pieter Balkenende | <i>Prime Minister of the Netherlands</i> |
| 130 | Pascal Couchepin | <i>President of Switzerland</i> |

PART II

133 Reports of the Round Tables:

- 135 Peace and Stability
- 139 Democracy and Civil
- 143 Society Culture and Diversity

PART III

147 Background Papers:

- 149 The Potential for Dialogue in South-East Europe,
by Hans d'Orville, Director of UNESCO's Bureau of Strategic Planning
- 163 People, Ethics and Civilization
by Kiril Temkov, Professor, Faculty of Philosophy Skopje

- 167** The Concept and Implications of the Dialogue among Civilizations from a Macedonian Perspective
by Ferid Muhic, Professor, Faculty of Philosophy Skopje

ANNEXES

- 187** Programme
- 191** UNESCO General Conference – Resolution 47 on New Perspectives in UNESCO’s activities pertaining to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, including in particular follow-up to the New Delhi Ministerial Conference, unanimously adopted on 16 October 2003
- 195** UNESCO General Conference – Report of the Director-General to the General Conference new perspectives in UNESCO’s activities pertaining to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, including in particular follow-up to the New Delhi Ministerial Conference
(document 32 C/60, 7 October 2003)
- 201** UNESCO General Conference – 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
(Background document of the Secretariat 32 C/INF.15, 11 October 2003)

NOTES



Svetozar Marovic, President of Serbia and Montenegro; Ferenc Madl, President of the Republic of Hungary; Dragan Covic, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Boris Trajkovski, President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Alfred Moisiu, President of Albania; Georgi Parvanov, President of Bulgaria; Stjepan Mesic, President of Croatia; Janez Drnovsek, President of Slovenia

Message from Ohrid

**Adopted by the Regional Forum on
the Dialogue among Civilizations
Ohrid, 30 August 2003**

We, the participants in the Ohrid Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations – led by eight Heads of State of South-East Europe, commit ourselves to a culture of dialogue, tolerance and peace in order to advance the prosperity, well-being and mutual co-operation among the peoples and countries of the South-East Europe region.

The region, which is the cradle of European culture and civilization, has witnessed wars, destruction, and ethnic cleansing, not least over the past decade. Fear of the Other was always a step towards hatred and conflict. Now, a new era is dawning where dialogue, understanding and reconciliation are poised to replace the tribulations of history and where unity can be found in and nourished through the rich diversity and humanity of the peoples. Forgiveness will help rid the region from the biases and ignorances of the past. A new generation of democratically elected leaders in the region promises a more peaceful future given their dedication to dialogue and genuine co-operation.

We are determined to demonstrate that the region can turn itself, through its own strategies and effective means of dialogue and engagement, into a vibrant space where people can jointly rediscover the stimulating

wealth of differences, cultural exchanges and interaction as well as their multiple identities. The recognition of multiple identities of each individual is indeed a precondition for a constructive, practical and forward-looking dialogue apt to deepen and intensify the process of regional co-operation and stability.

The peoples of South-East Europe know how to live together, cooperate and exchange their precious knowledge with a view to solidifying freedom and democracy and upholding human rights. Free societies can be created only upon the existence of free individuals, who are sovereign in choosing their political status and in following their own economic, social and cultural development. Only under such circumstances can spirituality, religion, cultural and civilizational affiliation fully develop, whereby people can live together in harmony and in the pursuit of prosperity.

The Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2001, sets forth a useful framework for action by States, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. It also calls for interaction and dialogue among individuals and institutions in the spirit of inclusion and a collective desire to learn and to question assumptions. Such dialogue occurs at local, national, regional and international levels.

There are no superior or inferior civilizations. Neither are there superior or inferior races, languages and religions. We stress the equality of each cultural tradition and recognize the value of each civilizing experience as an invaluable and integral part of the commonly shared human experience. Cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indeed, diversity is not a threat.

We are convinced that dialogue represents a new paradigm of security, especially in a globalizing world with its manifold new challenges to individuals, communities and countries. A commitment to dialogue among civilizations is also a commitment against terrorism. Pursuing reconciliation and seeking security through dialogue requires a dynamic and pro-active civil society. It necessitates a mobilization of political leaders, parliamentarians, scholars, spiritual and religious leaders, media and non-governmental organizations as well as women and youth who all must play their roles and assume their responsibilities.

We believe in an active role of the private sector in promoting economic development of the region, which in turn contributes to its stability. The international business community is called upon to engage itself in activities reflecting its corporate social responsibility. In this

respect, we are encouraged by ongoing initiatives launched by the private sector.

We therefore consider it of paramount importance to work with vigor towards dialogue and co-operation in all spheres of life through joint projects in education, scientific co-operation, cultural heritage as well as media and communications. The dialogue of the future necessitates transformation from verbal commitment into moral action through a range of practical projects, building on the action taken since the High-level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe (Paris, April 2002) convened by UNESCO.

Peace and security in the region are of utmost importance for its stability and prosperity based on a continuing dialogue, regional co-operation and integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Education remains the most fundamental basis for promoting tolerance, understanding, dialogue, respect for diversity, human rights and democratic principles. These values and dimensions together make up what is called "quality education", which often entails a revision of school curricula and textbooks – and should build upon initiatives already undertaken by some countries in the region to eliminate stereotypes and misrepresentations of other cultures and identities.

Mutual respect of traditions and people will be possible when the matrix of values and the underlying spiritual and ethical foundations can influence education systems in different societies. We are conscious of the positive role that religion should play in this regard.

Fostering co-operation in higher education needs therefore to comprise support to a new generation of teachers and policy-makers of modern education. Education for pluralism can thus become a solid partner of political action for pluralism.

Development is a key question for the region. In that regard, scientific and technological co-operation is an important domain where progress can and must be made, in particular through the rebuilding of scientific networks and infrastructures and the building of competent institutional capacities and human resources in different disciplines.

The Ohrid Forum welcomes the proposal and offer by President Boris Trajkovski to convene and host in mid-2004 a conference of Ministers of Education and Science with the purpose of developing criteria for a universal network that could provide through education a continued development and promotion of dialogue among civilizations throughout the region and with the participation of experts from other regions.

The challenge for South-East European countries lies in associating cultural heritage with development policies and demonstrating how much this powerful symbol of a people's identity can become a unifying force for national and regional reconciliation. This may well serve as a foundation for a shared future.

Once respect for cultural heritage allows people to understand themselves, it will also be a key to understand others. 54 cultural and natural sites from the region are currently inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List, which attests to an enormous cultural richness and diversity. It is therefore imperative to develop a culture of conservation and preservation. This will help avoid that cultural heritage becomes a symbolic target of aggression and intentional destruction. The Ohrid Forum therefore endorses the adoption of a Declaration against the intentional destruction of cultural heritage, as proposed by the UNESCO Director-General, which is before the 32nd session of UNESCO's General Conference.

The Ohrid Forum welcomes the project Cultural Routes in Southeast Europe and endorses the proposal and offer by President Georgi Parvanov to convene and host in 2004 a meeting of Heads of State of all countries of South-East Europe to be devoted to the rich cultural and historical heritage of the region.

The Ohrid Forum equally endorses the suggestion by Chairman Dragan Covic that the Mostar Bridge be reopened in 2004 in the presence of the Heads of State of the region.

Channels of communication must remain open and flexible in order to allow fostering mutual understanding and co-operation among people. The new era of information society requires new generations with solid skills in information technology, which today plays an important role in bringing cultures and people together. The use of new techniques such as e-learning and distance education is contributing to wider access to knowledge and information. Educational systems need to be adapted to create a new computer-literate generation.

The media are called to play a particularly crucial role in helping tear down barriers in the minds of people. Strengthening independent media and its professionalism, upholding freedom of the press and of expression, and promoting the right of access to information and knowledge are major challenges for South-East Europe. Apart from serving as channels of information, the media constitute also forceful instruments through which new identities can be constructed and mediated.

Our common task transcends the need to rebuild the region and bolster its confidence, competence and trust after a period of conflict, as we move to a common and newly enlarged and united Europe. Civilizations and cultures will mutually enrich themselves and help shape a new world where justice, equal development and eliminating poverty will curb possibilities for future conflicts.

During the Ohrid Forum three panels developed recommendations on the themes of “Peace and Stability”, “Democracy and Civil Society” and “Culture and Diversity”. The results of their deliberations will be a valuable input for concrete action in the future.

We express our sincere appreciation to President Boris Trajkovski, the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koichiro Matsuura, and Rabbi Arthur Schneier and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation for having convened this important Forum. Our gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, for his support and encouragement and for the participation of his Personal Representative for the Dialogue among Civilizations. We equally appreciate the participation of DaimlerChrysler and their valuable contributions to the Forum, along with those of the Governments of Japan, Austria, Liechtenstein, Norway, Qatar and San Marino, of UNESCO, UNDP, the United Nations, the European Union and the Appeal of Conscience Foundation.

Drawing lessons from history, we agree that reconciliation is the path for our common future. Dialogue must become a new refrain that will echo throughout the region and the world at large.

Part I

Introduction



Boris Trajkovski, Macedonian President and Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Boris Trajkovski

President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

I am honoured to address the participants to this Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, which is being held in Ohrid, the Republic of Macedonia, and to wish you a warm-hearted welcome to this country, which throughout its centuries-long history has strongly marked the cultural heritage of humanity. Welcome to this spiritual city of Ohrid, which for several millennia has been one of the centres of European culture. This city represents a pantheon of Macedonian memory. You need only to glimpse this soil to discover the prehistoric Great Mother, described by the legends as the mother of light and sun.

The magnificent constructions of ancient times, of early Christian times and of the odysseys of several empires, religions and cultures of this place have opened the way for universalism and humanism at one of the first universities founded in this legendary city by Saint Clement and Saint Naum of Ohrid, the disciples of Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius who in 1980, 11 centuries after their deaths, were proclaimed patrons of Europe. These disciples, in medieval times, expanded the horizons for a civilization of love and a need for unity.

Let the civilization of love and need for unity be my welcome to all of you, as there is great symbolism in the fact that this regional gathering is being held here today.

Every citizen of my country is proud to have you here, in this cradle of humanism which for centuries has borne the magical name of Macedonia, and believes in the civilization of love and gives clear proof of it. Despite the hard times we went through in 2001, when the world media used to call us "Macedonia, or the threatened ideal", the fact that you are all present here today and that we have been chosen by the United Nations and UNESCO, upon my initiative, to host this Forum, proves that this country may be the model for harmony in a pan-humanist civilization that must never be threatened.

We should not forget the reality and philosophy that wherever there is killing, we are all being killed! The multicultural, multiconfessional, multilinguistic reality, has allowed the people of Macedonia to become fully aware of the necessity for dialogue. The millennia-long tradition of co-operation and cohabitation has turned its citizens into true artists, promoting civilized standards while trying to cope with differences and resolving even the most radical conflicts of interest.

Ancient legends preserved until today, from early Christianity and the beginnings of Slavic literature, testify to the crucial importance of dialogue in these areas. The act of accepting the Jews, after their exodus from the Pyrenean Peninsula, in 1492, was neither new nor unusual to people from this land, who in that period already had 2000 years of experience of inter-civilizational dialogue. One of the oldest universities, the Saint Clement's school, which dates from the 10th century, has been nurturing the spirit of understanding and co-operation among different cultures. Only in this country can you find a church from the 11th century, a mosque from the 15th century, a synagogue and a dervish lodge standing side by side.

The highest social values and ideals derive from the postulate on the dignity of each human being in the spirit of our own historical tradition and the commitments explicitly stated in the "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations". Each individual is and should be respected as a person. He is the pillar and holder of human rights and freedoms. He is the cause and reason for the realization of all the freedom and dignity of the human world in general. A free society can be created only upon the existence of free individuals, who are sovereign in choosing their political status and in following their own economic, social and cultural development.

The imperative of affirming the principal of dialogue is more present than ever before. It is a fact that the human race is living dispersed in numerous cultural contexts and civilizing models leading to common ideals. It is also a fact that hierarchical relations that would put some above others, or that would affirm some and discredit others cannot and must not be established. There are no superior or inferior cultures, there are no superior or inferior civilizations, and there are no superior or inferior races, languages or religions. This is because there are no superior or inferior human beings.

This is the reason why we must accept the essential equality of each cultural tradition and recognize the value of each civilizing experience as an invaluable and integral part of universal human values. Common tasks can be achieved and the highest ideals of the modern world followed, not through assimilation but through integration, and not through force but through dialogue. This is the reason why dialogue is the only way forward for mankind, who needs to live, aware of the starry sky above him and the moral law within him.

Unfortunately, dialogue is not the only way in which cultures and civilizations have communicated throughout history up until today. We are

witnessing violence, aggression, wars and terrorism both at the regional and global levels. Undoubtedly, South-East Europe is still one of the most vulnerable areas. But then, the world would be an idyllic place if it only had this region to deal with! The world's history book has no pages on peace. There is no chapter without violence and wars! Even today, our reality shows unilateral and arbitrary usage of force.

I wish that this Forum would come up with an appeal different from the refrain that "Carthage must be destroyed!" I wish that we all together change it into "Carthage must be saved!" No Carthage should be ever reduced to ruins, no foundations of any culture should be shattered and no nation should ever ravage the soil of other civilizations or nations so that nothing can ever grow in it! I wish for our appeal to become a new refrain that will echo throughout the world and become a call for dialogue.

To avoid this vital demand for dialogue among civilizations remaining just another piece of paper, and to turn it from a verbal resolution into a moral revolution, I would suggest organizing, together with the Director-General of UNESCO, a conference of Ministers of Education and Science of all UNESCO member states this time next year. The basic objective of this conference would be to set the criteria for a universal education network that would provide for continued development and promotion of dialogue among the civilizations of the world. The imperative for true equality among cultures and mutual respect for all traditions and people will be possible only when the matrix of values and the spiritual and ethical foundations we strive for become the basis of educational systems in different societies in the world.

Finally, let us, from this ancient city of Ohrid, send a universal appeal to silence the weapons and let hope prevail in everyone's heart. After all, we are all but guests on this Earth!

Thank you for your attention and allow me to open the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations in Ohrid.

Ko chiro Matsuura

Director-General of UNESCO

I am delighted to bid you all welcome on the occasion of this most important Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations.

I should like before all else to congratulate President Boris Trajkovski most warmly on having taken this propitious initiative, and for having chosen so magnificent a historic city as Ohrid to host the event. The goals of this Forum can, I feel, find a particularly apt expression in this site, one that was, as early as 1980, placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. We have been given the opportunity to meet in this country in which cultural diversity and pluralism are experienced as an everyday reality by all citizens: at the heart of this magnificent region, the Balkans, in which the first vestiges of artistic creation date back to the sixth millennium BC.

Thank you, Mr President, for having invited us here today.

The Forum which brings us together today represents a follow-up to the Presidential Round Table which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, in September 2000, and which, on the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit, launched the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. In November 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 56/6 setting forth a "Global Agenda for the Dialogue among Civilizations" and designating UNESCO as a major actor for follow-up purposes.

Our meeting therefore fits into a continuing process of reflection that had already been initiated at several international meetings held in these past two years. I have in mind in particular the international conference held in Vilnius (Lithuania) in April 2001, the Tokyo-Kyoto (Japan) Conference in July-August 2001, or again the international symposium on "Civilizations in the Eye of the Other" at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in December 2001. Finally, just a few weeks ago, in New Delhi (India), the Conference on the "Dialogue among Civilizations" brought together over 50 ministers, as well as numerous intellectuals, consultants and experts from all regions of the world. On that occasion the New Delhi Declaration was adopted, opening up new prospects and calling for new approaches, particularly in the spheres of values, education, science and technology.

The peoples of South-East Europe have suffered immensely throughout the past century, and again recently when terrible conflicts raged during the 1990s. The century that has just dawned has generated a new wave of hope, one that must be nurtured and consolidated through dialogue. On my visits to the countries of the region during the past three

years, I have been struck by the sincere desire of each and everyone to live in harmony within the different communities and with all neighbouring peoples. This is also the goal that the eight Member States of the South-East European Co-operation Process (SEECP), here represented at the highest level, have set themselves. Pockets of ethnic tension still persist in this region of the Balkans, as we are reminded by the hostage-taking in the vicinity of Skopje.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I also bid welcome to all the Presidents of the countries of the region and to the personal representatives of those who have not been able to attend. Their presence testifies to their shared commitment to a peaceful future, one founded on tolerance, respect for others and cultural diversity, which are prerequisites for the stability so ardently desired by all.

May they all be assured of UNESCO's full support in their resolve to strengthen and to enhance their mutual co-operation, more particularly in the spheres of education, science, culture and communication.

This Forum represents in my view a follow-up – one destined to carry the process a stage further – to the High-Level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe, held at UNESCO Headquarters in April 2002, which I co-chaired with the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr Walter Schwimmer. Today, it is the Heads of State who will be building on the work begun on that occasion at ministerial level, a development I can but applaud.

The presence of ministers and senior representatives of countries of South-East Europe, but also representatives of Member States of the European Union and other Western countries, together with representatives of major regional and international institutions and organizations, including the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, provides a precious opportunity to support the countries of the region in their efforts to nurture an intraregional dialogue, and to develop such co-operation bilaterally and multilaterally. For we are all aware that stability in this region is the guarantee of a far broader stability, extending throughout Europe and even beyond.

As regards its co-operation with the countries of South-East Europe, UNESCO has developed a strategic approach, which was adopted last year by the High-Level Conference to which I have just referred. Indeed, it is within this framework that our operational action in the region is now being structured, and that a series of specific projects focused on priority areas are today being implemented. I am moreover happy to note that the

Task Force I set up within the Secretariat is continuing to coordinate the activities conducted by the Organization in South-East Europe, and that partnerships with the private sector have been identified for financing priority schemes, namely schemes providing for co-operation between countries and institutions in the region – hence, dialogue between neighbours.

The channels of communication must therefore remain wide open, in order to permit free-flowing contacts among different groups, thereby fostering mutual understanding and co-operation. Ensuring the independence of the media, freedom of the press and of expression, the right to information, but also media education – these are a major challenge for the region, one for which UNESCO is mobilizing its expertise and financial resources. For, in addition to being essential information resources, the media provide powerful tools with which to forge new identities.

Education is nevertheless undoubtedly the most powerful lever for promoting tolerance, understanding, dialogue, respect for diversity, human rights and democratic principles, as President Trajkovski has stressed. It is these values and dimensions, as a composite whole, that UNESCO terms the “quality of education”. It frequently requires a radical revision of curricula and textbooks, in particular in regard to the critical presentation of the history of intercultural relations and relations with neighbouring countries. Strengthening co-operation in higher education therefore means for the region introducing and entrenching such changes, and fostering the emergence of a new generation of teachers and administrators for a truly modern education system.

For educational policies must ensure that cultural diversity becomes the driving force of social cohesion. The systematic effort made by education systems to strengthen democratic citizenship and respect for human rights is an integral, key element of it. Education for pluralism thus becomes a partner able to put considerable weight behind political action to promote pluralism.

Scientific and technological co-operation is another major area in which progress can and must be made. Today's world calls for an ever greater volume of scientific advice based on analysis, understanding, sharing and thinking ahead. In South-East Europe, the reconstruction and development of scientific networks and infrastructures entails both enhanced institutional capacity-building and human resources development. In order to bolster regional endeavours, UNESCO is encouraging concrete co-operation between European institutions and

those in other regions, particularly in the form of exchange schemes for researchers, with a special focus on women and young scientists.

I should like to conclude this panorama of the various fields in which UNESCO nurtures and supports the efforts being made in South-East Europe by focusing on culture and cultural heritage. More than 50 cultural and natural sites located in this region are included in UNESCO's World Heritage List – a fact that testifies amply to the wealth and diversity of its heritage. When recent history has shown how far the heritage of the Other can become the symbolic target of aggression, it has become a matter of urgency to develop a culture of conservation of and respect for the heritage, regardless of its – necessarily diverse – origins. For if cultural heritage enables peoples to understand themselves, it is also a key to understanding others.

During 2002, proclaimed “United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage”, UNESCO chose to place the spotlight on the dimensions of reconciliation and development inherent in that heritage.

As an instrument of peace and reconciliation, the heritage enables us to gain an awareness of our multiple roots and affiliations. It is also a factor of development since a harmonious, integrated approach to heritage management enables a nation's natural and cultural heritage to be turned to optimal account, not least in economic terms. It is therefore my hope that this Forum will strengthen specific commitments and activities towards this goal.

We have gathered here in order to make the dialogue among cultures and civilizations a broad, inclusive process, and to highlight its relevance to contemporary challenges. I have no doubt that the Declaration you adopt at the close of this meeting will point the way to new goals, and serve to evaluate the consistency and complementarity of the different regional and subregional approaches, while at the same time identifying the true obstacles to dialogue, in order to overcome them more effectively.

Building true cultural pluralism is one of the major goals of intercultural dialogue. This entails abandoning the old antagonisms and fostering the emergence of a common culture born of diversity. Differences must not indeed be ignored, but rather turned to account and recognized as a positive factor in the development of individuals and of the community. Such constructive pluralism fosters the quest for compromise through dialogue. It is aimed, in a democratic framework, at securing solutions that are acceptable to everyone. Dialogue does not mean negotiation. Rather, it means openness, a readiness to respond to a whole range of situations and points of view.

Any lasting, sustainable undertaking aimed at stabilizing and rebuilding the Balkans requires the unreserved commitment of all to the democratic principles of respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Together, you are going to make that commitment.

Together, you are going to succeed.

Giandomenico Picco

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

Allow me first to convey to you the greetings of the United Nations Secretary-General. The United Nations has recently suffered much by the hand of those who are pursuing a clash of civilizations. Dialogue among civilizations is the long-term answer to terrorism.

When years ago I was asked by Kofi Annan to pursue this idea of a dialogue among civilizations, I encountered different reactions. Some discarded it outright by defining it as a “luxury item” which they could not afford, for other more important matters had to be attended to. Others belittled it as one of the ideas whose time had not yet come.

This in itself proved to me that the case for a real dialogue has not yet been made successfully. Yes, many around the world heeded the call in academia, in some religious quarters and in some political quarters as well. But clearly, the critical mass has not yet been reached.

The issue is one that we here know well. We do not have to convince ourselves. We are here because we believe in the relevance of dialogue. I would submit that we have to take the issue of dialogue among civilizations to a new level of political discourse.

Can dialogue become a real tool of international diplomacy? Can it become the ideological answer to what I call strategic terrorism?

Much of the confrontation we have seen in this world is based on the perception of one’s own identity. To a large extent it would seem that many believe they have only one identity and once that is spelled out, it becomes an element of separation from others. Entire ideologies and literatures are based on the misconception that each of us is the depositary and the carrier of one identity. But is it not more correct and true that all of us possess several identities?

Many years ago, in the Middle East, in circumstances that I hope would never be replicated for anybody, I found myself blindfolded and constrained, so to speak. Transported like a package by car and by foot, I ended up in a location to this day unknown to me. I was whisked into what I perceived to be a house or a building of sorts and I was made to sit. As my blindfold was lifted I saw in front of me two masked men.

It was probably a correct assumption that their identities may have been somewhat different from mine. We had not gone to the same schools, likely we had not shared the same readings nor the same places of worship. Our outlook on life was surely quite different.

One of my first sentences was to ask them if they had any children. They showed a degree of surprise, for the business at hand had not much to do with family matters nor we had we any previous acquaintance.

Indeed, our respective main identities were different; anybody could have come out with a long list of what separated us. But what good could that have done?

If it turned out that we both had children, that made us both parents:

We had one identity at least in common. That is where we started from. That was the beginning of the liberation of the western hostages in Lebanon.

Multiple identities are not only a reality, but a useful reality that we sometimes forget. If we look at what we have in common, perhaps it would be easier to get over what we do not have in common.

Some political cultures seem to emphasize what separates us, as if we all had only one identity. To recognize how many identities we have is the first step. Multiple identities allow us to find a common ground with almost anybody; no matter how small that common ground, it is surely better than none at all.

The myth of single identities has to be revisited; this myth is at the origin of so many social and political theories. How can we allow a personality to be monopolized by one identity? How can I be a member of my own family and nothing else? What about my region, my country, my profession, my artistic inclination, my culture, my status as father and son at the same time, as husband and most of all as member of the human family? Why do I have to choose, when I can be all that at the same time, because all those identities make me what I am?

On the other hand, there is an identity that is mine alone and nobody else's, for all of us are unique. If we were to choose only one identity and paradoxically we chose our individual uniqueness, does it follow that we should go to war with each other because we are unique and different from each other?

I feel uneasy speaking of dialogue among groups defined by their religious identities or even cultural or national lines of divide. Because that dialogue starts from the very concept of what divides us instead of what unites us. More than that, it seems to me that within each of the groups we define as actors in dialogue, be they religious, cultural or ethnic, there are good people and bad people; our being good and bad is not usually determined by our identity, but by our choice of interpreting our identities.

If dialogue is for the purpose of enlarging the common denominator, then I may have more in common with a good man ten thousand miles away than with my immediate neighbour, perhaps not such a good man.

Some may say that certain political and religious traditions are inclined to interpret diversity as a threat or in some other negative sense. Some may say that exclusion is inherent in some religions and in political ideologies. But I would like to ask: do we create an artificial divide by focusing on the differences across religious, ethnic or cultural lines? By doing this, we may even risk increasing the gaps.

It seems to me that the real divide across which dialogue has to be pursued is mainly that between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who perceive diversity as an element of betterment and growth. We will surely find both kinds of people of every religion and political affiliation.

This is the divide across which dialogue is to be pursued in my view

I have never had any difficulty with communication simply because my interlocutor was of a different religion, or ethnic group or civilization. The difficulty comes when he or she perceives that our being different means we are enemies.

The reason, of course, is that while it is easier to speak of dialogue across religious or civilizational divides, we have already divided the world that way ourselves. We have already created a mindset for ourselves that looks at these divides as problems or potential problems.

Boundaries are first set in the mind and then in society. The nation's boundaries have at least partially been overcome by alliances and open trade, by common endeavours and jointly tackling global challenges. How can we change mindsets that look at religious, civilizational and ethnic boundaries as separations?

It seems to me that common endeavour - working together - is the answer. At the peak of the troubles in Northern Ireland, a man who would eventually be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize began to take young men from both religious communities and put them together to re-construct, I mean to physically rebuild, the houses that bombs had destroyed. Working together was the first step that allowed John Hume to eventually bring the parties to an agreement. Common endeavour, to be carried out irrespective of the sense of identity of each participant, is the path to real dialogue. Working together from the grass roots up and from the top down is the practical answer to the mindset that makes us perceive diversity as a threat.

It will be said that one cannot work together until dialogue has been successful. I beg to differ. There will always be at least a few ready to go first where others have not gone and thus begin a common endeavour when the conditions do not seem ripe. They may encounter obstacles of all kinds and they may even be struck down by those who need an enemy. But others will

then follow and pursue the common endeavour further. They are the vanguard, the commandos, and the heroes who are fully aware that nothing impacts our world as deeds do: no theory or word, no preacher or scholar alone is enough to raise hopes and inspire others and thus write the future like our heroes, like our heroes of dialogue. Sergio de Mello was such a hero.

They wait not for the conditions to be perfect, for the times to be ripe; when it comes to leading and carrying hearts and minds, the action of the few has more value than the reflection and caution of many.

We will not win the battle for the hearts and mind of our youth or those who feel unjustly treated by theories alone. We will only win the battle by our deeds.

The balance of powers has been at least partially superseded by a world of asymmetry. In such a world, even the small may affect the large in many dimensions.

Only few decades ago, a financial crisis in a small country would not have affected all the world's markets; a contagious disease within one human being would not have created a world epidemic and a forgotten failed state would not have provoked a global security crisis. By now, all this has happened.

Many would not like to hear this but we are all very vulnerable. All this is daily routine for us now because we live in an asymmetric world. The might of the mighty is no longer sufficient, the wealth of the rich may not be enough and the knowledge of the learned may need to spread further to avoid the world from going mad.

Endeavours and projects that embrace people across divides of all kinds are the recipe, no matter how hopeless, no matter how hard, no matter how small our practical efforts are. We can make those who think differently work together.

Perhaps we need a new manifesto. A manifesto of reconciliation - an antiterrorist manifesto - if you like. A manifesto to oppose the call to arrogance and murder by those who seem to need an enemy at all costs.

If the key indicator for a successful democracy is respect for minorities, the key indicator for the success of a dialogue is the lack of arrogance on the part of the parties involved. In this case, arrogance is believing oneself to be in sole possession of the truth.

Many years ago in a place that could have been anyplace, I listened to a conversation between an elderly gentleman and a young boy. The old man was teaching the bits of wisdom he had acquired over so many years. He warned the young boy that the greatest enemy at times may come from within his own family and with it the greatest pain.

There are those on today's political scene, groups or individuals, who appear to search for an enemy as a requirement to define who they are. The need for an enemy is natural to those who perceive diversity as a threat. They need an enemy because they have not much positive to offer. I would submit: they need an enemy because without it they would be unable to project a vision that many would follow.

Let me end by quoting a passage from *Crossing the Divide, Dialogue among Civilizations*:

“Whether we are moving towards a clash of civilizations or towards greater human solidarity against those who murder innocents only because they are different, is really up to each of us. The choice is neither predetermined nor unavoidable; that is why each of us individually chooses and takes personal responsibility. We can let the small minority take over and throw us into continuous conflict at all levels; or we can enlarge the coalition of those who respect each other's dignity and common humanity, who value the life of our family members as well as the life of our fellow human beings on the other side of the planet. We are the majority; we come from all corners of the world; we are the builders; all can see our work where peace prevails. We believe in the greatness of the human spirit because we offer positive values and need no enemy to sustain our beliefs.

Our children can do better than we. They can go where we have not gone, they can achieve what we have failed to do, and they can discover what we do not even know exists. They can give new forms to human solidarity and enlarge the common denominator of human values. Many will cross the divide – over and over again, until there will be many more bridges and no more walls.”

Arthur Schneier

President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation

On behalf of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, Cardinal McCarrick, the Archbishop of Washington, and Reverend Kishkovsky, a leading Orthodox Christian leader in the US, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the participants in the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations in Ohrid. Our interfaith foundation concerned with religious freedom, human rights and tolerance is pleased to be one of the three co-sponsors, together with President Trajkovski and the Director-General of UNESCO, of this significant gathering for South-Eastern Europe and beyond.

Prime Minister Crvenkovski just asked us to remember a great public servant of the international community, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who went to Baghdad to build peace. He and other members of the United Nations staff were cut down and their lives snuffed out.

We are gathered here in a sombre mood in the shadows of the carnage that has taken place in the past few weeks in Baghdad, Jerusalem, Djakarta, Bombay and New York on 11 September 2001. Let us remember the victims of those terrible events and all of the victims of terror and violence in many nations that you, by your presence, represent at this conference today. The question that confronts us is: "Are we naïve?" Indeed, can there be a dialogue among civilizations, or are we doomed to the conflict among civilizations predicted by the doomsayers? It is a real question. Can there be dialogue or are we headed for the destruction of civilization?

We who are assembled here today are in defiance of the would-be wreckers of the international order who inflict the scourges of violence and terrorism upon humanity. Let us pledge in memory of those who perished, the innocent men, women and children, that we will do everything in our power to promote dialogue and coexistence and nurture reconciliation among peoples and nations that once feared and hated each other.

Permit me to be personal. I am a survivor of 9/11. I saw innocent men, women and children whose lives were snuffed out in a massacre caused by terrorists using modern technology; citizens of 83 nations of the world. I will never forget standing in Yankee Stadium together with 30,000 men, women and children, husbands and wives of those who just vanished. Trying to give them comfort were religious leaders of New York. What can one say to people who are still clinging to hope of a reunion, but were ready to settle just for the recovery of some human remains; a finger, a hand, a ring?

I am also a survivor of the Holocaust. When I was a young child in Vienna, I experienced ethnic cleansing, which has become a familiar phenomenon in many parts of the world. I fled in 1939 to Budapest and after the Nazis occupied Hungary in 1944, many members of my family were deported to Auschwitz - it will be the 60th anniversary of that event next year - never to return. Hitler, with his harmful idea of the master race, brought death to tens of millions and destruction to a continent in order to impose a New World Order. Those of you in the region of the Balkans are still suffering from the consequences of that Nazi era. Nazi domination of Europe was brief, a mere 12 years. But those were years of such frightful devastation and disaster that they seemed like an eternity in hell.

In Budapest as a youth, I also experienced another New World Order that unleashed the tyranny of Stalin and reports of gulags. Seventy years of communism brought about a spiritual devastation of the Russian people and many of the nations represented here today. It was a period of terror and fear. Thank God, today you are free. You are not afraid. You can speak. You can worship. You can build. And you are not told what to do by despots and their followers.

Ten years ago, my dear friends, the peoples of South-Eastern Europe were in the midst of brutal ethnic conflicts. I still remember when the Appeal of Conscience Foundation gathered in 1992 on the neutral ground of Switzerland for the first time Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church; Rais Ulema Selimoski, who is now in Skopje but was then Rais Ulema in Sarajevo, and Archbishop Pujlic, who is now Cardinal of Sarajevo and my brother Selimovski, who is right here in this room today, as are Cardinal McCarrick, Father Kishkovsky and Mrs Schneier, we are all here as witnesses of that event 11 years ago.

What a wrenching experience of finger-pointing, of scapegoating and of accusations: so many mosques destroyed, so many churches destroyed, so many women raped, so many people killed. So many families were dislodged from their homes and broken. It was not an easy encounter, but we had enough moral responsibility to take a stand and say: "Enough of the killing! Stop the killing! Stop the War!" We also made an important statement that is as applicable today as it was then; a crime perpetrated in the name of religion is the greatest crime against religion. That is a very relevant statement during this new scourge of terrorism facing mankind.

A question that we should ask ourselves is: "How does one recover from all of this?" We are trying. Distinguished presidents, I have been to most of your countries and have seen that you are trying to recover socially and economically. You are trying to do the work of reconciliation; to unite

the people, because the Balkans have always been multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious. How do you take this home and create within it a fabric of unity and diversity as we have succeeded in doing, although not fully, in the land of immigrants, my new home, the United States of America? I emphasize that we have evolved; that we had our own problems, but thank God, live in America today with the fullest ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. We believe in “live and let live” and that is the challenge all of you have.

So how do we recover? Education, education, education. And something else that is very important. You know that when God was ready to create man and endowed man with the capacity of memory, the angels came and said to the Lord, “You cannot do this to a human being. You also have to give man the capacity to forget. Otherwise life would be unbearable; the loss of loved ones, the pain and suffering on a daily basis.” God listened to the angels, so he gave us the capacity of memory, but he also gave us the ability to forget and to move on.

As survivors of those New Orders that tried to destroy your fabric of unity, my advice to you is: “Don't be paralysed.” Remember we must or we are doomed to repeat, but don't be paralysed by past horrors. Move on, look forward and build. Don't permit yourself to be locked in with recriminations and finger pointing for the past. Remember we must, but we move forward. As the Psalmist says, “walk through the valley of the shadow of death”, but don't remain in it. That's the challenge.

Unfortunately, we in the older generation have to rid ourselves of the biases of the past. Yet no child is born knowing how to hate. And this is why I was very encouraged to read just the other day that in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is a special commission to examine the textbooks in schools and to eliminate any defamatory passages or any distortion of history. To make certain they do not dehumanize or scapegoat the stranger, textbooks need to be re-written, and UNESCO, stressing education, is certainly the arm of the United Nations to accomplish that. In the preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO, it clearly states that ignorance is a cause of mistrust. Textbooks need to be rewritten to reflect democracy, pluralism and the rule of law, rather than narrow ethnic chauvinism and triumphalism.

We must stand on guard against nationalism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism that are still with us as remnants and vestiges of a horrible past. The Director-General spoke about the importance of the mass media. Yes, we agree that newspapers, radio, television and the Internet must be mobilized as part of this effort. Hate and vitriol have no place in the print

media or the airwaves and must be exposed. The challenge facing you is not merely to build an economy or an infrastructure, but to move the walls that have been built between neighbour and neighbour.

My friends, as a religious leader, as a rabbi, let me conclude by quoting to you a passage from the Bible. We tend to think that only our generation had to face crises. This is not true. Remember Noah from the flood? Well, that civilization was filled with hatred and xenophobia, hatred of the “Other”. As a result of that evil, we saw the destruction of Noah's civilization. But God made a covenant with Noah and his family and put them and the animals on an arc. Then God made a promise - and the promise is the rainbow — that there will never be such destruction again. Therefore, the next time you look at a rainbow, you will see the colours are intact; green, blue, red. And we are speaking about mankind as a cultural diversity that will survive if we maintain identity, culture and faith and blend into one rainbow of peace, unity and diversity. That is the challenge.

We call for an end to the destruction of human beings as well as an end to the destruction of mosques, churches and synagogues. On that point, we are proud that the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution at the initiative of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation for the protection of religious sites worldwide. Let us be strong and of good courage in our mission; may we not close our eyes to the tragedies we witness or close our ears to the suffering of humanity. Let us pledge ourselves to a strengthening of trust, to respecting the “Other” and toward the achievement of peace of mind, peace of heart and peace in the world. And the name of God, His name is peace.

Salaam, Shalom to all of you.

Ilinka Mitreva

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia

It is my special honour and pleasure, on behalf of my government and on my own behalf, to bid you welcome and wish you a pleasant stay in the ancient city of Ohrid, the cultural treasure of Macedonia and a UNESCO world heritage site. It gives me particular pleasure that we can share this spirit of openness and hospitality, which has always marked Ohrid and Macedonia, with all of you on this Forum with a profoundly humane and noble mission, deepening the always present and living dialogue of civilizations as the only way to secure the most precious values of human kind: peace, mutual understanding and tolerance. I believe that Macedonia and Ohrid are in many ways the true venue for such an exchange of opinions, which perhaps deviates from classic political issues treated at international gatherings, but it is an exchange of opinions that involves the entire weight of the problems that the world is facing today and will be facing in future. Your presence at this gathering testifies to that and, in that respect, I would like to express the gratitude of my government for your active contribution to the success of this Forum. Special gratitude, naturally, goes to UNESCO.

One feels that at the millennium threshold all of us live between the prematurely promised and unattainable "end of history" on one hand, and the heralded "clash of civilizations" on the other. The hopes and enthusiasm of the free world have been awakened with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and they were replaced with astonishment, disbelief and concern before the sombre images of September 11, though historically speaking, for a brief period of time, we, on the Balkans, also lived through our part of the Golgotha. These regions, which are the cradle of European culture and civilization, witnessed wars, destruction, and ethnic cleansing; confinement in narrow national and religious frameworks where fear of the other is the first step towards hatred. At that time, many predicted that the clash of civilizations had already started here, at our gates, in the Balkans.

However, such apocalyptic predictions did not come true. The spirit of our people resisted being involved in the trap which, disguised behind the veil of belonging to different civilizations, makes deadly enemies out of ancient neighbours. Of course, it is an unforgivable political mistake to neglect the possible threats and dangers and believe that the forces of destruction are forever locked in Pandora's box.

The Ohrid gathering is yet another message that people in this part of Europe wish to and can live together. They can cooperate and exchange the precious knowledge with which their culture and environment has abundantly provided them. That is our great mission: to show that our region can turn from a potential zone of conflict of civilizations into a world leader in the process of rediscovering the wealth of differences, cultural exchange and intertwining. In fact, respecting and revering the culture of the other is the best way to confirm the receptiveness and wealth of one's own culture.

The continuous process of deepening and intensifying regional co-operation is yet further proof of the necessity of comprehensive communication. It is the right path. And it is the choice of my government which will continue all the necessary activities and initiatives in that direction. There is an obvious need to include all the segments of civil society in joint co-operation. The Balkans have gone through a lot of tribulations in history; however, it is wrong to say that we have been divided throughout history. We must underline the aspects of our past that have brought us together and left an essential mark on the culture of mutual respect. Of course, we are not speaking of historical amnesia or reshaping grim historical episodes; it is simply liberation from the shackles of unproductive historicism that always sees itself as the victim and the other as the executioner.

This country, with its history, its authentic and everyday experience of shared life and tolerance and its modern position as a respectable member of the international community, makes a real contribution to mutual understanding, dialogue and intertwining of different civilizations and cultures. There are churches and mosques, and synagogues and ancient sites standing side by side under this sky. This is where main roads connected the East and the West. We see our life on the crossroads of civilizations as an advantage and a treasure rather than as a curse and wretched fate. Thanks to such understanding, our people have managed, in spite of all differences and attempts to manipulate national or religious feelings, to build permanent relationships on shared respect. The way in which this country faced the challenge in 2001 shows that there is only one solution to problems: dialogue. The culture of dialogue in our country is one of our most genuine values. In the spirit of dialogue and understanding, my government has undertaken all necessary measures not only to pave the way for the future in the shared homeland of all its citizens, but also to heal the wounds from the past, where a special place is given to the programme of renewing and reconstructing monuments of Christian and Islamic provenance damaged by the military actions of 2001.

The Republic of Macedonia is part of the big family of free and democratic countries which sees the future of the world in the mutual intermingling of different civilizations and cultures and their material and spiritual values. We shall not accept mechanical joining, assimilation or cultural uniformity; however, we shall also not accept a world with walls and borders between different civilizations for the simple reason that those walls would go through the live tissue of our memory, our present and the future of our children. No man is an island. Civilizations are even less capable of living and existing separated from one another by the seas of ignorance, fear and hatred. We in Macedonia and on the Balkans know something about this. It is the knowledge of the inevitability of intermingling and mutual enriching of civilizations that must be our joint and recognizable contribution towards the creation of a united Europe, and also towards the shaping of a new world where justice, equal development and the elimination of poverty will reduce the possibilities of abusing civilizational differences and turning them into fuel for hatred.

The twenty-first century, which Andre Malraux predicted would be the "age of spirituality", poses enormous challenges for all of us, individually and together. With due respect for and recognition of all the civilizations inextricably incorporated into the common code of humanity, we are faced with an obligation to help the relatively new civilization which we share. This civilization is genuinely syncretic and includes all cultural horizons: it shares the value systems shaping the future of society and of each individual. It is the civilization of freedom, democracy and human rights. Only in such a system can any spirituality, religion, cultural and civilizational affiliation fully develop and live together in harmony, away from the winds driving them towards the forces of conflict and self-destruction.

Let this gathering in Ohrid drive our mission to bring together our nations and cultures in the name of the eternal tenets of humanism - a mission which fills us with pride and faith in the future.



Boris Trajkovski, Macedonian President; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO; Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation; Giandomenico Picco, Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the Dialogue among Civilizations and Alfred Moisiu, President of Albania

Statements by Heads of State

Alfred Moisiu

President of Albania

It gives me great pleasure to attend this regional Forum where the important and current issues under discussion are the dialogue through cultures and civilizations.

My country, like all the other participating countries, plays an active part in this new historical process, i.e. the process of consolidating the democracy and joining Europe. This process is no longer based on ideological criteria or influence zones but on the common values of freedom, democracy and the free market. Different countries, cultures and traditions are joining a big family, thus creating a rich and valuable mosaic. Cultures and traditions, so far the symbol of the identity of different ethnic groups and communities within a country or region, are integrating into the EU by preserving their identity, which similarly enrich the European civilization. In essence, this process makes Europe stronger and the Balkans safer. The tendencies towards globalization naturally lead to the recognition, “rapprochement” and interconnection of the cultural values.

The new development challenges, such as the fight against terrorism and increase of international security have brought to light once again the debate regarding cultures and civilizations. There have been also viewpoints highlighting the conflict among cultures and introducing it as a clash of civilizations. We cannot agree with certain ideas, according to

which the differences among different cultures and civilizations make conflict unavoidable. We witness that the major conflicts in the region and throughout the world are not conflicts instigated by ethnic or religious motives, but conflicts among the values of freedom, democracy and emancipated societies on one hand, and anti-values on the other hand, such as totalitarianism, extreme fanaticism and terrorism. When Albania joined the international anti-terror coalition led by the USA, it joined exactly for the purpose of protecting these major values of today's civilization. We are convinced that this is an essential contribution to the preservation of peace and development.

The last contacts we have had recently with high-rank politicians of the region, like the one with Mr. Trajkovski during the First Balkan Gathering "Building Friendship", as well as the regional initiatives we have undertaken for the acceleration of our Euro-Atlantic integration processes, are not only an expression of the good political and economic co-operation among our countries, but also evidence of an ever-growing tendency to jointly share the problems and overcome the challenges of the future. This speaks for the creation of a new political culture, the culture of dialogue. This new spirit becomes even more important when we take into consideration the fact that it takes place after the four dramatic Balkans wars, which have led to excessive human and material losses and massive displacement of hundreds and thousands of innocent citizens.

We are all conscious of the high cost our region has paid for having pursued extreme nationalism and weapons instead of dialogue. Whereas today's meeting and place represent a new symbolism: we are cultivating with greater strength and conviction the idea of leaving behind the old culture of conflicts and clashes and are embarking upon a period of dialogue and agreement. However, we cannot but emphasise that there are still politicians in the Balkans who cling to old mentalities and who lack the will to detach themselves from the past. Realistically speaking, the past will never come back. The aspiration and interest of our peoples and countries is to look ahead by demonstrating tolerance and courage to forgive, and to make these human values part of the new culture of the region. Rabbi Schneier was right to highlight that children are born innocent, they are like a blank slate, it is distorted politics that teaches hatred to them. We should never do this to them, on the contrary we should not forget, forget, forget. Let us forgive, forgive, and forgive!

The establishment of real democratic societies is the best way to strengthen dialogue, to cooperate and coexist among our peoples and countries. These types of society are based on respect and assurance of

human rights freedoms and on the principle of the rule of law, which strengthens peace, stability and development. Therefore, the engagement of the state, politicians, civil society, media and other institutions is of special importance. Part of the culture of dialogue and understanding is also the increase of political, economic, cultural and sports exchanges, the expansion of reciprocal communication, as well as the compilation of common strategies for projects with regional interest. We should teach to our children in schools the cultural diversity of the countries of the region, so that they can love and respect one another.

Our region greatly needs the free movement of goods, citizens and ideas; it does not need bureaucratic barriers that do nothing else but narrow the ground of democracy and development. The more schools, knowledge and culture we exchange, the more our freedom and development will grow. This is also the reason why Albania has abolished the need for visas from citizens from a majority of the countries of the region, expecting them to do the same with us in return. We should seriously engage in the free movement of citizens within the region and beyond in the European Union. This would definitely provide new impetus for the development of our countries. It is also worth stressing that an increase of understanding at the highest political levels ought to occur. Unfortunately, what has been achieved in other levels, with regard to understanding, is not sufficient. This is why we should never allow bureaucrats to hinder the peoples of the Balkans and the entire South-Eastern Europe from access to free communication.

In the context of this meeting I would like to bring to your attention, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, a very positive aspect of the culture of Albanian society: religious harmony and coexistence. There are three religious beliefs in Albania. For centuries they have lived in harmony by producing inter-marriage relations, out of which children are born and generations are brought up, which deepens further increased religious harmony and tolerance. In this way, Albania offers a praiseworthy model of inter-religious dialogue and understanding, which at present constitutes an extraordinary value for dialogue among different cultures and civilizations. To further highlight this value and to share it with the others, we will organize an international symposium expected to take place in November.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate President Trajkovski and UNESCO for this initiative and the excellent organization of this meeting. I am convinced that it will contribute to an increase in the spirit of dialogue among cultures, to greater co-operation amongst our countries and to the strengthening of the Euro-Atlantic identity of the region.

Dragan Čović

Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

I would like to begin my speech by expressing my profound gratitude to Mr. Boris Trajkovski for his having kindly invited me to take part in the work of this significant gathering, which is taking place in the beautiful town of Ohrid, a genuine cultural monument and the friendly country of Macedonia, which has always maintained good relations and outstanding co-operation with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I would also like to say how happy I am to have UNESCO's Director-General, H.E. Mr Koïchiro Matsuura with us today. He has, from the very beginning of his mandate, been making great strides in increasing his Organization's presence in South-Eastern Europe.

Dialogue is a key-element for improving relations and co-operation between nations and states. An honest and open dialogue is a basic pre-condition for successful termination of negotiations, for bringing different views closer and reaching acceptable solutions. It is only through dialogue that it is possible to overcome differences and disagreements, to reduce the level of dispute and resolve conflicts.

History teaches us that it is sometimes very difficult to establish a dialogue due to the heritage of war, conflicts, violence and hatred, deeply engraved in memory. In order to overcome consequences and reoccurrences of that heritage, we need to take the path of peace, forgiveness and tolerance.

Conflicts and hostility build up walls and distrust between people and aggravate dialogue between confronted parties, so that many dialogue attempts very often resemble a Sisyphean task.

As there is no alternative to dialogue and negotiations, which represent the only hope in conflict termination and peace establishment, and as not even a simple, everyday dialogue can be generated by itself, it is necessary to include all available resources and energy in strengthening dialogue and negotiation process.

It is our common task to build a new world, capable of viewing its own future with brightness and to create pre-conditions for overcoming conflict that has lasted over hundreds of years with the goal of opening up a path to honest and successful dialogue, which will through respect of cultural, religious and other differences, bring us to the civilization of peace and love.

However, nowadays at the height of globalization, human beings as individuals and as a species in general seem to be torn between different

cultures, religions and civilizations unwilling to confront the challenges of technological development. A certain spiritual emptiness is to be noticed too, which results from the moral and philosophical desolation of our time.

Full awareness of, and better acquaintance with, the values of one's own and others' culture will certainly help to face this and other challenges brought on by the encounter of civilizations.

Nowadays two opposing trends have significant influence on success of the dialogue between civilizations: globalization and local interests.

The process of globalization is growing stronger and is becoming more intense. The globalist movement is expanding, coming into all areas of our planet. Differences are being reduced, while relations between nations are intensifying. The level of inter-dependence is greater, while the number of isolated autonomous entities is smaller.

Nowadays it is not possible for even the largest civilization to develop itself in isolation. In many countries, a period of isolation equals poverty and suffering.

Further development of the modern world with the domination of modern IT technology does not allow for the existence of any territorial and cultural closed identities, and it also includes intensified dialogue between different cultures and the creation of a new global world rooted in the difference of cultures and dialogue between civilizations.

It should also be kept in mind that global economic processes of technological development, mass communication, trade, tourism and financial institutions together with the accompanying migration processes bring the problem of mutual acceptance among representatives of different nations and civilizations to the fore.

Unprecedented migration movements represent a new kind of social phenomenon, creating new forms of life and blending different traditions and customs together. This raises the issue of integration and coexistence capacity of representatives of different cultures.

Although these processes of integration and accustomization proceed mainly in a peaceful and correct manner, there are still numerous cases where problems when encountering different cultures have never been resolved, so that tensions continue to cause new conflicts.

This problem is further complicated by the fact that globalization brings about further development and progress of overall humankind to creation of new identities, which are in majority cases more open than the existing ones, what due to a probable danger of ruining traditional modes of thinking and already defined systems of values arouses certain reserve and uneasiness with the people who either do not approve this process or

do not understand it. They explain this process as an attempt of some cultural models of ruining from inside cultural grounds of other civilizations with the help of media campaigns, lead exclusively by individualistic mode of thinking.

As a consequence of this, opposition and refusal of all positive external influence is created in some cultural identities, which feel jeopardized by those processes, so that under excuse of preserving their tradition and identity they retreat into the framework of their own culture and civilization which often results even in full radicalization.

Such occurrences represent a warning and appeal to all of us to put additional effort into the process of getting closer to other civilizations, learning how to better understand others, how to live in a pluralistic world and how to embrace the identities of others.

To that end, it is necessary to open ourselves up fully towards others, to intensify and exchange knowledge and experiences and to establish a dialogue. It is only in this way that problems can be resolved, disappointments and dangers avoided and life made brighter to both others and to ourselves.

The internet and other highly technological IT solutions certainly may improve communication thereby making dialogue easier, but it is through direct face-to-face conversations that, even in the 21st century, represents a decisive factor in resolving political, economic and other issues.

Dialogue between civilizations must be an integral part of our daily life, in South-Eastern Europe even more so than in other parts of the continent. Analysis of the economic and political situation of the region points out to a much more favourable situation than in earlier periods. All countries of the region are included into European processes and they are highly committed to strengthening peace, stability, democracy and respect for human rights through honest and permanent dialogue. This is how they confirm their determination to take control over their own fate and to face the principal challenges within the region.

Open and honest dialogue is what we need more than ever before. Continuous exchange of views and the highest-level dialogue will enable a better utilisation of resources from different cultures and religions and will create pre-conditions for further development of co-operation and stabilisation of circumstances in the region. Only through the acceptance of differences will it be possible for us to build peace, democracy and a brighter future.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a special place for the promotion of dialogue among different religions, cultures and civilizations. By applying the basic principles of tolerance, by taking care of their own religious, cultural and national identity and by accepting others in their differences, peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina are trying to bear witness to the potential of coexistence of different cultural circles and to putting together the pieces of a new mosaic of common culture.

Our country is still curing its wartime wounds, traumas and physical pain. We will remain saddled by the tragic heritage of the last war for some time to come, yet we try to use open dialogue and conversation even on the most painful issues as a means of looking for paths towards reconciliation and forgiveness.

We are highly aware of the fact that this aim is achievable only through the celebration of difference and not through ignorance and degradation of differences nor by defining ones own culture and nation as an absolute. We are also aware that solutions cannot be found in narrow-mindedness, but through the preservation of ones own identity and harmonizing it with the identities of others.

It is obvious that in the coming period we will have to work even harder on the promotion of cultural differences and methods of conducting dialogue. Equally, we must start preparing our young generation for a new mode of living, rooted in tolerance and full respect for other nations and cultures.

We are firm in our desire to build up a society worthy of human beings, a society in which the highest moral norms will be respected. Only in that kind of society is it possible to create a genuine culture of living, a culture of dialogue and a modern community. An honest and well-cared for dialogue between nations and national minorities, rooted in equality, rule of law, respect for human rights and cultural differences, will be of extreme importance in this process and will contribute to final and genuine reconciliation between nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Today's gathering is additional proof of the joint aspirations and solidarity of the countries of South-Eastern Europe of reaching a clear perspective for joining European structures through the building of permanent dialogue and the strengthening of democratic institutions within the system.

I firmly believe that a constructive exchange of views on all aspects of dialogue between civilizations will contribute significantly to the better understanding of different national and cultural groups in the region and

will also further improve the favourable climate in the relations between our countries.

I expect the outcomes of the today's Conference to send a clear signal to the international community about the preparedness of the countries of the region to use the intensification of dialogue as a means of promoting further peace, stability and prosperity not only of this part of Europe but also beyond.

Georgi Parvanov

President of Bulgaria

I must confess that the choice of Ohrid as the venue for this Forum dedicated to dialogue among civilizations is more than just symbolic. In addition to embodying a Europe of diversity, the inimitable atmosphere of this city makes one tangibly aware of both the historical and the present-day meeting of a number of various cultures and traditions.

Perhaps this is the place where one can most easily come to realise that the so-called "clash of civilizations" is neither inevitable, nor a desirable destiny for mankind in the 21st century. On the contrary, today's globalizing and mutually interdependent world demands an intensive dialogue among civilizations as the only possible strategy for peace and development. And, as experience sometimes shows, such a dialogue is not merely a beautiful dream; it is a dream that can come true. This dialogue is achievable because culture can serve not only as grounds to disagree but also as and the most solid ground for building understanding and consensus. At the end of the day, unless we succeed, through the dialogue of civilizations, to establish a civilization of dialogue, we would be jeopardizing peace and stability, and hence everything else.

In this context, any fatalism that might attempt to squeeze cultural differences into rigid and irreconcilable boxes, to divide Europe along the boundaries of empires long gone, according to the various alphabets or religions is untenable and politically dangerous.

By the way, I can assure you that such fatalism is disproved also by the experience of the Republic of Bulgaria, being as it is a country where old cultures and civilizations have come to cross and build layer upon layer, and where some of those same boundaries happen to lie. And I do hope that our experience in dialogue and coexistence gained through the centuries and which I successfully upheld into the present day may contribute to the richness of the discussions at this Forum as well. Throughout its centuries-long history, Bulgaria has been the link between the East and the West, between Christianity and Islam. This history has taught the Bulgarian people tolerance for and acceptance of diversity of ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is this tolerance that lies at the foundation of the unique Bulgarian ethnic model, which established itself soundly over these years of democratic development. Bulgaria has remained peaceful and stable despite the fires raging around it. This stability has been the result of the common efforts of all: Bulgarians, Turks, Roma, Jews, and Armenians alike.

Indeed, the Balkans, this cradle of antique civilizations and cultures, has more than once been ravished by destruction and bloodshed. Such events might be ascribed to many factors and reasons, yet they are hardly due to any clash of civilizations. That is why today it is up to us, and to our friends and partners to make this region into a place of peace and stability, where the peoples live in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, in close co-operation and friendship with their neighbours. For the first time in decades, all states in our region have been governed by democratically elected governments. For the first time they have declared common values and have been maintaining an active dialogue among themselves at all levels. Today, all the countries of South-East Europe are pursuing common strategic goals: membership in the European Union and NATO, and these prospects have been reaffirmed at the NATO Summit in Prague and at the Thessalonica Summit of the European Union. Bulgaria believes in these prospects and is working with determination and consistency towards their realization.

Both the venue and the topic of our Forum inspires a special thrust to my address. I was brought to it by a thought formulated by the honourable Mr Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, whose participation imparts special significance to our Forum. That thought is that through their common cultural heritage, the countries in our region can overcome the present sources of prejudice and intolerance and lay the foundations for peaceful and stable development.

Just over a month and a half ago, we, the Presidents of Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, visited our three countries one after the other and here, at Ohrid, we signed a Joint Declaration for furthering co-operation in the construction of the Pan-European Transport Corridor 8 and other infrastructure projects along its route. All three of us agreed that the construction of this corridor will have a strong positive impact not only on our three countries but also on the economic and infrastructure development of the entire South-East Europe, and for the accelerated integration of the countries from our region into the EU and NATO.

During this tri-lateral meeting, crossing from one country into another, we were pleased to find that there is a lot in common in our food, songs, dances, costumes, customs and traditions. And this means that there is a lot in common among our peoples, in our history, in our culture. What is more, this commonality can be found in all countries of South-East Europe.

This commonality has not remained unspotted by our scholars and experts in the area of cultural and historical heritage. Several years ago, at

the initiative of the Bulgarian National Committee of ICOMOS, an international team was set up, which included representatives of all countries from South- East Europe. This team went on to develop a common methodology, and on the basis of that each country systematized its cultural and historical heritage into ages, plotting it onto its national map. Then, a smaller team aggregated these maps and made a common General Map of the cultural and historical heritage of South-East Europe.

The result has been amazing! The preserved cultural and historical heritage formed clearly visible culture corridors, which have been tracked across our lands millennia and centuries back, and today they have not only survived as the living memory of civilizations in our region but stand as some of the strongest ties among our peoples.

These cultural and historical corridors disregard boundaries. They start from the Adriatic, run across several countries and end at the Black Sea coast. Others set off from the Mediterranean Sea and reach all the way into the Carpathian Mountains. Still others trail along the course of the Danube. These corridors or, as the scholars called them, "cultural and historical routes", date from various ages, they were set up by various civilizations in which our forefathers also had their share, yet they are here, in our lands, and they are our most treasured heritage through which we can and must present ourselves before the world, as one of the cradles of world civilization.

Along with the construction of these corridors between our countries, let us make the most rational and effective use of what has already been created, namely, the cultural and historical corridors. These have been built and have existing for centuries now – back in the times of the Thracians, of ancient Hellas, the Roman Empire and the Byzantine, the Ottoman Empires as well as during the Balkan Revival.

That was why, one and a half months ago, at the closing press-conference of our tri-lateral meeting in Pogradec, I suggested that next year we hold a meeting of the heads of state of all countries in South-East Europe, to be devoted to the exceptionally rich cultural and historical heritage of our region. Bulgaria is prepared to host that meeting, which could yield the answers of three major questions:

First, how to communicate to our peoples, to our European partners, and to all our friends throughout the world this vast heritage of history and culture abounding across our lands. Because, regrettably, it is mostly our scholars and experts who know of this priceless treasure, while our citizens are only vaguely aware of it, and next to nothing has transpired to the people beyond our region. During our most recent meeting, EU

Enlargement Commissioner Günter Ferheugen and I discussed this issue and he expressed the willingness of the European Commission to provide financial support and technical assistance for implementing a wide public relations campaign, which would present the great contribution of South-East Europe in the development of the European and the world civilization.

The second question to be addressed by our summit meeting is how this unique cultural and historical heritage can be used most rationally and effectively:

- to ensure mutual opening up and cultural bonding of the countries from our region;
- to enhance a wider opening up and cultural bonding of our region with the rest of Europe;
- to facilitate the social and economic development of the countries from our region.

The mutual opening up and cultural bonding of the countries from our region is the easiest to achieve, as it depends entirely on the political will of the countries and the peoples in our region and because this process, although spontaneously, has already started. All we need to do is spearhead it by goal-setting and promotion.

Greater openness and the cultural bonding of our region with the rest of Europe is more difficult to achieve, as it requires overcoming certain misconceptions about our region that have set in over the years, picturing it as a place of wars and ethnic conflicts, which do not quite match the concepts of heritage and achievement of human civilization. Nevertheless, with a well thought-out common approach, we can and must demonstrate that South-East Europe holds an important place in the cultural history of Europe and the world. In this respect, special attention must be given to information technology and the Internet, and to furthering the co-operation among scientific, research and educational institutions in the countries in our region and the other European countries.

The best way to use our cultural and historical heritage for the purposes of the social and economic development of our region is to involve it, in a rational and effective way, in the tourist industry. In some of the countries in our region, this has already been achieved to a considerable degree. Still, the dynamic development of cultural tourism in recent years, in combination with a development of the transport infrastructure, increase the demand for special topic routes, which expand beyond the boundaries of only one country. And as evident from the research project of our scholars and experts, our region is well equipped to develop cultural tourism along the road of the Thracians, the road of the

Hellenes, the road of the Romans. Or along the road of paganism, the road of Christianity, the road of Islam. And why not along the road of wine, the road of cheese, the road of bread.

And that is not all! If we were to trace carefully the cultural and historical routes, we will discover that very often they run through exceptional natural landmarks, curative spa springs and natural preserves abounding in unique flora and fauna. This is yet another vast niche for yet another type of tourism, the so-called eco-tourism which, just like cultural tourism, implies observing strict requirements to protect and sustain the tourist product.

Thus, we have arrived at the third major question to be considered at our forthcoming meeting – the full uncovering and preservation of our cultural and historical heritage. Our experience so far has shown that in addition to some serious financial means, the key to this lies in regional co-operation. First, because it pools together the entire scientific, research and expertise potential of our region which, regrettably, has been increasingly melting away lately. Secondly, because the heritage of one age is not limited to any one single country but it encompasses almost the entire region. And thirdly, because treasure-hunting and dealing in cultural and historical artefacts has already become subject to the operations of international organized crime, and counteracting that also requires an international approach.

As regards the considerable amount of funds necessary to uncover and protect our cultural and historical heritage, a significant part of those funds could be generated through the tourist industry, which uses this heritage as a major product in its operations. However, this source of funds will become operational only after the tourist product has been included in the active business cycle. Prior to this, some start-up investment will be needed, which could come either from grants from the EU or certain donor countries or in the form of loans from international financial institutions, or from capital of the private sector, which could be involved under a concession arrangement. The same arrangement will have to be provided for the initial financing of the necessary engineering infrastructure connecting and servicing the cultural and historical landmarks. So, we have once again arrived at the transport corridors and the other infrastructure projects along their routes.

Evidently, a future summit on the cultural and historical heritage in South-East Europe has to address a large range of issues – political, cultural and historical, economic, financial, social, environmental. Therefore, I would suggest that participants in that meeting should include, along with

the heads of state of the countries from our region, also high-ranking representatives of the EU and the international financial institutions, the scientific and research community and practicing experts, as well as the business community. Thus the meeting will become a working international forum, the final output of which could be a concrete action plan for the full uncovering, preservation and effective use of the cultural and historical heritage of South-East Europe as part of the world heritage of all of humankind.

If we manage to achieve that, we will demonstrate that our past works more in bringing us together than in dividing us, that in our history and in our culture, alongside our diversities, there are also many things we have in common. And it is these common things that we must use as a stepping stone for our future. That means that just as our region has had a common past, it can have a common future. It is time we took this future up ourselves and our first joint step in this direction needs to be a Common Strategy for the European Future of South-East Europe. Bulgaria has already proposed several times that we all develop this common strategy, our strategy. It is time to roll up our sleeves and do it!

Today, Ohrid is sending an important signal to the entire international community by actively supporting the important goal set by the UN and UNESCO to weld a bond between cultures, based on peace and development. I am confident that the discussions at this Forum will dwell on the regional dimension of the dilemma of a dialogue versus a clash of civilizations, and come up with relevant solutions and ideals on how to overcome differences and strengthen peace and co-operation on the Balkans.

This will make our contribution in the shaping of the world of the 21st century as a world of mutual interdependence and mutual understanding, a world of openness, trust and co-operation.

Stjepan Mesić

President of the Republic of Croatia

I have accepted the invitation to participate in the work of this Forum with pleasure because throughout history this turbulent area has witnessed clashes between civilizations and cultures rather than dialogue, which is our present goal, and which we want, and intend to promote in the future.

In South-East Europe, the region encompassing my country, religion – as a constituent element of culture and one of the markers of civilization – has been acting throughout history as a watershed, a crucial factor in the shaping of national awareness and nations and, thereby, in the shaping of national states later on. Here, as elsewhere in Europe, religious wars have been waged. And although religions do not preach war and violence but bear the message of the Good, we cannot ignore the fact that religious feelings and religious affiliation have frequently been instrumentalized and served as a reason for and a spur to violence and conflict.

Earlier in history – as well as during the recent wars and conflicts in the region – religious, cultural and civilizational diversities have often been used as an instrument of violence and policies aiming at destruction, war, aggression and territorial expansion.

This Forum has gathered people representing science, culture and international organizations as well as responsible political leaders of the countries of South-East Europe. It is up to us to firmly support and promote with determination, and not just out of mere courtesy, dialogue among our cultures with a similar but often quite different cultural and civilizational heritage. That is to say, not only a dialogue taking place here and now, but dialogue as a continuous process, a conversation and a discussion contributing to the stability and permanent peace and co-operation in the region, and thereby in the whole continent.

We must be aware be that in this European region, as well as elsewhere in the world, the dissolution of former closed political and civilizational formations has been paralleled by the creation of new entities: national and ethnic, economic, cultural and linguistic. They have all made an effort to establish and strengthen their own identity. The new entities have had the wish and the will to govern themselves, to make use of their own knowledge and abilities and join the contemporary globalization processes with a new, clearly defined identity.

The fate and the success of the new Europe and the European Union will depend on how relations among countries are arranged and on how

the countries and nations that have for a long time been seen as 'the outskirts of Europe' are integrated in the European Union.

I depart from the position that cultural and civilizational diversity are always manifested as an individual and intimate experience as well and that they are difficult to fit into some firm and strict juridical context. Therefore, I appeal that every cultural and civilizational entity be granted the right to self-definition and self-identification before the whole international community.

I consider the following three elements to be crucial for a true dialogue among civilizations: tolerance, ecumenism and human rights.

First, tolerance. In my opinion the role of all of us gathered here is to contribute jointly and individually to the elimination of all forms of social intolerance and discrimination based on cultural and civilizational differences. I plead in favour of respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of all our cultures, of the varied forms and ways of their realization.

I advocate tolerance based on knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, freedom of consciousness and ideas. Tolerance, as harmony in diversity.

I consider tolerance to be not only our moral obligation but also our political and legal requirement.

Tolerance is a virtue that makes life and peace possible and contributes to the replacement of 'the culture of war' with 'the culture of peace and dialogue'.

Tolerance means accepting the fact that human beings have the right to live in peace and be what they really are, irrespective of their differences in appearance, conditions, speech, behaviour and values.

The second element ecumenism: In developing dialogue among civilizations and cultures, ecumenism is of special importance – as a form of active search for co-operation and togetherness; ecumenism – as an endeavour to get closer to different cultures, to all people.

Ecumenism contributes to a closer acquaintance and better understanding among people of different beliefs, thus making a major contribution to world peace. Dialogue among civilizations and cultures through tolerance and ecumenism should be considered as our joint hope for a common future of the world.

However, this dialogue must tackle the dangers of continuous growth and concentration of power and wealth in the hands of some people and at the expense of others; it must consider the danger of

environmental and nuclear destruction, increased armament, terrorism, as well as the issue of human rights and others.

Human rights then, as the third element: In this region cultural and civilizational dialogue implies also a dialogue about the protection of human rights, including the right to life, the right to self-determination and cultural identity, minority rights, the right to participate in decision-making within the community, the right to a dissenting opinion, religious freedom, and individual dignity.

In the end I wish to express my personal appreciation of the fact that the Draft new 'Constitution for Europe' anticipates Europe as a continent that is open to cultural dialogue, education and social progress.

I am convinced that the honourable members of the European Union will accept the Draft text, which states that the people of Europe are proud of their national identities and histories, but are also determined to overcome old divisions and create a common future 'unified in diversity'.

We live in different societies, different cultures and different geographical conditions; our horizons may sometimes differ, but we all live under the same sky.

Janes Drnovšek

President of Slovenia

Ohrid is a special place, not only for its beauty or its cultural diversity, but also for being the scene where the last attempts for peaceful resolution of the crisis in Yugoslavia were made. It was exactly here that the then Presidency of Yugoslavia tried to find a solution to the crisis in Yugoslavia; unfortunately, after that, some have chosen the path of violence. Ohrid is also important for being the place where the peace agreement was signed two years ago. This Agreement is the framework of the stability of modern Macedonia, and of the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic communities. The crisis in Yugoslavia was a clear warning of what could easily happen if political problems are not resolved through dialogue. Negative politics based on looking for enemies advance hostility and nationalism. Responsible politics foster patience and dialogue. The politics of dialogue and tolerance do not bring quick results and the solutions proposed are often rejected. The example of Yugoslavia, as well as some other examples clearly shows that only the politics based on dialogue and patience can have a long-term success.

Responsible politics do not offer quick solutions and requires a lot of patience. The example of former Yugoslavia could be in fact a positive example for all of humanity, because it calls for patience, dialogue and mutual respect. It is good that the international community remains present in this part of Europe. The European Union is an example of successful model of co-operation for many peoples and states. Europe had faced a number of crises and wars, and the EU is based on these negative challenges. Europe has built democratic institutions that disable the politics of intolerance and violence. It is important that all the countries in the region see the perspectives of the EU. With its presence in the region, the EU announces that all the countries from the South-Eastern Europe could enter the EU. The only solution for the countries from the region is to foster democratic institutions and politics based on understanding and dialogue. Therefore, I welcome the activities of the international community, and today's Forum is one of them, which recommend the use of dialogue and patience as the only way leading towards successful resolution of problems.

Ferenc Mádl

President of Hungary

It gives me distinct pleasure to participate in this important conference. I would first like to congratulate you Mr President and the Director-General for taking the initiative to hold such a Forum. This meeting gives us the possibility to take stock of the opportunities we have in order to strengthen the co-operation that exists between our countries and our organizations.

It is well known that this meeting forms an integral part of the series of regional conferences organized upon the initiative of the UN and UNESCO in different regions of the world over the past three years. First New York, the Vilnius and Paris and now Ohrid. Our special thanks go to Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura for his perseverance, over the past years, as he silently but firmly plays on our conscience: maintaining that the dialogue should not only materialize between representatives of different religions, but politicians also have an obligation to articulate their opinions on the future co-operation between civilizations.

The essence of my contribution could be paraphrased in one single sentence. I would like to use an earlier statement of André Malraux on culture, within the context provided by our present times: the 21st century will either be the century of dialogue or there will not be a 22nd century.

I admit these are serious words. I would like to shed light on this statement in my contribution. To this end, I have divided my speech into three parts. I would first like to discuss the conditions of constructive and fruitful dialogue. Following this I would like to elaborate on the specific situation of South-Eastern Europe. Finally I would like to make mention of Hungarian efforts aimed at providing for the stability of this much suffered part of our continent.

1. The difficulties and constraints of a fruitful dialogue

If we were to query an everyday citizen living in Europe, Asia or Africa about his or her opinion on the dialogue among civilizations, we might not receive an answer with a positive connotation. The notion of this originally Greek word might not be known to him or might think that this was also one of those useless things of our modern life.

The same citizen walking the streets of Tokyo, Cairo or Skopje will ask us with indignation: what are we doing against recurring wars,

threatening ecological disaster, poverty, unemployment and international crime? This list could go on.

What kind of answer do we have for such questions of the citizens of Ohrid, Budapest or Nairobi?

Dialogue is indispensable if we really want to find a lasting settlement to the above-mentioned problems.

In this respect I think it would be worthwhile to mention four notions. One is partnership based on the equality of the parties in dialogue. The second is trust, the third is about the assertion of and the honest desire to know the interests driving others. The fourth element is the atmosphere in which the dialogue takes place. One cannot state that equality and trust are essential for dialogue. Still we have to aspire to get closer to a status where the dialogue is between equal parties with confidence towards the partner.

If we were to wait always to have confidence in the other party before acting, we could spend the rest of our lives waiting for co-operation. Thus we need to engage in every dialogue possible in the hope that confidence will prevail over suspicion.

Further elements of a constructive dialogue are the interests we share and show, as well as their interaction. The atmosphere of the dialogue is another such element.

It is already a good sign if the parties realize their interest in starting and conducting a dialogue.

This elevates the endeavour to a higher quality level, if there is true interest in what the other party represents, a rediscovery of long neglected values. This can bring about a situation, in which the atmosphere itself becomes a contributing value. This is what I hope to achieve today. The hope that even those with suspicions on their minds will see that dialogue is necessary and important for mankind ready to assume public responsibility.

2. South-Eastern Europe as the exceptional venue for intercultural dialogue

From time to time it is worth remembering the differences in the social development of South-Eastern and Western-Europe.

In terms of our topic today, it is important to note that -from the Medieval Ages until the end of the 19th century -religion based animosities were much less frequent in the region than in Western Europe. When the main objective was the establishment of a central administration on the

basis of a French example, leaders of the region were confronted with a contradiction that still exists today. What is more important: a unified, homogenous nation state or preserving the multifaceted culture of those living in the region? We still do not have a satisfactory answer to this question. It was this dilemma that was the cause of so much suffering and tragedy for the people of this region in the 1990s.

If our present meeting was to have a practical objective, then it should be to rally the values of cultural and religious diversity against hegemony and standardizing aspirations.

UNESCO can play an active role in promoting the stability of the region, if after the adoption of the universal charter on cultural diversity; it develops the accompanying convention and helps to put that into practice. This is a significant challenge for all of us: to protect the autonomy of the individual from obsolete ideological concepts. Countries of South Eastern Europe are destined to use their values of cultural and religious diversity and to serve as a model for other regions of our continent.

The religious diversity of this region is unparalleled. The coexistence of Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and Protestant communities for several centuries is a value that we have not paid enough attention to. In Western-Europe Muslim communities were established as a result of colonization and the migration that followed World War II.

Here small, rural religious communities were established like a mosaic, thus in our region we cannot talk about the "export" of religion. I am on the opinion that we have not yet appreciated the significance of this, so during the course of the Christian-Muslim dialogue we have to provide a place for countries of South-eastern Europe.

3. Hungary's participation in securing stability in the region

As a neighbouring country Hungary has always been and continues to be extremely interested in strengthening the stability of South Eastern Europe.

From the beginning of the 1990s Hungary welcomed more than fifty thousand refugees fleeing the armed conflicts. The population showed solidarity with all those, who had to leave their homes due to humanitarian, economic, ethnic or religious crisis.

At the same time the enlargement of the EU and of NATO provides new conditions and possibilities for frameworks of regional co-operation. We wish to play an initiative role in helping to promote the adaptation to the new situation.

In co-operation with our Visegrad Group partners we wish to participate in forming the new South-east Europe policy of the EU. The EU plans to attach an important role to the Central European Initiative in shaping and implementing its Eastern, South Eastern policies. Active Hungarian participation in the Stability Pact and the notion of self-government, which is now at the centre of activities within the Szeged Process are all good examples of our commitment to reconstruction. Relations established at the local level between local authorities can provide a sound basis for co-operation and can help to promote the successful European integration of the region.

I would like to state here also that Hungary is ready to continue to deliver on her earlier undertakings if that helps to reconcile people of the affected region and to pave the way for their co-operation.

It is in light of this that we support plans drafted by UNESCO, namely

- a review of school history books,
- regional exchanges of teachers in higher education, administrative personnel, students to help with the process of reconciliation.
- We especially support the program titled "Establishing a plural cultural identity in a region burdened by tension"

Let us not forget our final objective: to act and cooperate internationally, so that people of this region of Europe, who have suffered, should find again their reasons to be optimistic, so that their place of birth and they can live in peace.

When one gets tired from time to time, it is usually best to turn to arts for rejuvenation. It is in the spirit of this that I would like to leave with you Mr President and Mr Director-General the album of a Hungarian painter, who lived one hundred years ago. His name is Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka and his work is a fine example of the spirit of the dialogue between cultures. The Wailing Wall of Jerusalem, the portrait of the old Moroccan teacher or his works depicting the beauty of the landscape on the Balkans, give us inspiration to go along on the path that we have to, to protect our values, so that our everyday life could be filled with joy and happiness.

Svetozar Marović

President of Serbia and Montenegro

It is a special pleasure for me to greet you in the name of Serbia and Montenegro.

It is my belief, and I think that of all of present here today, together with those who are not able to be with us, that we are gathered by a common and great dream – one in which all countries of the Western Balkans find their strength and power to be part of a prosperous and civilized Europe. And I mean this in the fullest sense of the word and with full faith that this is our future.

As President of Serbia and Montenegro, I know how difficult it is to believe in such dream. There are still so many things which remind us of our past – and even more which urge us to work for a brighter future. That is why I think it is very important that gatherings such as this one not only represent a victory of this dream – not just wishes and good words – but above all, that they be an undivided common energy which will signify a step further. A step towards what I believe is our common goal. Above all else, this means that from today's meeting here in Ohrid, we say that we are one step closer to the final victory of the civilization of peace over the civilization of war.

Before all else, one should find peace within oneself – Mr Mesic, the honourable President of Croatia, in his speech earlier today, recalled such religious values as those shared even by Confucius: if we don't have peace within us, it will be difficult to find it in our environment.

It is my belief that we will see images of victories of peace in the near future. Nevertheless, we are still living in a world of images of suffering and devastation – not only in our environment and in our region, but also throughout the world. This is why it is crucial that all of us who believe in this world – a world of safety, unity, equality, multi-ethnicity, multi-nationality – that we fight every single day to reinforce this peace. I think that we must act in a unified manner to put a halt to the horror that we can see in front of our very own eyes; that of children being killed whilst swimming in a river. Regardless of who is responsible for this act. Regardless of whose children they may be. Seeing children die is not something that will help us move forward. It brings us backwards.

This is why it is important that we are together – we from Serbia, we from Montenegro, and our friends from Albania, and our friends from Macedonia, and our friends from the whole world – because this is our common strength. A murder of any man is a murder of our own.

This is why I would hope that – together, from this meeting – we can say once more that the Western Balkans is, without a doubt, safely moving forward on a road of peace. And that we, the representatives of peoples, the representatives of citizens that elected us and that will challenge us democratically (if we don't perform our job well), that we will employ all our forces in order to make it so.

I would like this to be a great step towards the victory of democracy, the victory of peace, the victory of moderateness, and the victory of reason. What we have before us is a real dialogue, not simply the kind of dialogue that you may find in books – the kinds of dialectics we learned from Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and more recent philosophers – but a true, living dialogue.

We need greater dialogue because there are still many open and unanswered questions. I would like to take this opportunity to state that Serbia and Montenegro truly want a dialogue on Kosovo. There are representatives of the United Nations present here; and I know how difficult their mission in Kosovo is. I am not one of those who would accuse them with ease. On the contrary, I would like to support them. I would like to support them in their mission as the United Nations institution in Kosovo – because without them, the problems would be even greater; the opportunity to solve those problems in a democratic manner would be much farther away.

This is why it is my profound belief that every man and woman who wishes good things for their children, their people and their future, will know just how to demonstrate in concrete ways and through their own lives, the belief in dialogue, the belief in a new civilization and a new culture of understanding, respect, stability and peace. These are not just mere words – but our reality.

With great optimism, I expect the mission of the new Administrator in Kosovo will contribute to this. I wish him much success in this venture, and assure him that we, from our side, will help him in this as much as we can.

I also believe that the principle message from this meeting must be a message which signifies the victory of democracy and the victory of civilization, of sufficiency, prosperity and well-being. As you know, the civilization of poverty easily, seductively, and rapidly leads people to legends, draws them back to myths and folklore. This is why we have to support all people who are fighting for reforms today, who are fighting to make this region a fully-fledged member of all European institutions as soon as possible. Because, only through greater European integration can

we finally make this region – one which is so rich in history – free of the illusion that “we can progress by going backwards.”

Based on all these reasons, my dear friends, I fully believe that all of your good wishes, your efforts and your dreams, which I wanted to briefly share with you – after this meeting, even tomorrow, will make a concrete move and show that dreams here can be a reality.



Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO speaking with Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

Other Statements

Kiro Gligorov

Former President of the Former Yugoslav
Republic of Macedonia

I am certain that I am not the only one here who feels that Ohrid, our Macedonia, and the wider Balkans is the right place to hold this important gathering aimed at promoting the dialogue among civilizations as a necessity, so many times confirmed in the past, indispensable to the global existence.

Everywhere here you encounter the rich history, the great material and spiritual treasure, and witness the survival and preservation of the identity against all historical odds.

Dialogue and cohabitation among people of different nations, religions, cultures and traditions persisted here for centuries. Throughout history, peoples here always fought together and built together, not against each other. This is confirmed by the Krusevo Manifesto, where Macedonians called upon the Turks, Albanians and Muslims inhabiting these spaces to jointly resist the enemy - "Let us all live as brothers, we consider you as our own, and would like it to remain the same forever". At the same time, the great revolutionary and thinker Goce Delcev called for a world "where there will be only a cultural competition among nations".

These meaningful messages reflect thousands of years of tradition and spirit of the people who are aware that the roots of divisions, conflicts

and destruction could be severed only through unity and respect for different cultures and beliefs.

Conventional logic and wisdom, based on historical experiences, teach us that every monism, political or cultural, suppresses freedom and democracy, which are fundamental human values; any universalism, of communist, Western or any other provenience, which does not respect diversity, inevitably ends in imperialism, in a system of domination of some over others. When this problem is reduced to the regional level, to the Balkans, it becomes even more serious, given the historical civilizational stratification of the Balkan Peninsula and its ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic heterogenesis. That is why, in my opinion, the question of how to develop and nurture cultural pluralism of peoples and States is of vital importance.

I have a reason to say this. Namely, if we carefully consider the essence, we will see that the culture was the core reason for many of the wars that raged on these spaces in the 20th century, regardless of their national or ethnic cover. I will take the example of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That process did not begin in the 1980's, as many are inclined to believe. I am deeply convinced that the process began in the 1960's, with the escalation of the linguistic dispute between Serbian and Croatian intellectuals, whose escalation had led to other irreconcilable differences and mutual intolerance and antagonism.

Tolerance, understanding and respect for others are not only indispensable but they are the only way of survival, the only way for us to cope with the challenges of present days, to respect diversity of opinions, ideas and knowledge on the universal way forward. Or, as it is often said: to be able to speak and listen, to contribute and to benefit of contributions of others.

It is through this prism that I contemplate the present and the future of my country. Peoples of different cultural habits, religions and languages have lived here for decades. However, they never fought each other. The citizens of this country are well aware that the dialogue for peace, prosperity and respect of diversity is the sole instrument for their survival and for the survival of their country. They are aware of the necessity to cohabitate and to fight together in order to handle the challenges on their road towards the great European family.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the future, peace, stability, cultural and civilizational progress cannot be reached without a constant dialogue among different civilizations and cultures at micro and macro level. In this process of dialogue, everyone should preserve and

respect their own particularities and integrate into the society where they will respect the particularities of others, though they are most often different, aspiring towards harmony and enrichment of the society as a whole.

Zhelyu Zhelev

Former President of Bulgaria

Our conference should not be purely scientific or strictly academic. This is necessitated both by its time and venue and by the political goals in pursuit of which it has been organized.

In order to attain the objectives that we have set ourselves, it should rather be scientific and practical, of a pronounced applied nature and markedly pragmatic orientation, while, at the same time, it should preclude elementarization and oversimplification in problem analysis.

However, in order to avoid both extremes, we should by no means leave the ground of serious science. We should use the basic concepts in this area with their clearly defined content, so as to know what exactly we are talking about and avoid landing in the situation of people, who seemingly argue about one and the same thing but in fact speak different languages, which means that they also talk about different things.

The first thing we should do is to avoid confusing culture and civilization. These are the two key categories, which, if not used correctly, can result in considerable discrepancies, mismatches, substantial misunderstandings and thoughtlessness. For not every culture can be described as civilization, even though every civilization is culture, at least because culture in the broad sense also includes anti-culture.

As the analysis of all great civilizations, known from history, indicates, civilization is essentially a particular type of cultural valorisation ranking, where man is positioned at the top of the pyramid and the purpose of all other values is to serve his free and complete development, to serve the unfolding of his creative abilities and the blossoming of his personality. The assumption is that the complete development of separate human individuals will contribute to the utmost to the prosperity of the people and the country.

This, naturally, is the ideal model of civilization.

However, as politicians and statesmen, we have no right to be naive and to consider that one hundred percent implementation of the ideal model of civilization is possible, or to believe that it was one hundred percent implemented at some place and at a certain point of time.

The sense of realism also obliges us to distinguish between ideology and reality, between what ideologies, political concepts and programmes proclaim and what happens in reality, in actual life.

Generally, the disparity between theory and practice, between words and deeds is considerable – at times they even become antipodal.

Nevertheless, we need the perfect civilization model, because it helps us find the right explanation of many things in history that happened to civilizations, and of not fewer other events that occur even now before our eyes.

When does a civilization emerge? When does it reach the zenith in its development and when does it collapse? Why do civilizations perish? What is it that actually perishes, when a civilization is gone? Why does culture (as a totality of cultural values) persist in the form of cultural traditions and customs?

The ideal model of civilization allows us to come up with answers to these and many other questions from our own times and from 20th century history. For example, why is it that we cannot refer to Hitler's regime in Germany as "Nazi civilization" or "fascist civilization"? Why is it that this combination of words is not felicitous and even has a blasphemous ring in our ears? It is very simple: because Nazism degraded man from a supreme value and an end in itself in development to a most common means for the attainment of other ends, for the establishment of other values, such as the "Third Reich" nation and state, with the *Vermacht*, SS, Gestapo, which were positioned at the top of the pyramid of values. From a purely culturological, scientific point of view, "the Nazi regime" was a very interesting example, because it clearly demonstrated how a great national culture and civilization, such as the German culture and civilization were in the 18th and 19th centuries, could be taken millennia back in history to the era of barbarity. This fact indicates that matters are historically reversible, even though for a relatively short period of time. The situation with communism is not very different. In fact there is a distinction but it is insignificant and not in favour of communism. Fascism was artlessly sincere in value ranking, while communism has always concealed that ranking hypocritically through its official propaganda. To its last moment the official communist propaganda reassured the public that everything was done for man, for the common people, that the Party and the Government had no other concern but the care of man.

In reality however it was quite the opposite.

Hence, we shall have the same ring of absurdity and blasphemy in our ears, if someone attempts to talk to us about a "Bolshevik civilization" and to persuade us that such a civilization has existed or even that it is possible.

Actually, if we have to be precise, in the 1970s and early 1980s some Soviet authors tried to give currency to the term "communist civilization",

but it was not taken up by society, and even lecturers in scientific communism did not dare commit themselves to it.

But probably the most interesting and instructive example is the emergence of Christianity and the Christian civilization. How did the initially anaemic and feeble Christian movement, which had no state and no army of its own, manage, within three centuries, to defeat and conquer the powerful Roman Empire? Naturally, the main reason is the degradation of Roman civilization, particularly at the end of the imperial period, when man and human life were depreciated to such an extent that they ceased to be of social value. And this is best seen in the continuous wars, in the brutality employed in suppressing riots and uprisings, in the gladiator games and the other "circuses", where cruelty and the death of the vanquished already are a source of aesthetic pleasure. During the second half of the imperial period the major value of the Roman society was the Empire and the imperial power, in the name of which plots, coups and assassinations were conducted.

And it was at that particular moment, when Rome experienced a deep-going moral and political crisis, when it saw no way out of it, that a religious movement emerged on the horizon, which preaches love among people rather than violence, which declared that all people were brothers and sisters equal before God, regardless of their social position or ethnic affiliation, and which, to crown it all, promised salvation of the souls and resurrection of the dead...

Naturally, the Christian civilization also had its falls whenever it swapped the positions of its values and took the liberty to practice humiliation of man to the status of a common means for the attainment of other ends. Let us remember the Inquisition during the reign of Phillip II, the religious wars in Europe, the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, the indulgences for sin forgiveness issued by the Church, etc.

But in all these cases contacts should be sought and dialogue should be conducted with the genuine representatives of Islamic civilization, with its moderate wings and schools, with the moderate politicians and clerics, as well as with the ordinary Muslims, who are not indoctrinated by Islamic fundamentalism. And last but not least, naturally, contacts and dialogue with the young people in the Islamic world, because they, as all young people, are less prejudiced or unprejudiced and open to the other cultures and civilizations. It is pointless to seek a dialogue with the Islamic fundamentalists, since they are fanatics and as such they do not want a dialogue. They seek confrontation by all means, at that in its crudest forms. That is why they have to be handled differently: they should simply be

isolated morally and politically, so that they would not be able to influence or at least hinder the dialogue. And when they take the liberty to resort to the means and methods of organized international terrorism, they should be treated as terrorists. And by no means should we allow their terrorism to be presented as a war between civilizations. It should be explained that in the eyes of world public opinion their actions actually compromise Islam and Islamic civilization, because they create such an ugly image of them!

Harri Holkeri

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations
Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the UN Mission in Kosovo about the importance of dialogue in South-East Europe.

As the High-Level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe noted when it first planned this Forum, intercultural dialogue is vital to peace in the Balkans.

“Peace,” as the philosopher Baruch Spinoza said, “is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.” In a region as culturally diverse as this one, such a state of mind clearly cannot be achieved without sustained dialogue among members of different groups. This applies not only to dialogue between different political entities, but also to dialogue within societies.

Dialogue within Kosovo and between Kosovo and its neighbours is a top priority for UNMIK. For example, Kosovo already has an agreement on cultural exchange with Albania and hopes to complete such an agreement with Turkey next month. We will continue to pursue dialogue in various fields with Kosovo’s other neighbours. In fact, direct co-operation has already started, at Macedonia’s initiative, in education and health.

I really hope that direct talks on technical issues, as endorsed by the UN Security Council, will soon start between Pristina and Belgrade.

The UN Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations in 2001, whose work we’re here to continue, was declared in response to a fearful vision that became widespread in the 1990s of a “Clash of Civilizations”.

As many recognized, the clash of civilizations thesis threatened to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It was also based on the dubious notions that civilizations are internally pure and cohesive and that therefore the main fault-lines would be between civilizations rather than within them.

Littered with artefacts from a dozen empires, kingdoms and peoples, the Balkans are a quintessential example of a region that is at once a melting pot of different civilizations and a single, varied civilization in its own right.

Receptivity to the clash of civilizations thesis reflected anxieties caused by the end of the Cold War and the accelerating processes of globalization. Political struggles around the world have revolved around

issues of identity. Nowhere has that been more true than here in the Balkans.

Indeed, the Balkans is virtually the birthplace of modern identity politics. In this region people have long resisted pressure to adopt an identity imposed by others. As independent Balkan states began life in the 18th and 19th centuries, their national histories focus on their distinctive courses in the modern period and, unfortunately, often tend to ignore the heritage they share with their neighbours.

The reality, of course, is that one's national and ethnic identities are only two of the many hats that each of us wears. None of us is a "pure" product of a single culture or civilization. As modern men and women, we all bear the stamp of the cultural emporium that the modern world has become.

Confronted by the products of this wealth of diversity, our challenge is not to surrender one identity for another but to embrace the many identities each of us already has. When I was Prime Minister of Finland before it acceded to the European Union, I didn't urge people to give up being Finns and become European instead. Instead, I encouraged them to embrace the European identity we Finns already shared.

Similarly in this region, no one should be pressured to trade one identity for another. Instead, they should be encouraged to embrace the many identities they already have. No one is just a Serb or just an Albanian or just a Macedonian. Everyone in the region is a European, in addition to his other identities.

The reality of the contemporary world is that each one of us is already the product of a dialogue among civilizations. While lending my voice to the call to members of different civilizations to engage in dialogue amongst themselves, I would also commend everyone to listen to the dialogue among civilizations already taking place inside each one of us.

Ahmed Jalali

Permanent Delegate of the
Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO and
President of the 31st session of the
General Conference of UNESCO

These days we need even more to closely examine the very 'atmosphere' through which people pass in order to become different and attempt to live their difference. This atmosphere is that of dialogue.

In the realm of a genuine dialogue the term victory is alien and out of context. A dialogue is, by nature, different from any attempt to compromise between two or more monologues.

Dialogue implies questioning by its very nature. Without accepting the priority of the question over the answer, we neither can conduct a genuine dialogue, nor develop a new understanding, nor gain new knowledge. One source of our questions is the shock we receive to our expectations. "Knowledge always means, precisely, considering opposites." Knowledge is dialectical from the ground up.

Karl Popper teaches us that the power of science resides in its openness to criticism and its invitation to be refuted. These characteristics are also required for dialogue. In a genuine dialogue we should try to avoid the possible tyranny of the dominant opinion and allow queries to arise. In a dialogue questioning opens up the subject matter, while fixed opinions attempt to immobilize it. Questioning releases a range of possibilities which rigid opinions would restrict.

For Popper, a genuine dialogue rather primarily relies on a will from within. He thinks that it is a mistake to assume that the possibility of a discussion, a dialogue, depends on the existence of a common language or common basic assumptions between the partners. The main precondition is that they be ready to learn from and understand each other. Then, the more the variety of competing opinions, the more rich, fruitful and valuable the discussion. "Had there been no Tower of Babel, we should invent it."

There is a standard perspective of social identity, according to which, even if some outer aspects of the life of a group change, there is a hard core, which always remains constant.

At the other extreme of the notion of identity, one finds the so-called post-modern concept in which a person or a social group is seen simply as a node in a network of relations.

These definitions both suffer from the lack of a historical dimension. The history tells us that every person or every social group belongs to a

multiplicity of traditions and cultures. This pluralistic concept of identity not only solves some theoretical issues but also forms the only framework in which the possibility of dialogue can be assured.

"I asked where do you come from? Smiling in surprise, he said: O my soul! Half of me comes from Turkestan, the other half from Farghaneh! Half from water and clay, half from the soul and heart; half from the seashore, half from old pearls! I requested: be patient with me, as I am your relative. He then replied: Oh, I do not differentiate between 'a relative' and 'the Other'."

The wonderful consequence of this approach is that if absolute identity does not exist, neither can absolute otherness. Identities can therefore become of an inclusive nature, rather than a divisive one.

The composite nature of identities is best exemplified by civilizations. As is well known, civilizations are large-scale historical identities that go beyond ethnic, linguistic and religious boundaries.

Nowadays, many different entities hitherto belonging to the same civilization are independent nations living within national boundaries. The negative consequences of particularity can be observed in the fact that most of them define themselves solely in nationalistic terms. It is this emphasis put upon unique national or ethnic characteristics that has given rise to many antagonisms, disputes and even wars. In fact, the disastrous effects of the ideology of the pure race are being produced, in our time, by the ideology of a pure nation or culture. The ideology of ethnic cleansing has its roots in the idea of a pure nation, a pure ethnic group or a pure culture. Plato: Holding an opinion or a pre-conviction leads to the suppression of questions. Opinion carries a power which veils us from the realization that we do not know. It resists accepting our ignorance, and exercises its curious tendency to manifest and diffuse itself to evolve into the general opinion. This tendency will subtly become a form of prejudice or self-interest.

An idea can only be born if the fertile mental womb is receptive to questions, which are as waves on the sea of openness. We cannot, then, halt the process of giving birth to the ripened idea, even if it causes us pain through disturbing the opinion we are accustomed to.

Rumi: "Blood does not become sweet milk until your fortune gives birth to a new babe." For bitter dark blood will turn into sweet white milk only if, firstly, the seed of the new idea is sown and, secondly, the necessary time and the process are secured. In the context of our discussion, this could be conceptualized as a metaphor in which the seeds are questions and the process is genuine dialogue.

Mongi Bousnina

Director-General of the Arab League
Education, Culture and Science Organization
(ALECSO)

First, I would like to thank His Excellency, the Macedonian President, and the honourable Director-General of UNESCO for inviting ALECSO to this conference. I would also like to thank the Macedonian authorities for the warm welcome they have given us, and the kindness they have shown to the organisation that I represent.

Addressing the issue of cultural diversity begs the question of how we can approach it in the context of the globalisation that pervades our world today. What action should we take, in this era of new information and communications technology to prevent a range of different cultures from dying out, giving way to a single culture? How can the universal and the particularistic flourish in tandem, rather than hinder each other? It is incumbent upon us all today to address this critical and pressing question.

One can hardly forget that the sad events of 11 September 2001 at the World Trade Centre have unfortunately given a new lease of life to the notorious theory of the doomsday scenario of the clash of civilizations. The rift caused was deep indeed, and the wound inflicted, painful. The proponents of sedition lost no time in using these regrettable events. They launched into the wide-scale dissemination of a culture of hatred and exclusion of the other. They turned diversity into antagonism, otherness, into hostility. Difference became an unbridgeable gap.

Consistent with its mission, and with the support of men of good will, foremost of whom is Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, ALECSO has never failed to make every effort to disseminate a culture of peace, freedom and active fraternity among men. In keeping with the political and ethical guidelines set for it by Arab leaders, ALECSO thus only expresses the essentially pluralistic option of Arab culture, a choice that has persisted for thousands of years.

A view of pluralism, as the mere accumulation of unrelated, diverse elements would be very wrong. Pluralism cannot result from duplication, the juxtaposition of different elements, or the mere addition of homogeneous components. On the contrary, the pluralism of a culture is what makes it the living and creative expression of an original synthesis of diverse elements.

Indeed, inherent in culture are unfailing grace and inadmissible generosity, and a sense of giving and welcoming, integral to its make-up.

Judging from the spirit of Arab culture, for example, the latter is not so much a closed system recognisable by its objective relational structures, and by the customs and outward appearance of those who have adopted it. Rather, it is more of a tangible, unified organic entity, of a highly spiritual nature. The very fact that each part of this culture is a living culture in its own right, with an independent way of thinking and a living soul of its own, bears testimony to this.

A foundational generosity, “the spirit of Andalusia”, precisely forbids turning a culture into an exclusive doctrine or an instrument of domination. As the cult of humanity, culture enshrines respect for the other, as much as self-respect; at its very core is communication, nay communion. Failure to acknowledge this will unavoidably lead humankind to mistake the lack of culture for a culture.

What name should indeed be given to the surging aversion to Islam, often coupled with a creeping hatred of Arabs? How can we term this kind of terrorism, feeding on bad feeling all over the world, to these sermons full of hatred delivered by all sorts of fundamentalists, both religious and secular, both in the East and in the West? These fundamentalists in fact invent the very components of the “clash of civilizations,” by promoting their duplication worldwide, and, most of all, by implementing them.

Cultural diversity provides us with a substantive argument that cannot be reduced to “polite manners,” respectful of customs and civilities, and susceptible to picturesque or exotic attractions.

The promotion of cultures and intercultural dialogue requires an ethical and political stand.

Since cultural diversity does not result from geographic difference, it is not the product of racial diversity either. It does not depend on the size of the body, the colour of the eyes, the shape of the skull, or any hierarchy of cultures. Rather, it is the result of the long historical process of continuity of cultures, in which accumulation and accretion have made us what we are today.

Admittedly, since Hippocrates, the famous Greek physician and author of *On Airs, Waters, and Places*, an axiomatic determinism has, with varying degrees of inflexibility, ever subordinated values to facts, the ideal to the real, and culture to climatic or biological factors in the human estate. Neither Plato in his *Laws*, nor Aristotle in his *Politics*, nor Ibn Khaldoun in his *Prolegomena*, nor even Montesquieu in *The Spirit of Laws* have questioned it.

Alas, this long positivistic tradition seems to leave little room for the uncertain experience of history, the spontaneity of human liberty, and the gracious, unfathomable and ever unpredictable, creative impulse of man.

In our opinion, all cultures are equal in terms of dignity; none is naturally doomed to rejection, or deserves to die. Most of all, none is destined to inevitably dominate the others. The very existence of a culture alone is its *raison d'être*. It alone is enough to guarantee its right to prosper. At the end of the day, a theory of culture can be identified with a theory of humankind, and no man deserves to die.

On the international scene, this position of respect for all cultures started with legitimately claiming for itself the status of a mere cultural exception. Thanks to the efforts of UNESCO and regional educational organisations, including ALECSO, we now have a new instrument that can be used worldwide, the universal declaration on cultural diversity. This is a frame of reference designed for states, government bodies, NGOs and civil society associations. It provides the necessary regulatory principles for any action to promote the culture of peace, respect for difference and acknowledgement of the other.

ALECSO, which works at achieving the same ideal, and has the same ambition as UNESCO, is delighted at this. It is necessary today that we close ranks to confront lack of culture, ignorance and fanaticism, the breeding grounds of every form of terrorism throughout the world.

In these conditions, it is incumbent on those who uphold peace in the world to work for dialogue among cultures, religions and peoples.

Fight ignorance with knowledge, dispel darkness with light, defeat the logic of war with a logic of peace, this is, in sum the mission entrusted by Arab states to ALECSO.

In its action, ALECSO is only putting into practice the spirit that marks the entire Arab culture, irrespective of any protocol or concern for "political correctness", and regardless of burning issues and sad current events, particularly in the Middle East. Indeed, because of both its history and structure, Arab culture is fundamentally varied and pluralistic, and has always cultivated difference.

In our opinion, rehabilitating Arab culture in other people's eyes begins with a step forward towards the other. At any rate, we have made this choice.

Age-old Arab culture, we all know, is a synthesis, born of the marvels of Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, patiently brought together with the mysteries of India and the Far East, the feats of the Phoenicians, the boldness of the Carthaginians, and the wisdom of the Greeks and Romans. In truth, it would be more appropriate to describe it as a melting pot of highly spiritual cultures, in which the human soul, totally purified, was able to open up to the Absolute and receive the Heavenly message.

Indeed, God chose our land as the locus of divine revelation, first Ur, then Egypt, Palestine and Arabia. Abraham, the father of all prophets, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad all had the same message: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, love your neighbour as yourself.

By adopting the Greek heritage, Arab culture has brought together the rational approach of scientific investigation and this sublime spiritual dimension, now the common heritage of humanity, which some people are now trying to misrepresent and pervert. Humanity today is indebted to this element for its scientific advance and its technological achievements. Thus, without incurring any distortion, Arab culture has been able to have a good understanding of the world, and be attuned to both men and God. Similarly, it has been able to make its voice heard in the world.

For this reason, by virtue of both its historical development and its political and ethical content, Arab culture is universal; yet it still lacks the adequate means, and the highly sophisticated tools of our time, to duly make itself known throughout the world.

This is why no one should be allowed to use cultural diversity to argue for a particularistic view of culture contrary to freedom and human rights. The theory of cultural diversity should not provide an alibi for those who, like any backward-looking people, are directly or indirectly trying to evade the demands of modernity. Neither can it be used to impose on humanity a frame of mind, and likes and dislikes.

However, universality cannot be achieved spontaneously or mechanically. It results from the action of man in his grappling with the inertia of the material world, the vicissitudes of history, and the dangers threatening some culture or other for geopolitical reasons.

Admittedly, the values of modernity, democracy and human rights, are not accessible to all in an identical manner. As an ancient eulogist of human wisdom has said, *una est religio in rituum*

varietate. In this respect, a pedagogic approach is in order.

Failure to consider this aspect has caused, at least for the most part, the collapse of many modernization attempts. Rashness can be lethal sometimes.

Nonetheless, we should be wary of realistic laziness. As we have already seen, cultural diversity cannot adapt to naturalism at the theoretical level. Nor does it fit in with realism at the practical level. In the first case, the result would be necessitarianism and racism, in the second we would be reduced to inaction and quietism. Only a voluntaristic approach can be salutary. It may be pedestrian and painful, but it is the

path of generous and conquering faith. Humanity can indeed expect a lot of it.

Only a voluntaristic policy can meet the requirements of peace on the international scene. We certainly have a lot to do before we can learn to live together: rethink our co-operation methods and modes of exchange, reform our educational systems, disseminate a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding, make headway in the fight against poverty, and reduce economic, social and cultural disparities as much as possible.

We must say loud and clear that globalization is liable to change. It never manifests itself as a destiny or an inescapable fate. It is, on the contrary, a dynamic process and a historical moment in the general evolution of humanity. It is to be apprehended as a way to recreate our world, and change our common abode. For this reason, it cannot be foisted on people. Nor can it be improvised.

What is required is a thoroughgoing, consistent approach, which closely binds together the cultural, intellectual, spiritual and political dimensions. The success of such an undertaking depends in the final analysis on the actual improvement of living conditions on a daily basis. Indeed, people have no reason to entertain lofty thoughts if they have to lead a low – and often very low – life.

Cultures cannot engage in dialogue with each other, and get to know and recognise one another, without sustained attention being given to teaching languages and the humanities. Similar emphasis should be laid on the human sciences, comparative religious studies, and a re-reading and re-writing of one another's history. This will help foster open mindedness, discernment and aesthetic and moral sense among the rising generations, thus providing them with the best bulwarks against fanaticism and terrorism.

As long as our schools are the breeding ground of our future, educational reform will be a moral imperative and political duty that no one can evade.

Ara Abramian

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador
for the Dialogue among Civilizations

I extend my sincere gratitude to you both, Mr President and Mr Director-General, for the honour to be invited to this important regional Forum. The problems debated today are very significant for me, especially taking into account my recent nomination as the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the dialogue among civilizations.

The proof for the subject of our conference being important is a bunch of crises and conflicts that remain to be a threat to the peace and security. This long-suffering region did not evade them either suffering more than ones last century. This period of development of the mankind is characterized by globalization that has covered almost all sides of our life. It, undoubtedly, brings along many advantages and reveals new opportunities to solve the problems the mankind is facing now. At the same time, globalization entails new threats and challenges which mankind faced in the twenty first century. The principal ones are international terrorism and expansion of weapons of mass destruction. It is their symbiosis that they are the basic threat to the world civilization in the new century.

Unfortunately, among the threats and challenges there are still regional and local conflicts that should be solved. The dialogue among civilizations is aimed at solving and preventing those conflicts.

Nowadays, the functions that should be related to the dialogue among civilizations are quite multifaceted. Let alone the overcoming of interethnic, intercultural and intercivilizational barriers, this is also counteracting negative consequences of globalization, strengthening through the humanitarian sphere of democratic institutions and values, etc.

Presently, there is a great need to overcome conflicts and disunity of various ethnic and religious groups on the Balkan Peninsula, under the aegis of international community and UNESCO as a leader, by means of a dialogue of cultures, religions, and by way of patience, sympathy and constructive co-operation.

It is not accidental that South-Eastern Europe has become a priority for UNESCO in the framework of the Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007. This is a wise choice, based on the philosophy of the dialogue among civilizations and on the potential of the Organization as a leading partner in the humanitarian sphere.

Your region has given to the world magnificent examples achieved for millenniums of development. This is testified by monuments of tangible and intangible heritage of the mankind, including those which are embodied in chefs d' oeuvre of architecture and art. Many times in the history wars and conflicts, up to the most recent ones, have left serious wounds keeping the pain of distrust in this region. That is why UNESCO has chosen it as a priority in its work not only because it is one of the world crossroads of cultures and civilizations, but also because it is here that one awaits for a break in the sphere of protection universal human ethical values, preservation of pluralism and intercultural dialogue, strengthening of co-operation among peoples by way of raising the scientific, education and humanitarian potential of the region.

Being the President of the "Union of Armenians of Russia", I am well familiar with the problems of Armenian communities, scattered worldwide. They have accumulated an enormous experience of coexistence with other peoples as well as with the people of this region where the Armenian people have lived since the Roman Times. By the way, the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire, Vasili the First, the founder of Armenian dynasty that was called as Macedonian, came from that region. I am deeply convinced that the Armenian people having found itself in the epicentre of destructive historical cataclysms has proved by its thousand-year history that there are no fatal reasons for conflicts and, moreover, for wars between carriers of different cultures, that the preservation of the cultural diversity, of a variety of civilizations and of their tolerance in mutual relations are the very guarantee for developing the dialogue among civilizations as well as for ensuring peace and consent among them.

These objectives are guidelines for a large preparatory work carried out in order to convene in Moscow in October of this year the constituent congress of the World Armenian Organization. Its task will be to promote the process of Armenian communities, integrated in the Islamic world, in the West and the East, becoming a force of interethnic consolidation, so that together with other champions of cultural and civilization tolerance and pluralism they assist to render a humane quality to relations among peoples and to update bases of the world order. In this respect the vector of our work is completely congruent with high purposes and ideals of UNESCO.

I would like to emphasize that the Russian Federation widely uses the approach founded on the principles of the dialogue among civilizations. In the multinational Russia the national policy is an integral component of the federal policy of its transformation into a prosperous,

strong and democratic state. Preservation of integrity of the Russian state will in many respects depend on the successful solution of this problem. This being the case the issue of formation and strengthening of the civil society is nowadays as acute as never before. The example of the Armenian diaspora in Russia shows that for the last three years following consequent efforts of the "Union of Armenians of Russia" this diaspora turns to become an active participant of this process. The experience of our Union shows that an ethnic public organization, having correctly chosen the target and forms of its activity, is capable to act in the role of an efficient mechanism of realization of both national and ethnic interests of the community and of the interaction with authorities for the participation in elaboration and accomplishment of the federal national policy.

As one of small links in the process of dialogue among civilizations the "Union of Armenians of Russia" is a partner of the state in strengthening friendly and good-neighbourly relations of Russia with other countries, first of all with Armenia. We render a real help in the fields of education, science, culture, preservation of the multilingualism. At the same time we feel a need to have elaborated such a mechanism of joint activity with the state authorities which would allow to cope with such serious problems as radical extremism, nationalism, arbitrariness of officials and inactivity of law-enforcement agencies.

Being convinced of the necessity to unite the public potential of numerous ethnic organizations in the name of strengthening statehood and civil society in Russia, the "Union of Armenians of Russia" has launched an initiative to create a Public Chamber of Nationalities under the President of the Russian Federation. The work in this direction is already being conducted. The round table of representatives of the state and of the civil society held in Moscow has actively supported this idea rich in prospects and correlating with thoughts within UNESCO about ways of constructing the dialogue among civilizations. One speaks here about an innovative structure that should determine effective measures and mechanisms of interaction between the state and numerous national and associations of peoples living in Russia.

Dear participants of the Forum, these are several practical aspects of our work. May I now voice out considerations concerning prospects of the international co-operation within the framework of the dialogue among civilizations that is a priority issue for UNESCO.

Russia attaches a first-rate importance to the efforts of the Organization aimed at organizing a multilateral co-operation in the global humanitarian sphere and to its catalytic role for the work on numerous

projects in the field of education, science and culture. The President of the Russian Federation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, as it follows from my regular contacts with them, consider UNESCO as one of the leaders in the whole UN system and support the efforts of its Director-General, esteemed Mister Matsuura, on reforming the Organization and raising its efficiency.

In the quality of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the dialogue among civilizations, which is new to me, I feel an enormous responsibility for the development of the process initiated by UNESCO in order to promote the intercultural and the intercivilizational dialogue. It is unacceptable that once again, as it happened many times in previous centuries, any people, big or small, becomes a victim of new tectonic shifts in interethnic and intercivilizational relations during the epoch of globalization. In this respect the role of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors should be fully called for. I think, that my colleagues, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors and Artists for Peace, whose civic stand has a huge weight not only in their countries, but also on different continents, would, for certain, support me in the following.

The dialogue among civilizations is the base and the guarantee of peace between peoples. It should help to avoid wars and destruction of the natural, cultural tangible and intangible heritage of mankind, to prevent dissemination on our planet of the plague of international terrorism, to open the prospect of preservation for everyone of his "small" motherland with its languages and traditions as well as of ensuring a sustainable development for it. When one takes this road, the role of representatives of the international civil society becomes obvious: UNESCO has singled them out as conductors of its ideals in the world, and one of the important directions of formation of the international authority of the Organization depends on them.

Pondering today at our Forum over methods and means of promoting the dialogue among civilizations, I would like to call the participants to create a clear mechanism of interaction between countries, UNESCO and Goodwill Ambassadors on this issue. I am glad that on the eve of the 32nd session of the General Conference together with the UNESCO Secretariat and the Permanent Delegation of Russia to UNESCO we have outlined a number of steps in this field.

In the conclusion I would like to heartily thank Mister President Trajkovski for his initiative on an all-round strengthening of peace and stability in the region. The Macedonian leadership has made this field its priority coinciding with the priorities of the international community. This

is a valuable example of interaction of a Member-state with UNESCO. Let us wish to all participants a great success in this walk of life so important for the mankind.



Branko Crvenkovski, Macedonian Prime Minister and Ara Abramian, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Dialogue among Civilizations

Elizabeth Rehn

Representative
Stability Pact

I am representing the Stability Pact for the South Eastern Europe here and, on behalf of it, I want to express our gratitude for the very good arrangements that have been made for such an important conference as this one with the leaders from South-East Europe. We have to remember, however, that if there is to be a real dialogue with real results, it is at the grassroots levels where the job must be done. Grassroots NGOs want to work for dialogue. They have to take it as their own responsibility because it is something that they want to do.

At the Stability Pact, we have concentrated on many of the aspects to be raised here during this Forum, especially those to be dealt with in the first Roundtable on Peace and Stability during which I shall be sharing my thoughts on such issues as: media and cross boarder co-operation and parliamentarian co-operation. As I find these to be of extreme importance, I should like, at this time, to make some comments on the issues.

Firstly allow me to speak of Culture. Culture is a word that is not often mentioned within the European Union. They speak more so about the economy and things like that. It is appropriate that culture has been mentioned here in the way it has, because knowledge and understanding of culture is the gateway to co-operation through dialogue. Especially amongst young people and youth in general. I recall – during my time as the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Sarajevo – a pop concert, organised by a Serb entertainer where thousands and thousands of young people were gathered to listen. That was a real dialogue! No one in the audience was asking ‘Are you a Croat?’ ‘Are you a Bosnian?’ ‘Are you a Serb?’ – they were just young people gathered together enjoying a great concert. Also, about a month ago here in Macedonia, I watched a football tournament with youngsters at which all the so-called different ethnicities represented. It was first held in Manovo and then in Gostivar. There were hundreds of youngsters who had such fun finding out more about each other. We must admit that it is through these small steps that we are really creating the full good cake in cross boarder co-operation. There are so many opportunities for this sort of cross-cultural work, the Ohrid region, has many examples of excellent initiatives with Greece and Albania, and with the rest of Macedonia. We should really delve into questions relating to culture much more strongly than we have.

I should now like to touch on the subject of Media. This is an issue I strongly feel that we ought never forget. Professionalism of the media in this region, South Eastern Europe, has not always been excellent. To be sure, there are many other countries in the world where media professionalism is equally not that excellent. Yet the media are instrumental in either making or destroy efforts towards reconciliation. It is important that we take great efforts at training those who work in all media to strengthen their professionalism, but also the administration of media and its ownership. Oftentimes media representatives are writing what their owners want them to write. This is not ideal for true and real dialogue.

Now, I would like to mention just a few words on a subject that has, thus far not been mentioned at all. Gender equality. While no one has spoke of this, we ought to remember that over half of the population of the world – and in conflicts and wars – is women. Women are those, who nowadays, are the victims – raped, tortured. However, when it comes to peace negotiations – to the peace process – they are almost totally forgotten. We must honour UN Resolution 1325 adopted in the year 2000. Women should be enhanced in their roles in all different positions, because they are really excellent at dialogue. We can do a great deal for dialogue between different cultures. I happen to come from a country, Finland, which has a female President, so I am of course, not blaming these excellent Presidents we had with us here in the first session; they cannot help that they are male. I do, however, think that it is important that NGOs and women's groups be taken seriously, to become part of the dialogue, because, only through inclusion of all can we really work for reconciliation, for understanding between all peoples.

Vladimir Petrovsky

Chairman, Dialogue among Civilizations Association

Former UN Under Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office at Geneva

First of all I would like to add my words of high appreciation to the President of the Republic, Mr Boris Trajkovski, to the President of the Government, Mr Branko Crvenkovski, and to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, as well as the co-sponsors of our Forum, for convening this meeting.

The location of the Forum in the country at the cross roads of civilization, together with the composition of its participants, creates a favourable environment in which to discuss the dialogue among civilizations thoroughly and to work out ingenious approaches and recommendations for practical actions.

The United Nations experience in dealing with the "Dialogue among Civilizations" demonstrates the collective resolve of the international community to search for a new approach to global interactions and a determination to build a better tomorrow for future generations based on a new paradigm of understanding and mutual respect.

Too often, the international community has seen how misunderstandings about a nation, a religion, a culture or an individual had led to mistrust, fear, prejudice, dispute and even war. Instead of accepting that international dynamics will lead civilizations to clash, the world community would flourish by striving to create a bounteous crossroad of civilizations. Harmony through cultural diversity should be accepted as the only way for creating a culture of peace, stability and well being. It is our belief that the dialogue among civilizations leads to the emergence of a global society, multi-cultural in form, and democratic in content; a universal understanding of such human values where ideas meet, while hatred and discord disappear.

This dialogue among civilizations will therefore encompass all nations and people regardless of their race, creed or national origin. The call for dialogue stems from the necessity to pilot the global changes in a non-violent, democratic, and evolutionary way. Such a dialogue will try through parallel actions to help reduce tensions and conflicts and to contribute to global peace and security in all aspects.

It is imperative that each and every member of the international community takes part in the process of promoting and facilitating this dialogue. A better articulation of different ideas, visions and aspirations

will require the engagement of intellectuals, artists, the business community at large and, naturally, political leaders and diplomats.

The urgent and sincere determination to continue the effort created by the 2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations led to the development of a separate organisation for this purpose. On 20th January 2003, the Association 'Dialogue among Civilizations' was established and the next day it was announced by myself, the Association's Chairman, most appropriately at the annual reception of Maecenas World Heritage Foundation at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The event was attended by the diplomatic community and representatives of international organisations.

The Association "Dialogue among Civilizations" is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation. Its headquarters is situated in Geneva, host city of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. "Dialogue among Civilizations" already started acting in Moscow, and in Amsterdam. The aim of the Association is to encourage a multi-cultural and inter-religious political and diplomatic comprehensive dialogue as mutual learning; to make a contribution to understanding, tolerance, respect for diversity as well as solidarity between countries, regions, and population groups, with the ultimate goal of promoting a peaceful global society and assisting the United Nations in its efforts to achieve the aims set out in its Charter.

Dialogue among Civilizations shall endeavour to achieve its objectives by organizing and enhancing cultural events (e.g. exhibitions, concerts, ballet and theatre performances, film festivals, sports etc.) accompanied by discussion fora and other ways of encouraging dialogue in all aspects. Dialogue among Civilizations seeks to be complementary to existing efforts and strives towards maximal co-operation with all organisations in the field.

The complementary objective for Dialogue among Civilizations can be formulated as making the ensuing dialogue a constructive problem-solving approach; to invest in democracy; to assist maturity into a more cohesive society; and to create alliances of moderate future political and business leaders.

Dialogue among Civilizations will concentrate on the positive side of the process of interaction of civilizations and mutual enrichment. The issues to be specifically approached are what I shall call the "five Hs". These include: human values; human security; human development; human rights; and humanitarian threshold in collective actions.

In approaching these aims of a new emerging global society, there is only one way - democracy, the rule of law and responsible visionary

governance. Dialogue can and should triumph over discord. It should flourish and bear fruit in every field of human endeavour. Without the dialogue taking place every day among all nations, no peace can be lasting and no prosperity can be secure.

Dialogue among Civilizations wants to create a database for political solutions to problems which were developed by the United Nations and other multilateral structures. The DAC will forward these solutions -from different backgrounds and cultures- at forums and symposia to support the development of the processes towards sustainable peace between peoples and nations.-

Dialogue among Civilizations attaches particular importance to the education of the younger generation and the need for their increasing awareness of supporting an emerging global society through cultural, inter-religious as well as political and diplomatic dialogue. Young people should learn and understand how to handle in a positive way interaction between civilizations. Dialogue among Civilizations aims to encourage public awareness through support of targeted artistic creativity and of preservation of designated art and monuments within the UN system.

The principle projected activities of Dialogue among Civilizations include:

1. Initiation and complementation of regular consultations at regional, multilateral and international levels;
2. Initiation, organisation and management of, and co-operation with, targeted regional and international organisations, conferences and other efforts on Dialogue among Civilizations;
3. Planning and implementation of series of international manifestations supplemented by related lectures and discussions;
4. Initiation and coordination of DAC working groups and websites;
5. Creation of a databank for the prevention and management of conflicts;
6. Initiation of Centres of Learning for the young people on necessity for understanding other cultures and necessity of intercultural and inter-religious political and diplomatic dialogue;
7. Promotion of dialogue among civilization through media and internet; and
8. Support to targeted artistic creativity and to conservation of works of art and monuments within the UN system.

Malgorzata Pawlisz

President

International Academy of Dialogue Among Cultures and Civilizations, Poland

"The human person [...] is that of his/her relation to beings outside the authentic area constituting the man"

Plato

Let me express my congratulations for the success of this excellent gathering here in Ohrid and let me do it on behalf of two institutions which I have an honour to represent – the Polish Asia Pacific Council and International Academy of Dialogue Among Cultures and Civilizations. It has been a perfect idea to invite such venerable persons and organisations to this sunny place with the symbol of light in the flag that represents not only a good weather but also inner brightness – as Mr President Boris Trajkovski has said during our first plenary session. Thank you, distinguished organisers, for this inspiration.

Now, I allow myself to say a few words about our Polish initiatives. Polish Asia Pacific Council was established in 1997 and gathers eminent Polish scholars, former Ambassadors to many, especially Oriental, countries, members of our Government and public administration – as private persons, together with journalists and businessmen. Trying to play a role of independent advisory body functioning in a form of think-tank, our Association is run by its President – Professor Gawlikowski – the famous Polish Sinologist, its Vice-Presidents – active politicians and intellectuals, former ministers of past governments and by my humble person as Secretary-General.

The first three years of intensive debates has led us to conclusion that contemporary world awaits genuine intercultural dialogue based on respect for human and social rights, on recognition of the right of every country, continent and civilization to maintain and to develop its own cultural identity. New problems require new tools. The process of globalisation with its positive and negative faces is a tremendous challenge for those who feel responsible for future shape of our common globe. As a result of this phenomenon, one may see substantial benefits but as many are visible new plagues like the increase of nationalism, fundamentalism and terrorism together with the re-barbarisation of our western post-modern societies.

Thus, starting in the year 2000, each year we have organised conference devoted to the issue of most required, indispensable dialogue

among cultures and civilizations. The last event of this kind that gathered around 600 participants was organised in Warsaw in April, this year. Polish Prime Minister Mr Leszek Miller gave his high patronage to the conference while Polish President Mr Aleksander Kwasniewski received Members of the Honorary Committee of the conference. Among members of the Committee we had a great honour and happiness to welcome His Excellency Mr Giandomenico Picco, one of the chairmen of today's conference and His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Jalali, President of General Conference of UNESCO – both excellent speakers and irreplaceable friends, representing highest UN and UNESCO authorities. It has been a great privilege for us to host such great and unique personalities. One of the organisers was also the distinguished Polish National Committee for UNESCO. Hosting eminent presidents and chairmen of many international organisations like the International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations from Tehran, ISESCO from Rabat, the International Crisis Group from Brussels, the Asia-Europe Foundation from Singapore, the Arab World Institute from Paris, the India International Centre from New Delhi, the Centre for Multicultural Studies from Adelaide, the United Nations University from Tokyo and many others has been a real pleasure.

The topic of that conference was "Dialogue Among Civilizations – the Key to a Safe Future". We worked in two plenary sessions and 22 parallel ones in a framework of six general themes covering economic, political, social and psychological, philosophical and religious, educational and communicational, media and art dimensions of dialogue. At the conference, a new global award entitled "Ambassador of Dialogue" announced its first list of laureats and institutions in five categories: science, international relations, business, art and media. Among the awarded eminencies, we may find present here and mentioned already, living star of mediation, negotiation and dialogue, "a man without a gun" as title of the book on his personal unusual experience says. Congratulations, once again. In this material, spread among our guests at the conference you may find a whole list of Ambassadors of Dialogue. This Award is an expression of a deep respect, admiration and gratitude to those persons and institutions that for many tens of years have worked for salvation of our world and for protection of our ability to be the real human beings.

The next world conference on dialogue among cultures and civilizations as a fundamental idea for the human species – as a new political, cultural and social paradigm – is planned to be organised in 2005, also in Warsaw in close collaboration with Asia-Europe Foundation and, as

we do hope, with the most significant and important organisation working in this area – UNESCO. We have just begun our endeavours to organise four preparatory seminars: one in Iran in collaboration with – let me say – fathers of an idea of dialogue – Iranians and precisely speaking, the International Centre for Dialogue Among Civilizations in Tehran, next in Pakistan, another in Australia and last in Poland.

At the aforementioned conference in Warsaw a few months ago we officially and internationally launched the International Academy of Dialogue Among Cultures and Civilizations – as an educational body aiming to be a forum for practical training and permanent debates, of research and designing new projects. Respecting my time constraints let me not present the whole programme of the Academy, mentioning only the international camps for students and schoolmates from secondary level schools which we plan to organise next year in winter near Cracow and in Germany with our strategic partner there – Trier University. Our main target groups are teachers, journalists, young people, young politicians, young scientists and young managers and artists. Please let me use this unique opportunity to invite representatives of new generation from your countries to take part and to co-create a new civilizational ship sailing towards new lands of our common future.

Since the dawn of history humanity has focused attention on ideas, manifesting in this way their ideotropism so characteristic of the species. Prophets speak, philosophers and academics discuss using the language of ideas, while huge social movements come to exist, historic transformations occur, and mental and spiritual changes marked by tensions follow their word. Our idea of genuine dialogue among cultures and civilizations shared by everybody here is a perfect and exact expression of the spirit of this time – the 21st Century. Maybe that is the secret of its growing attractiveness. Let's create together a great world movement of promoters and applicators of this very human concept that may help the human species regain the great sense of its existence.

Statements by Representatives of Heads of State and Government

Vladimir Voronin

President of Moldova

Message delivered by Valerian Cristea, Vice Prime Minister of Moldova

First of all, let me greet you and express my sincere thanks to the President of the host country, Mr Boris Trajkovski for his kind invitation to participate in this greatly important meeting.

Mr Vladimir Voronin, the president of my country, had the intention of participating in the proceedings of this prestigious Forum to discuss with you the problems and issues that concern us all. Unfortunately, his extremely tight agenda, especially during this time (here I refer to two subsequent national holidays), did not allow him the opportunity to achieve this wish, but he did ask me personally to extend to you a cordial salute.

Mr Trajkovski, your splendid experience at the national and international levels, the respect that you enjoy, are, of course, a guarantee for the success of this Forum. All of us who are present in this hall would like to wish the Forum successful deliberations. It is an honour for me to join all the speakers that preceded me and to greet cordially the organizers and the distinguished guests present at this significant event.

I hope that we all agree with the appeal, which can often be heard from the high forums tribunes, that there are no small and big states in culture, art, philosophy, in their history, in the perception itself to see and to understand the world. On this subject every country and every nation have their own words to tell and the experience to share, my country not being an exception.

Because of that, with a feeling of pride and enthusiasm I would like to present you, on behalf of my country, which has recently celebrated its 12th anniversary of independence, several important reflections regarding the role of those determinative organizations for the human destinies at the beginning of this contradictory millennium.

Even if the independence of the Republic of Moldova is relatively recent, the period that had elapsed was marked by historical events. And presently, my country, like the majority of the countries in this region, has undergone a period of painful transition and radical changes within society. Gone are the obstacles, while this process may have been difficult, it was also a passionate period. In a way, this transition meant achievement, building common aspirations for everybody.

Due to the fact that we are an integral part of the ancient continent and its millennial civilization, for us coming from another system, the term "young democracy" is used. These democracies need support and encouragement for their future. The role then of UNESCO, UN, EU, Balcanic Club, the Holy See, and other organizations of great importance, becomes crucial.

The term "democracy" of course would not be viable without such notions as "tolerance", "non-violence", "non-war", understanding and love between the nations and its most supreme aspects.

With special respect, I reiterate my gratitude towards President Boris Trajkovski and to the organizers of this Forum for supporting and encouraging this initiative.

We are convinced that such a Forum within this region can serve only to fortify the peace process and the dialogue between the countries and peoples of the region. We believe that it will also contribute to the spirit of overcoming difficulties and obstacles, making them feel less painful. Also to the definitive elimination of past mistakes which are regrettable. Obviously, the major objective here it the achievement of an adaptable coexistence for all peoples of this region.

We welcome any initiative that organizes regional conferences entitled "Dialogue among civilizations". Regrettably, our recent history has so painfully reminded us that it is dialogue – getting to know and to listen

to each other and to be heard – which is vitally important for every country specifically and for all of humanity in general.

That is why I would like to emphasize once again the ardent necessity to unite our efforts for the idea of a global peace becoming our common future.

Today we are going through an historic period, vulnerable I would say, a period where regional conflicts and terrorism in several areas of the globe can escalate in proportions more or less bloody. Taking into account this aspect, I remain inspired by the ideal represented in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”. This proverbial phrase of high humanistic spirit creates the hope that this Forum will have beneficial consequences upon the profitable and mutually advantageous co-operation for the people’s goodness; inhabitants of this small planet, which during its long and painful history faced prosperous periods only when the cultural interconnection and the peaceful way of thinking became primordial objectives of human existence.

Aleksandar Kwasniewski

President of Poland

Message presented by Jolanta Szymanek Deresz, Head of the President's Administration

On behalf of the President of the Republic of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, I would like to warmly greet all the participants of the Forum and to pay tribute to its patrons, President Boris Trajkovski and UNESCO's Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, for their initiative to organise a regional debate on such an important and, at the same time, topical and exciting subject.

Dialogue among civilizations is a process that will mould the face of the 21st century. This Forum represents an attempt at reflection on this challenge; it is a major contribution to the worldwide debate initiated in 2001, proclaimed a Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations by the UN.

Entering the third millennium we realise ever more clearly that today's world is multipolar and polyphonous, that it represents a mosaic of various cultures and various historical traditions. In the conditions of increasing globalization, there are less and less separate, autonomous phenomena. For this reason, dialogue among civilizations is today more than a mere humanistic postulate, more than curiosity about the exotic and the different. It is also about the need to look for what we have in common, to learn unity in diversity. At the same time, we have to shape our sensitivity in such a way as to know how to respect other people's identity, their need to be distinct, their different view of life and the world. This is desirable and possible, in defiance of the occasionally forwarded pessimistic visions of an inevitable 'clash of civilizations'.

This Forum is proceeding at a special, difficult time. After the terrorist attack on America of 11 September two years ago, the world found itself faced with unprecedented threats. Terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction seriously undermine international security. Hotbeds of ethnic and religious tensions in various regions of the world are still smouldering. The situation in both Iraq and Afghanistan is far from stable. The state of Israeli-Palestinian relations remains dangerous and disquieting. Against this background, the advancing nominalization in the Balkans is a cause for optimism.

Europe, and in particular the Balkan region, has for centuries been a territory where Western civilization has met with the world of Islam, a place of difficult dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Poland, too, for centuries used to be home to a variety of nations, cultures and religions. Our historical experiences, notably starting from the 16th century, the time

of the Commonwealth of Two Nations, provide a practical example of creative interaction between Catholicism, Judaism, Orthodox Christianity and Islam. In a federative state, Poles, Lithuanians and Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, Tartars and Armenians lived for decades in one Motherland. A great deal has changed since, many wars and conflicts have swept across our country, state borders have changed; and yet, the memory of living together in a multinational state is still alive among us. We treat ethnic and religious minorities living in today's Poland with respect and amity. We have chosen openness, reconciliation, partnership and close co-operation in our relations with all our seven neighbours. We deeply believe in the universal significance of these values that should have a decisive impact on the shaping of relations between states and nations, now and in the future. These values constitute, moreover, one of the cornerstones of the European Union. That is why we regard both our traditions and our present experiences in this respect as one of the noteworthy, valuable elements contributed by Poland and by the Polish people to Europe undergoing the integration process: Europe firmly rooted in its own history, but also multiethnic and multicultural.

In today's world, even the largest civilizations, even those particularly focusing on their own identity, cannot develop in isolation. Modern information technologies, the expansion of communications, the processes of economic integration and increasing migration make contact areas between civilizations ever more numerous and ever wider, involving ever larger groups of people. There is more and more global and regional interdependence. Dialogue among civilizations must be about making us able to speak and to listen; to radiate outside and to draw from the others.

One should also take into consideration the impact of contemporary process, of globalization on dialogue among civilizations. We should be aware that the process of globalization is leading towards a more interconnected world not only in pure economic and financial terms but also allowing multidimensional culture contacts. These types of contacts should be strongly promoted by state partners of universal and regional dialogue aimed at developing a common approach towards solution of many problems we are facing today.

It is my profound hope that our Conference will contribute, even in its modest regional dimension, to building openness, tolerance and confidence between large groups of people and cultures in today's world. May an important message flow from Macedonian Ohrid to the international community, in such urgent need of understanding and co-operation on the threshold of the 21st century!

Ahmed Necdet Sezer

President of Turkey

Message presented by Sander Gurbuz, Minister of State

I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to H.E. President Boris Trajkovski, and to Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, for organizing this Regional Forum on "Dialogue among Civilizations".

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

The wide range of values that we today call civilization define the common level reached by humanity as a whole. These are values upheld by all religions, matured throughout a long period of interaction.

History reveals that harmony, peace and prosperity are on the rise during periods when mutual understanding, dialogue and co-operation is established among nations. Our past experiences teach us that discriminatory tendencies that cause peoples to exclude one another not only fuel conflicts but also deprive them of the opportunity of making mutually enriching contributions.

The past century witnessed great wars and untold destruction as well as very significant progress of human race. Scientific and technological innovations have opened new horizons greatly increasing the stability, prosperity and the quality of life and welfare of humanity. Respect for human rights and fundamental rights and freedoms have become the common value of the international community.

The United Nations and other platforms of international co-operation have proven that efforts aimed at world peace, harmony and solidarity can yield successful results.

However, while problems such as poverty and inequality in income distribution are yet to be solved, several new threats such as terrorism, environmental degradation, drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, racism, moral and cultural decay and intolerance have emerged.

These are indeed threats against humanity as a whole and unless they are effectively addressed they will sooner or later affect all societies in an increasingly globalized world.

One of the main threats that confronts humanity and requires urgent and collective action is terrorism. The terrorist attacks of September 11 have proven in a striking manner the frightening proportions reached by this threat.

Terror in all shapes and forms is a global scourge that has no boundaries. It would be mistaken to link it to any religion, ethnicity or culture.

To foster dialogue among civilizations, Turkey took the initiative and convened the Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the European Union member countries.

This Joint Forum met in Istanbul on 12-13 February 2002, under the title "Civilization and Harmony: the Political Dimension". It demonstrated the determination of the European Union and of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference to enhance the international harmony between different cultures, religions and philosophies.

The Istanbul Forum was unique in the sense that it was the first ever high-level meeting devoted to the need to intensify multicultural dialogue. 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.

In the same manner the Ohrid Regional Forum constitutes a concrete and useful step in implementing the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and complements the spirit of Istanbul.

Once again I would like to commend H.E. President Trajkovski and the Director-General of UNESCO Mr Matsuura for convening this forum and I extend my sincere wishes for a successful meeting, which I am confident will make a positive contribution to the international efforts in this respect.

George W. Bush

President of the United States of America

Message presented by Charles Ries

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs

I join others in saluting the legacy of Sergio Vieira de Mello, who has sadly been taken from us while helping to build democracy and political transition in Iraq. The United States salutes his contributions and we rededicate ourselves to the causes of human rights and peace to which he was committed.

I would like to thank our hosts, President Trajkovski, Director-General Matsuura of UNESCO, and Rabbi Schneier for their vision in organizing this meeting on issues critical to the world today.

The Dialogue among Civilizations is an important and welcome initiative in promoting better understanding among cultures and religions. It represents the triumph of communication and collaboration over the forces of isolation, mistrust and violence. It also recognizes that these forces can only triumph if leaders and people of good will do nothing. It embraces peace, democracy, and stability as the durable path toward a better life for each citizen of this region and beyond; a better life based on mutual good will, not on imposing one's will over another.

As we gather today on the shores of beautiful Lake Ohrid, I would like to extend the wishes of Secretary Powell for a successful Forum. Secretary Powell warmly welcomed the Forum, noting that Ohrid - where Macedonia's party leaders took a stand for peace by concluding the August 2001 Framework Agreement -- is a particularly fitting venue for the Dialogue.

The principles of human rights, rule of law, and mutual respect are beliefs held in common by all those who chose to participate in this dialogue. As President Bush declared:

"America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance." (President George W. Bush, January 29, 2002)

This regional Forum builds upon UN resolutions that reaffirm the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and that reinforce the essential notion that common humanity unites all civilizations.

It is this last theme - common humanity uniting all civilizations - which I want to highlight today in your regional Forum.

As we have heard this morning, reformist leaders throughout the region are walking the difficult painful path away from the legacies of the past. They are marching forward to develop solid institutions in order to preserve and protect individual freedoms and to help create whole and integrated societies, at peace with their neighbours.

This regional conference, and the worldwide efforts of UNESCO, will increase understanding between cultures.

The United States was proud to rejoin UNESCO in a decision that President Bush last September called "a symbol of our commitment to human dignity".

America hopes to lead by example. E pluribus unum – out of many, one – is a guiding principle of American political life. But this is still a work in progress for the United States. Each day we see examples of intolerance and division in the society. And each day we work personally, and collectively to try and use our laws and institutions to build a better, more tolerant society.

America hopes to lead also by offering direct assistance through our development policies and educational exchange programs. These programs have been designed to help you accelerate democratic and market-oriented reforms that help to complete regional integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

These efforts are critical to fulfilling President Bush's vision of a Europe whole, free and at peace.

Just as each of our efforts to build more tolerant, pluralistic societies must be wrought through daily attention and care, so must we work together to improve the lives and safety of our citizens. When we review global events, we see that the core principles, values, beliefs and ideals are today fundamentally challenged as never before.

We must work within our societies and across our national borders to help each other solve the multitude of problems that plague us in the modern world. These problems not only degrade our standard of living, they literally rob the earnings of hardworking citizens and keep people from realizing their dreams -- from trafficking in women and children, to alien smuggling, organized crime and corruption, arms proliferation, regional environmental degradation and the spread of global terrorism. These are problems we cannot solve alone, but must and can solve together.

Through discussion and the exchange of our views, ideas and solutions, we will prevail in suppressing prejudice and misunderstanding. Let us work to ensure that our commitment to the noble ideals of this

conference will grow firmer and more enduring. I look forward to hearing your observations and I welcome the opportunity for this important and timely dialogue.

Ion Iliescu

President of Romania

Message presented by Simona Miculescu, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the President

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools" – this is what the recently much celebrated Martin Luther King used to say more than 40 years ago. His message is still valid, may be more than ever, and that is why such a Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations is so crucial.

In this context, please allow me to extend to you a warm message on behalf of Mr Ion Iliescu, the President of Romania, and to express his regrets that he cannot enjoy this political and intellectual experience together with you but he is and remains a fervent and enthusiastic supporter of this cause. He is confident that this Forum can contribute to the identification and launch of new possibilities and forms of dialogue and co-operation among the people of South Eastern Europe, including through the noble and creative channels offered by culture, education, communication and science. As part of the world's wonders protected by UNESCO's, Ohrid represents an excellent choice to host our debates that, we are convinced, will initiate very good proposals, leading later to fruitful initiatives meant to provide a better climate of peace, stability and security in our region.

In the same context, please also allow me to address, on behalf of Mr Ion Iliescu, the President of Romania, the warmest congratulations and wishes for success to Mr Boris Trajkovski, and to Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, as both were the initiators, organizers and sponsors of this Forum. Moreover, we thank Mr Matsuura for his special attention to our region, as this event was preceded, in April 2002, in Paris, by the Meeting of the Ministers of Education and Science of the countries of South Eastern Europe, which took place under his leadership.

The South-East European space can be seen as a primordial core of the entire European civilization. It was oftentimes the genesis and spreading point of phenomena that changed Europe's face. From the Indo-European ethnic and linguistic diffusion of the 2nd millennium before Christ, which brought together the Paleo-Balkan populations of the Hellenic, Illyrians, Thracians, Geto-Dacians in the 1st millennium, up to the geneses of an anthropocentric way of thinking, the first one in the history of mankind, where Protagoras's words - "man, measure of all things" could be uttered and where the philosophical meditation was born through the "balkanic" Plato and Aristotle; from the geneses of democracy

nearby the Acropolis, up to the genesis of some world-wide empires – such as the Christian Byzantium empire – the Balkans were, for a couple of times in the history, the main stage of the world.

Today, Ohrid is the main stage of the world of dialogue! That is because any dialogue between people is worthwhile – it is a countervailing force to the negative trends such as religious bigotry, terrorism, ethnic strife or war mongering. The dialogue among civilizations is not only a necessity, but also a moral and intellectual obligation. That is why the topic of this Forum is fundamental for our region. Following a period of bitter conflict and widespread human suffering, all countries of the region have now committed themselves to democratic values and objectives, to full respect for human rights, and to mutual respect and tolerance among citizens of different ethnic origins. The fulfilment of these commitments is indispensable for achieving a civilized co-existence that is both sustainable and just.

From this perspective, the Ohrid Forum will contribute to enhancing and protecting cultural diversity by the dialogue between cultures and religions, through tolerance, acceptance of differences, and pluralism. This dialogue should be promoted both at top political level and at grass root level, as part of every day life. Therefore, this culture of understanding should be disseminated through educational, cultural, scientific and communicational tools, with the participation of a broad array of social actors from the decision-makers, civil society, academia, media to individual prominent personalities. It is in this way that the dialogue among civilizations will become a genuine "civic culture".

Romania and its President highly appreciates the set of substantive regional projects on the dialogue among civilizations adopted by UNESCO, in 2002, focusing on education, culture, communication and science, and strongly supports their implementation at the country level.

You can count for the cause of this Forum on the Romanians, who follow Winston Churchill's conviction that the empires of the future will be the empires of the open minds. And what better instrument is there for opening minds than the dialogue or the "trialogue" or the "multilogue"?

Romania is ready to encourage, host and implement any dialogue meant to build a better and safer world.

Tassos Papadopoulos

President of Cyprus

Message presented by Petros Kareklas, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture

It is with great pleasure that I address the opening of the plenary session of the Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations.

Today, having already crossed the threshold of the 21st century, we face once more the urgent need to reflect profoundly and, most of all, collectively on the principle of dialogue among civilizations. The contemporary dimension of this principle extends beyond the mere knowledge of different nations and contact amongst them. It implies the acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity and the promotion of an unbiased interaction between individuals, social groups, communities and States at all levels. The successful outcome of such an effort requires a sincere and strong belief at the highest political levels that dialogue among civilizations is indispensable for the prevalence of peace and thus for development and prosperity.

In our present-day world, humanity is witnessing the ongoing course of globalization, which seems to have no reverse. The economic and cultural objectives of the phenomenon and the means used to pursue them reveal an unbalanced distribution of its benefits, which often gives rise to unnecessary manifestation of violence among nations. During the last year, we have all experienced the misery and the destructive consequences of the absence of intercultural dialogue. The dialogue in which we, representatives of different nations and carriers of diversified cultures, are involved here today, is a sign of hope and commitment that democratic discussion and co-operation between countries can allow the dialogue among civilizations to flourish.

This is the reason why the effort for the promotion and establishment of intercultural dialogue entails great responsibilities and hard work for each and every State. Contact and interaction must start firstly from the inside, within its society and the varied groups that form it. Careful educational planning, cultural development policies and investment in the welfare society are key-instruments for the establishment of democratic and tolerance-oriented societies, which can remain unaffected by discrimination and racism. It is our duty to build in our countries societies that do not fear the different, that accept and respect cultural and religious plurality and their material and intellectual expressions as the beauty of human heritage. Only such healthy societies are able to promote any kind of dialogue and contribute to the global peace and stability.

Along these lines lie the current efforts of Cyprus, a country situated at the crossroad of Europe, Asia and Africa and enriched by their cultures. Cyprus was recently and formally welcomed to the European family however, it still remains open to the diversity of its inner self. Significant efforts have been made, especially intensified during the last months due to political circumstances, in order to establish a solid channel of communication between the two communities which co-exist on the island. This major process of intercultural contact has launched the initiation of the breaking down of stereotypes, which imprisoned for many years the thoughts of the people of Cyprus and constituted an important obstacle for the development of intercultural dialogue, thus facilitating outside interferences in the internal affairs of the Republic of Cyprus. Our aim is to take all those necessary measures that promote a spirit of co-operation and establish peaceful conditions for the sake of prosperity and development of the country and its people as a whole. We are nevertheless aware, that we may have opened a window; however there is a lot to be done until the gate is really open and the island is reunified.

Within the same spirit, the Holy Monastery of Kykkos in Cyprus has been carrying out another ambitious plan aiming at supporting and promoting the world's cultural and religious diversity. The Cultural Foundation of the Monastery has established a permanent institution under the name World Forum of Religions and Cultures, which organized its first international peace conference in March 2002 in Nicosia. Church leaders, representatives from the major religions of the world and outstanding personalities of the international academic and political life were gathered together for the first time to participate in the meeting. Involved in a fruitful dialogue and exchange of ideas, the participants underlined the need to work together and take common actions in order to face collectively the consequences of globalization, both the negative and the positive ones. The great success of the first meeting lead to the organization of the next one this last May, demonstrating that the dialogue among civilizations must be a constant process of intercultural communication and interaction.

Such contributions, as well as those of international organizations and institutions are more than valuable in the global effort for peace and stability. Conventions, declarations and meetings related to the issue can be useful tools that provide practical guidelines about the way the dialogue among civilizations can be planned and promoted. Nevertheless, we must always bear in mind that eliminating the obstacles of intercultural dialogue, breaking down the cultural stereotypes and humanizing

globalization depends mainly on our determination for success in this fight.

May I conclude by expressing my appreciation to the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for inviting Cyprus to this Forum and by confirming my country's full support for any effort aiming at building and enhancing dialogue among civilizations.

Romano Prodi

President of the European Commission

Message presented by Sandro Gozi Member of Cabinet of the President

Introduction

The Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations comes at the right time. Since 11 September and the tension it brought to international relations, dialogue has never been more crucial. Today I am here to bring you President's Prodi's greetings and his warm encouragement. President Prodi would like especially to thank President Trajkovski and Director-General Matsuura for this excellent initiative.

There has been talk of a "clash of civilizations", of a round of latter-day crusades, of a confrontation between Good and Evil. We all must do our best to counter such simplistic views.

We all must lend our weight to the cause of dialogue – frank, honest, open and constructive. We must work to foster greater understanding, greater respect between cultures and more mutual awareness.

As you know, President Prodi has established a High-level Advisory Group to consider practical ways of fostering dialogue between peoples and cultures. At a recent meeting of that Group, one of the members, Malek Chebel, called on us to respect what he called "sovereign culture".

By that he meant all those aspects of life in society that calls us to awareness – over and above the political and economic interests that may bring us together or set us apart.

An awareness all too often neglected in these times of war and terrorism.

This call to awareness does not come just from a few intellectuals who are ahead of their time. It is the popular will – a call to reason and an appeal to the values we share.

Today's meeting is among the best ways of answering that call to awareness.

And the venue of today's meeting sets the stage for such a dialogue. Today, for us, for the European Union, Ohrid, the "pearl of the Balkans", is a symbol of reconciliation, a place where two or even three different worlds meet. The Ohrid agreement is a major act and a cornerstone of the will of reconciliation of this country.

A place like this cannot fail to inspire hope. Hope in a genuinely pluralistic approach to life in society. Not just in coexistence set against a backdrop of mutual indifference.

Hope in a real intercultural dialogue.

Such a dialogue can only work if it is based on an idea of equality. That does not mean equality in terms of cultures or beliefs. Here "equality" means equal participation in, and equal access to, the dialogue.

Such equality cannot be decreed from above, but must be nurtured so it can grow day after day. The sort of equality that needs to be backed up by resources – financial, material and human – not just ideas and words.

The road is a long one and powerful ideas are needed to make progress and change mentalities.

But ideas are not enough. We also need to act – together. And we also need the means.

So what do we need to do? and how?

We know what needs doing. The guidelines have been laid down – clearly – by UNESCO. I take this opportunity today to congratulate the Organisation for its tenacity and clear sightedness in putting forward objectives that are relevant and achievable.

First of all, education, the top priority. Education can develop young people's curiosity and interest in others. Learning to respect for one's own culture is also crucial. Knowing oneself is the precondition for openness and mutual awareness. This implies an interest in teaching content, which was also stressed by the European Council and the leaders of this region last June in Thessalonica.

Education also involves stepping up points of contact, encouraging social mixing, fostering dialogue between religions at grassroots level, and bridging the generation gap.

This calls for support from networks of civil society players, including those in the cultural sector and the representatives of religions. The bottom-up approach brings ideas and facilitates the work of decision-makers.

Research is another valuable tool in dialogue between cultures, because no society of knowledge –the precondition for dialogue – can be built without the support of the intellectuals in our countries. In particular, more mobility should be offered to researchers and academics at all levels, in a spirit of exchange and reciprocity.

Access to the media and an active communication policy are also important factors in intercultural dialogue and they play a part in education and as they help to overcome prejudices and false images.

We fully endorse UNESCO's proposals to step up resources for producing and disseminating information, particularly audiovisual output. But attention must also be paid to quality of uptake –the way the audience, spectators, readers take in information.

There is a huge need for education here, for learning also how to interpret images and sound.

The fourth aspect is the heritage. The preservation of our cultural and religious heritage is a prerequisite for dialogue between peoples and cultures.

The solution is not just to dig up the past and display it like a relic. The heritage must be "made our own" too, treated not as an object for contemplation from afar, but as a living part of our cultural, ethical and spiritual identity, as something external, but as a profound part of our being and our daily life.

Europe must assume its past and its historical foundations. And this should include our religious heritage. We need to assume this part of our heritage with less embarrassment, more forcefully and with more conviction. Europe offers us a unique historical chance to overcome the conflicts of the past and to reach a new balance.

This brings me to the last major issue before us: we know what to do, but how should we set about it?

To help clarify our objectives in this area, President Prodi has set up a Reflection Group on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe. Its members are distinguished personalities in the field and they are working on ways to support dialogue between religions and the preservation of Europe's spiritual heritage.

We have also taken important step here in the Balkans, thanks to joint project with the Council of Europe, to survey all religious places. These are important reference points for the collective awareness of those living in the region.

The programme, which seeks first and foremost to assess what needs safeguarding in terms of the architectural heritage, hopes to help maintain the region's cultural and religious diversity.

But preserving the architectural heritage is clearly not enough, and we must encourage people's "ownership" of these places – to make them their own, spiritually and culturally. Making such holy places into places of life should be the aim of such programmes.

Dialogue between religions may thus emerge as a living force in this region, but it cannot be confined to it. It must extend across the Mediterranean, setting an example of how the cultures and beliefs on the northern and southern shores can learn more about each other.

Here in the Balkans, all these religious currents are present. So the Balkans region can act as a workshop for dialogue between peoples and cultures for the whole Mediterranean.

To this end we set much store by the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Culture, which should be set up by the end of the year. It will be responsible for giving practical form and a global dimension to cultural co-operation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

The High-Level Group and the Foundation will help to turn the four priorities identified by UNESCO into practical measures in all our co-operation policies. Their work will provide a basis for the Commission to take more account than in the past of the cultural dimension of all development co-operation measures undertaken by the Union throughout the world.

Culture in the anthropological sense encompasses all forms of human activity. Building a bridge or a road, preserving the environment are cultural acts and a form of intercultural dialogue. In the past this dialogue has often failed through a lack of awareness of this. It now needs to be set as a development policy priority for all our co-operation strategy.

Rightly UNESCO is working on a international instrument of cultural diversity. This may provide a powerful incentive here, provided it is not confined to support for the cultural expressions of diversity but encompasses everything that plays a part in exchanges and dialogue between cultures.

The Thessalonica European Council mapped out guidelines for joint action and a shared feeling of belonging for the European Union and for the Balkans.

Let us not lose the "Thessalonica Spirit". Let us work together to develop new "common agenda", new partnerships of the full integration of the whole region into the European Union. It is clear, in fact, that our enlargement process will never be completed without the full participation of all SEE countries.

We need to set about implementing those guidelines in the cultural field too.

The stakes are high but our enthusiasm is unbounded.

We will need it all to get everyone on board.

Message

I am delighted to send my warm greetings to the participants at the Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations and my

congratulations to UNESCO's Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura and to President Trajkovski for this initiative.

This Forum comes at a critical time in international relations. As politicians, as members of civil society, as active and informed players of the public, we must lend our weight to the cause of frank, open and constructive dialogue and encourage mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

The Forum provides an excellent opportunity for direct dialogue between men and women set apart -- and yet drawn together -- by culture, religion and history. The venue sets the stage for such a dialogue because Ohrid, the "pearl of the Balkans", is a place where different worlds meet. As Europe's window on the East, Ohrid cannot fail to inspire hope in a genuine cultural pluralism where the identity of each can be respected in its fullness.

This dialogue must be based on equality, which cannot be decreed from above but needs to grow day after day. Powerful ideas are needed to make progress and change mentalities, but on their own ideas will not suffice. We also need to act -- together -- and we need the means too. The Commission will shoulder its share of responsibility but it cannot do it alone.

UNESCO has laid down clear guidelines and relevant, achievable objectives. First, education, the top priority, can develop interest in others and respect for one's own culture too. Knowing oneself is the precondition for knowing others. This implies an interest in teaching content, which UNESCO rightly proposes.

Research is the second factor, because the knowledge society is a prerequisite for dialogue and it cannot be built without the intellectuals' support. There is a need for more mobility for researchers and academics and for well-endowed research centres and universities.

Access to the media and an active communication policy are the third important factor in intercultural dialogue.

The fourth aspect of UNESCO's proposals is the heritage. Preserving our cultural and religious heritage is a prerequisite for dialogue between peoples and cultures because respect for others starts with self-respect -- respect for one's own culture, identity, beliefs and values.

I believe Europe should assume its past and its historical foundations, including our religious heritage, with more conviction, while of course respecting the secular character of government.

To help clarify our objectives in this area, I rely on the assistance of the Reflection Group on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe I

have set up. It can call on other, earlier projects to support dialogue between religions and the preservation of Europe's spiritual heritage.

I welcome the step taken here in the Balkans, thanks to a project I encouraged and with the distinguished help of the Council of Europe, to survey all religious places. People need to make these places their own, spiritually and culturally: this means above all helping to turn such places into living expressions of spiritual identity.

Dialogue between religions may thus emerge as a living force in this region and right across the Mediterranean and an example of how the cultures and beliefs on the northern and southern shores can learn more about each other.

The Balkans, where all these religious currents are present, can act as a workshop for dialogue for the whole Mediterranean. The region may serve as a reservoir of practical experience in dialogue between religions. It might also serve as a testing ground for the work of the High-Level Advisory Group I set up to consider ways of fostering dialogue between peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean area. I count on the Group to produce a theoretical and practical reference framework for our future co-operation in this area.

I also set much store by the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Culture, which should be set up by the end of the year. It will be responsible for giving practical form and a global dimension to cultural co-operation between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

The High-Level Advisory Group and the Foundation will help to turn the four priorities identified by UNESCO into practical measures in all our co-operation policies. Their work will provide a basis for the Commission to take greater account of the cultural dimension of all development co-operation measures undertaken by the Union throughout the world.

At Thessaloniki the European Council mapped out guidelines for joint action and a shared feeling of belonging for the European Union and for the Balkans. We need to set about implementing those guidelines in the cultural field too.

The stakes are high but I trust everyone's enthusiasm is unbounded. We will need it every bit of it to get all on board.

Jacques Chirac

President of the France

Message presented by Marcel Dehoux

Member of Parliament and President of the French-Macedonian Friendship Society

Allow me, first of all, in the name of the President of the French Republic for whom I have the honour of representing, to address my very sincere thanks to President Boris Trajkovski for having organized, under the patronage of UNESCO, this Forum on the dialogue of civilizations.

Among the three topics suggested, I chose to speak on cultural diversity. You will certainly not be surprised knowing the resolute engagement of France in favour of this major cause.

Indissociable from human dignity, cultural diversity constitutes the primary condition of dialogue of cultures and, thereby, of civilizations.

Thinking at the level of the individual, groups or States, it integrates a double dimension indeed:

- firstly to different cultural expressions, those expression of the passed, and here I should like to speak about heritage or the present, for which I should like to mention creation.

- it establishes bridges between cultures whilst supporting both their mutual understanding and creativity, tokens of common enrichment.

Finally and especially, it covers the right of States to support concomitantly both national creation and public access to plurality of the cultures of the world.

Cultural diversity has never been so abundant in the world. Its access has been made easier than in the past thanks, in particular, to new communication technologies.

At the same time, however, never has it appeared so threatened everywhere.

To cite language, for example, supposedly the major vector for expression of cultures, unfortunately observation would have it that the progressive obliteration minority languages is happening everywhere. Within approximately fifty years, half of them will have disappeared.

This particularly alarming evolution, this threat of unforeseen consequences, is also valid for other sorts of works, threatening our ways of life as well as the capacity of people to preserve and develop their own cultures. I am speaking of course of works concerned with cultural industries, and which, according to the definition that UNESCO gives, "agree to combine creation, production and marketing of cultural goods and services, generally protected by royalties". These "cultural

industries" include; cinema, audio-visual, print media, and more recently multimedia.

Several States, the first of which include France and Canada, have mobilized themselves to denounce the sole logic of the market as applied to goods and cultural services. Considering that "ideas are not merchandise like any other", in as much as they create the identity of peoples and thus contribute to social cohesion, these countries obtained, vis-à-vis free trade positions, a stay in the race towards liberalization of these industries. The Marrakech Compromise, concluded at the end of the Uruguay Round of negotiations (1986-1994). This compromise felt politically like a victory for the partisans of "cultural exception". It had only made it possible to preserve the mere essentials.

Obviously, however this is not enough.

Unanimously adopted on November 2, 2001, at the time of the 31st session of the General Conference, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity constitutes a major projection in the recognition by the international community of the importance of the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity. But, we cannot leave it there.

This is why, at the time of the Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in September 2002, the President of the French Republic solemnly reaffirmed the exceptional nature of goods and cultural services, and presented culture as a – and I quote " fourth pillar of sustainable development", along with the economy, the environment and other social concerns. He spoke in favour of the adoption by the international community of a world convention on cultural diversity that would give force of international law to the principles of the Declaration adopted by UNESCO. He pleaded that UNESCO – the sole universal and politically legitimate authority in terms of cultural questions – to take responsibility for it.

We are at the threshold of a major date since it will be up to the UNESCO General Conference, at its 32nd session (29 September - 17 October), to rule on the question of a new international instrument concerning cultural diversity.

We should all be mobilized so as to ensure that such a project succeeds.

The adoption of a world convention on cultural diversity would make it possible to establish diversity within the realm of international law. By affirming that cultural diversity belongs to the common heritage of humanity, this convention would establish in law the equal dignity of all cultures. It would provide the possibility for States to take action on public

policies supporting creation, as well as supporting the exceptional nature of cultural goods.

As an extension of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, such a convention would position itself within the context of the greater international normative instruments relating to culture, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two international pacts of 1966: the International Pact relating to economic, social and cultural rights and the International Pact relating to civil and political rights.

The aforementioned convention should contain three broad objectives:

- recognition of the specificity of cultural goods and services,
- the right of governments to adopt or maintain measures which they consider appropriate for the safeguarding of their cultural heritage and the development of their cultural and linguistic expression,
- reinforcement of solidarity at the international level.

This convention ought to be seen as a tool for international solidarity to encourage the following measures:

- access to cultural goods and services in the developing countries: the envisaged measures could take as a starting point provisions adopted by several developed countries, aimed at promoting access to goods and services in the developing countries with privileged access going to the least developed countries;
- incentive to conclude cinematographic and audio-visual co-production agreements making it possible for foreign productions to be considered as national thereby facilitating access to national assistance mechanisms and the dissemination of co-produced works;
- incentive towards the conclusion of cultural co-operation agreements: Parties to the Convention would begin to co-operate towards the development and reinforcement of competences and institutional means regarding cultural production, in particular by envisaging training activities for creators and professionals of culture, assistance towards the professionalisation of local cultural industries and support for the organization of the demonstrations emphasizing cultural productions.

Johannes Rau

Federal President of Germany

Message presented by Gunther Mulack

Ambassador and Commissioner for Dialogue with the Islamic World

The countryside around Lake Ohrid provides, as we can see, a stunning setting for a host of impressive cultural and religious monuments. Indeed, you could visit a different lakeside monastery every single day of the year, I have been told. And it is not only Orthodox monasteries but the many mosques as well that give the landscape its distinctive appearance, reminding us of Macedonia's Muslim community and the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

So for all these reasons this is the ideal venue for a conference on dialogue among civilizations. Here, after all, such encounters have been the stuff of daily life for generations. Different civilizations, languages, cultures, ethnic groups, majority and minority communities have all left their mark on the region - and the precise meaning of these concepts is something we will certainly be discussing during the conference. Each of these groups has contributed to the country's cultural wealth and identity. There has been significant cross-fertilization to the benefit of all.

Yet there have been many times, too, when dialogue failed, when one group dominated another, when certain groups were disadvantaged compared with others. In some cases conflicts were settled by bloodshed and force of arms, with untold suffering for all concerned. History is full of painful episodes and memories. The point is not to forget them but to try to understand and learn the lessons of the past.

The town of Ohrid has given its name to the peace agreement that in the very recent past ended an armed conflict and paved the way for peace, a fragile peace at first, but one which can now be seen as more or less solid.

That peace was given a chance was due to the wisdom of those political forces in Macedonia who returned to the path of dialogue and, for the sake of a shared future, were prepared to go the extra mile to accommodate the other side.

Macedonia has set an inspiring example: it has proved that even two groups which viewed each other as opponents can resume their dialogue with productive results.

The peace agreement is also the fruit of the international community's efforts. During the negotiations the OSCE, NATO, the EU and other players actively helped to promote reconciliation between the

Government and rebel leaders and have been supporting and will continue to support the implementation of the accords.

It must count as one of the major successes of the Ohrid peace agreement that today all relevant forces in Macedonian society as well as virtually the whole political spectrum represented in Parliament are committed to its implementation. What is now at issue are the political and legislative steps necessary to achieve its goals, the "how" in fact, not the "whether".

Clearly symbols and emotions played a powerful role in the conflict. Now, however, the multiethnic character of Macedonian society is officially recognized and will soon be reflected also in the country's administrative structures.

Both Slav and Albanian Macedonians as well as members of other minorities need to feel they are citizens of this country and build its future together. Provided Macedonia resolutely continues down the path of reconciliation, that future will one day mean integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

We see it as a very positive sign that this Forum is taking place under UNESCO auspices. This is particularly fitting, I feel, since it was the Ohrid region's unique combination of cultural significance and natural beauty which led to its being inscribed in 1979 on UNESCO's World Heritage List. It is vital that a country's cultural heritage be preserved in all its aspects, and this is all the more important when the integrity of that heritage is threatened by conflict. As UNESCO's successful World Heritage programme demonstrates, the cultural monuments that exist all over the world are, in their richness and diversity, clearly the common heritage of all mankind. The outstanding cultural and natural environment of the Ohrid region is therefore not only a source of joy and pleasure but also reminds us of the importance of pursuing the kind of dialogue that transcends political and cultural divisions.

UNESCO was the first intergovernmental organization to redirect its programmes after 11 September. On 20 October 2001 the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a "call for international co-operation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism" in all its fields of competence - education, science, culture and communication. Together with this Resolution, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted. It is an 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 contribute to this task and further develop international intellectual co-operation to this end.

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 are 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 that goal!

Rolandas Paksas

President of Lithuania

Message presented by Dalia Kutraite-Giedraitiene, Advisor for Social Policy to the President

It is a great pleasure to be together with you today. At this memorable moment we can recall April 2001, when the old capital of Lithuania, Vilnius, had the honour of welcoming the participants and guests of the first conference on "Dialogue among Civilizations". Rolandas Paksas, President of the Republic of Lithuania, would like to thank sincerely His Excellency President Boris Trajkovski, for the invitation to attend this Forum and expresses the hope that the Balkans and all Baltic states, which have already suffered immense hardships, will not remain on the margins of globalization and civilization processes.

History teaches us that at the dawn of each millennium mankind had faced their most severe challenges: wars, plagues, fears and betrayals. The last century, and the last decade of the last millennium also witnessed many such a cataclysms.

Clearly, the object of today's Forum is not to strive for some global changes. Rather, its aim is to warn all human beings of the new millennium who are confused by the numerous political, social and technological discoveries and disappointments that our collective and main mission is to be able to accept the challenges of civilization, realize their paradoxical nature and maintain a genuine sense of self-esteem.

I would now like to quote from a document drafted a few years ago during the "Dialogue among Civilizations" conference held in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. It states that "no civilization taken separately can lay claim to cover the entire experience of the humankind nor represent the whole of humankind. Consequently, comparative studies of civilizations enable us to realize what has been suppressed in one civilization but later expanded in another." This statement is especially relevant to the countries of Eastern Europe which against their will were forced to languish for many decades outside the boundaries of Western civilization.

Only a tolerant and far-sighted dialogue with the identities of separate cultures continuously fostered as its cornerstone will provide insight into the contradictory globalization processes of the new millennium.

Unfortunately, we have to admit openly and unequivocally that the major current concern are the values themselves. In a few decades the world population is to reach approximately nine billion. Naturally, this could deepen the economic disparities among different regions and cause

even more moral confusion from which the world is already suffering, as is witnessed by brutal attacks on the objects of invaluable cultural heritage, as well as by terrible events in Baghdad.

One feels uneasy looking at the world map where peace is more often than not submerged by the grey lava of ethic and religious conflicts. This is especially worrying to small countries and nations that often become instruments in and victims of malicious designs on a global scale. Lithuania also suffered more than once as a result of such political whims. Fortunately, the ethnic and cultural identity of our nation shaped in the course of history has been preserved. Moreover, it has now received attention and understanding care it has been calling for.

Lithuania is deeply grateful to UNESCO for including the Old Town of our capital Vilnius and the Curonian Spit - a unique and outstanding example of landscape beauty in the World Heritage List of cultural values protected by UNESCO.

We were destined to live and act in the face of discoveries and losses of the new millennium. Globalization has completely denuded the interrelations of humankind. Man left alone with his destiny as a result of such developments is a worrisome perspective.

Finally, I would like to again convey greetings from Rolandas Paksas, President of the Republic of Lithuania, who wishes you a constructive Forum and hopes that this conference will continue its noble mission to protect the essence and destiny of the man in the dialogue among civilizations.

Jan Pieter Balkenende

Prime Minister of the Netherlands

Message presented by Johan Wolfs, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

On behalf of Prime Minister Balkenende, I would like to thank President Trajkovski for the invitation to participate in this Forum. Also, I have the honour to convey the Prime Minister's personal greetings to President Trajkovski.

I would also like to thank UNESCO's Director-General Mr Matsuura for his Organization's continuous engagement and support in organizing this Forum.

The Netherlands attaches great value to safeguarding and defending principles of tolerance and mutual understanding. These themes have a strong presence in the history of our country, but also in our present-day society. And, of course, they are important principles in our contacts with other countries and regions in the world. This is why we attach importance to the UN Dialogue among Civilizations initiatives.

One of the main goals of the Netherlands' foreign policy is to contribute to establishing a peaceful, safe, prosperous world and to the international order needed to achieve this. Both our "traditional", diplomatic foreign policies and our efforts concerning development co-operation are geared towards these objectives.

As far as the South-East European region is concerned, the region has moved from a time of bitter conflict to a new phase, in which democratization, stabilization and co-operation are leading. The countries of the region share a European perspective that the Netherlands actively supports, and which is a strong promoter for their further development and mutual co-operation and understanding.

Still, much needs to be done, both within the countries of South Eastern Europe and with regard to their mutual relationships. The countries have their own responsibilities in achieving reforms, but have the full support of the international community, which assists them in this process.

It is my sincere hope that this Ohrid Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, with its focus on themes such as peace and stability, democracy and civil society, and preservation of culture, will contribute to the further enhancement of mutual understanding within the region. The presence of representatives from governments and civil society, the academic world and cultural disciplines, all these from different parts of

the world, guarantees a diversity of contributions which will make this a fruitful process. Ideally, participants who meet here will continue their exchange also after these two days of the Forum.

Pascal Couchepin

President of Switzerland

Message presented by David Streiff, Director of the Federal Office for Cultural Affairs

It is a privilege for me to be able to transmit to you greetings and the best wishes of success for this Forum on behalf of the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr Pascal Couchepin, whom I represent today. In my capacity as Director of the Federal Office of Culture, the topic of dialogue between civilizations is, naturally, particularly dear to me.

I should like to firstly make a point of thanking the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, UNESCO as well as the "Appeal of Conscience Foundation" for having allowed us to meet today here in this high cultural place that the town of Ohrid represents. As symbol of world cultural heritage, Ohrid not only invites us to carry out a reflection on our own values and common objectives, but also to understand and respect our differences in order to celebrate "our unity in diversity" through constant dialogue. Switzerland, as you know, is very attached to the concept of intercultural dialogue that represents one of its priorities at the national level and as regards foreign policy. Thanks to its own experiences, as a multicultural nation, Switzerland is conscious of the fact that it is only through exchanges and respect of differences will it be possible to encourage a mutual understanding between various cultures and to work thus for the maintenance of peace and a sustainable development.

For this reason, Switzerland engages itself particularly in South-East Europe, which represents one of its priority areas. Through various projects related in particular to education, cultural creation, the development of independent media, the setting up of democratic institutions or the reinforcement of participation of civil society, Switzerland contributes to peace and stability in the area. Switzerland also takes part in projects within the framework of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, of which it has been a full member since June 2000.

Joined together today to discuss the "dialogue among civilizations", it goes without saying that we approach the topic of "cultural diversity".

This autumn, during the UNESCO General Conference, we will all have the to pronounce ourselves on the appropriateness of the development, within UNESCO, of an International Convention aiming at the protection and the promotion of cultural diversity. Switzerland is of the opinion that it is of significance to seize this occasion and will decide in favour of such an initiative. Indeed, because of its long-standing cultural mandate, its expertise as regards cultural diversity and its universal nature,

UNESCO constitutes the sole legitimate and suitable place for the development of such a convention. Moreover, the draft convention worked out within the framework of the International Network for the Cultural Policy (INCP) in which Switzerland has participated, constitutes a good basis of reflection for the opening of this work within UNESCO. Furthermore, the members of the INCP will meet in October in Croatia.

Switzerland is thus ready to engage fully, as in the past, in discussions concerning dialogue for peace, human rights, cultural diversity as well as within other organizations concerned bringing its own experience on the subject to the table.

I take this opportunity to remind you that Switzerland will be the host of the World Summit of the Information Society that will take place in Geneva.

Speaking about the intelligent use of new information technologies implies the treatment of such topics as dialogue – writ large, intercultural dialogue, education and the freedom of expression. President Couchepin, and all of us count on the participation of a great number of presidents and ministers at this gathering.

To conclude, I am confident that by combining our efforts, by creating the necessary conditions and frameworks to maintain and promote a cultural pluralism, it will be possible for us to work in favour of a better understanding between civilizations and to contribute thereby to a climate of peace and stability in the world.

Part II

Reports of the Round Tables



Ko chiro Matsuura,
Director-General of
UNESCO and Blagoj
Stefanovski, Macedonian
Minister of Culture

Peace and Stability

Moderator: Srgjan Kerim, Former Foreign Minister
Rapporteur: Wilhelm Nausner
Assistants: Jovan Pejkovski and Islam Jusufi

In the panel "Peace and Stability," we had a very open and substantive discussion with the participation of 18 members of the Panel. The speeches and statements that were presented were expressed in the spirit of dialogue and participants proposed ways to improve the quality of dialogue from the peace and stability perspective.

I would briefly present the proposals made about specific topics that corresponded with the ones in the plenary session made by the Presidents, high-level officials and special representatives.

Allow me to start with some personal remarks about the Panel.

First aspect: For a number of decades Europe has witnessed a period of relative stability and peace. However, one of our greatest needs is security and in particular individual security. All nations clearly state that the best ideas for humanity have never required violence to promote themselves.

Second aspect: We need a democratic system that is both transparent and just with politicians that are not only brave but are bound to an inner moral code.

Third and final aspect: For these reasons, all nations should strive for dialogue and learning as a priority, and not as a luxury. How we write about and teach our common history is particularly pertinent.

Let me now give you a broader spectrum of the discussions that were made by participants of the Panel. I would like to mention only those who were directly related to the peace and stability in the region:

- There was a prevailing opinion that the region of South-East Europe cannot be stable without being secure. We need security in order to have stability;
- Economic progress and regional co-operation are very important pillars and prerequisites for durable peace and stability in the region of South-East Europe. In this context to set up a model of regional co-operation based on the experience of other regions in Europe and to use all the necessary tools for promotion of economies of scale including total dismantling of customs and transport barriers;
- We are ready draw lessons from history, which have to lead us to reconciliation. Reconciliation is a valuable asset for peace and stability in the region;
- The process of integration into the EU of the countries of South-East Europe has to speed up, thus contributing to a prosperous future for the people and nations of this part of continent. In this respect, it is important to foster co-operation between those European countries who have become members of the EU and who have been invited to join the EU, and those European countries who are not yet invited or candidates for membership in the EU;
- To develop and implement an integral concept of good governance on the national and regional levels is crucial for strengthening the democratization, and thus - peace and stability in the region;
- Full respect of human rights, rule of law and minority rights is considered to be at the core of a stable and prosperous region in South-East Europe;
- Not only the institutions and international organizations should be involved in the activities contributing to fostering peace and stability in the region, NGOs and individuals should also contribute through a bottom up approach;
- To avoid and to prevent conflicts and to remove and to avoid obstacles to the peace and stability in the region, political and religious leaders should be called upon to carry on with an active and continuing dialogue;

- Even if collective decisions are taken in relation to peace and stability, responsibility is and should remain at the individual level. Therefore, consciousness should be raised in human minds about xenophobia, racism, discrimination and segregation;
- In order to promote mutual trust and co-operation education is of utmost importance in securing the profound and effective dialogue in the region.

In conclusion, the preservation of peace and security in South-East Europe means building upon the commitment to democratic principles, the protection of human rights and the rule of law, as well as for protection of minorities. Multiethnic democratic states, development of good neighbourly relations, regional co-operation and European integration are prerequisites for peace and security in South-East Europe. It is our imperative for today and tomorrow.

In the end, I would like to thank Ambassador Dr. Srgjan Kerim for his excellent moderation of the Panel.

Participants of panel one discussion:

1. Alajdin Abazi
2. Ambassador Ara Abramian
3. Ljubisa Adamovic
4. Moric Albahari
5. Teuta Arifi Pratenik
6. Mersim Biljali
7. Jiri Dienstbier
8. Nihad Fahmy
9. Taki Fiti
10. Amira Hecimovic
11. Filo Hirota
12. Gjuner Ismail
13. Dritan Karadaku
14. Nedret Kuran Burcuoglu
15. Budmir Loncai
16. Paul Mojzes
17. Nicolae Miku
18. Dzeladin Murati
19. Luminita Petresku
20. Elizabeth Rehn
21. Stefan Sandzakovski
22. Vasilie Sekaresh
23. Rada Sharladjieva
24. Qazim Tepshi
25. Kiril Temkov
26. Mojsej Trajkovski
27. Aristoteles Tziampiris
28. Sotirios Zackeos Generalen
29. Slavo Zizek

Democracy and Civil Society

Moderator: Matthias Kleinert, Senior Vice President,
DaimlerChrysler
Rapporteur: Ognyan Minchev, Executive Director,
Institute for Regional and International Studies
Assistant: Jadranka Ivanova

First of all I would like to thank the host government and all organizing institutions and individuals for such an excellent forum in this beautiful part of your country. But I have to ask you to forgive me to be a non-professional rapporteur; the real one did not appear at our panel – so I took over this most important part of summarizing the results of our discussion. Under the very able and professional moderation of Prof. Matthias Kleinert of DaimlerChrysler we started a real interactive dialogue among all participants of Panel Number 2. To be frank the room was even too small to accommodate all participants around the table. The participants consisted of high-ranking diplomats, academics and representatives of religious and large NGOs alike. In the very beginning Prof. Kleinert had the agreement of all the participants not to elaborate on lengthy statements, but to enter in true and constructive dialogue.

As an initial statement, he explained in broad terms the manifold activities of the German-American company DaimlerChrysler in the field of corporate social responsibility. He stressed the point in particular that globally acting companies have a strong commitment as good corporate citizens wherever they are.

After this short, but very enlightening statement the very lively discussion started in which all participants enthusiastically contributed to the following 12 proposals I am honoured to put now on the table:

1. It was a broad agreement to have young, bright and able people at the Ohrid Forum next year. This is to further even more the critical dialogue and bring in fresh and sometimes unconventional ideas.
2. Including Business and Economy as one of the major topics. In practical life there is already a wide consensus and sometimes even a symbiosis of culture, sports, religious and NGO activities and businesses at large. In order to bring cultural projects to life money is required – a lot of money. In our time of constrained state budgets it is obvious that business can contribute to a good and noble cause.
3. Human Rights Education to be included in the curricula of the public school systems. It is important to raise the awareness of the younger generations as human rights issues are concerned. At the same time our younger generations should prepare themselves for living in a world where borders are falling down and living in a huge diversity of cultures.
4. Create a more intensive critical dialogue for educating the young political leadership. The political leaders of the future should not only be educated in political party-related dimensions, but to receive a more comprehensive education on all matters of peaceful co-existence in our global village.
5. Have a referendum on how to finance the different phases of appropriate educational projects. Here again, all active partners of society are called upon, politics, civil society, business communities, religious groups and NGOs alike.
6. Involve creators of electronic educational games which would attract kids and explain different cultures. Experience shows that a "so-called hero" who may be a sportsman, an artist or a singer is to explain how people with different cultural backgrounds can live together most peacefully and enjoy cultural diversity. In such a relaxed and playful atmosphere the actions and words of such a hero would transport the values of a peaceful society, such as honesty,

- reliability, respect, acceptance to the otherness, solidarity, peace, trust, friendship, helpfulness and charity.
7. Electronic media should focus on venues and promote co-production of intercultural feature films transporting the ideas of point 6.
 8. Big money makes politicians listen! In other terms this means to involve the big global players in the decision making in the political scenes.
 9. We have to come back to grass-root politics – the so-called grass-root democracy. In practical terms to involve the civil society at large in major political decisions in a more constructive way.
 10. It was proposed to increase the youth activities in the region including education, youth camps, fora, and programmes for research and education. Interregional educational programmes and appropriate instruments concerning institutional networking should be installed.
 11. To push the values of respect and acceptance and to crystallize more clearly what values we have in common.
 12. It was agreed that all participants who proposed one or the other item should write a one-pager on the related subject and hand it in. The follow-up meeting to specify the subjects should follow. The forwarding address will be given separately.
- As the moderator Prof. Dr. Kleinert from DaimlerChrysler Stuttgart put it: "This is the true continuation of the Ohrid Spirit".

Participants of panel two discussion:

1. Ahmet Akyurek
2. Ali Aliju
3. Ivo Banac
4. Alja Brglez
5. Cedo Cvetanovski
6. Mihail Cekov
7. Silvo Devetak
8. Efi Foka
9. Petar Gosev
10. Guenter Grasner
11. Ivo Grubisic
12. Jean-Dominique Guiliani
13. Sotiraq Hroni
14. Ahmed Jalal
15. Vasko Karangeleski
16. Virdzil Kandea
17. Ivan Krastev
18. Alain Modoux
19. Cane Mojanoski
20. Ferid Muhic
21. Nazan Aksoj
22. Yili Pango
23. Joannin Pascale
24. Malgorzata Pawlisz
25. Azis Polozani
26. Zarko Puhovski
27. Genz Ruli
28. Maria Schandor
29. Zilka Siljak
30. Iztok Simoniti
31. Martin Watson

Culture and Diversity

Moderator: Louis Emmerij, Former President, OECD
Development Centre, Paris; Co-Director, UN
Intellectual History Project.

Rapporteur: Katica Kulavkova

Assistants: Vladimir Martinovski and Irena Percinkova-Patton

Why is the question of cultural diversity so important and "fashionable" today? How is a dialogue between cultures and civilizations possible? What are the conditions for an effective intercultural and an inter-religious dialogue to take place? How does an intercultural dialogue relate to different religious backgrounds? How to create a new spiritual and social climate of tolerance and dialogue? Is the intercultural dialogue region-based or must it be seen as an international and universal objective? How to maintain the cultural diversity in our era of globalization? Why is it so complex to entertain the dialogue? What are the next steps?

These were some of the questions raised by the moderator at the panel discussion "Culture and Diversity", held in the framework of the UNESCO Regional Forum "Dialogue among Civilizations" in Ohrid, on August 29, 2003. The discussion ranged over many aspects of culture and diversity: economic, scientific, religious, educational, philosophic, anthropological, historical, social.

One of the major points in the discussion concerned globalization and its positive and negative effects. It was observed that in today's world increasing globalization has the paradoxical effect of stimulating diversity. In some instances it has provoked a Renaissance of regional and minority languages and cultures, in others it has motivated strong reactions in the face of the implied world dominance by imposing the cultural personality of ethnic groups and regions. Communications are more open and practically equal for all social communities in the postmodern, post-colonial, post-conflict, post-communist constellations. But, on the other hand, the anxiety vis-à-vis powerful civilizations, cultures and languages is an inevitable dark side of our plural and multi-cultural reality.

The overriding conclusion is the general need to assign a "human face" to globalization in order to encourage and enhance, among others, its beneficial effects on diversity and dialogue among different cultures. Economists have had a tendency to underestimate the cultural dimension of economic development. In general, more emphasis must be placed upon the interdisciplinary aspects of our society today. Thus, one unanimous conclusion of the Panel was a general recognition that not enough attention was given to non-economic aspects, including culture, in world economic and trade relations.

Religion is often considered interchangeable with culture in this context and frequently, inter-cultural differences are perceived as inter-religious ones. At the same time, it is important to stress that differences arise within separate religions as well (fanaticism versus open-mindedness, a conflict between two types of mentality). Extremism, dogmatism and fundamentalism are defined as the archenemies of cultural diversity and democracy. In this regard, inclusiveness is key since the moral fundamentals of the various religions are the same -- global ethics of how humans should behave. Cultural diversity is the opposite of dogmatism. Fanaticism can be held at bay in modern societies by affirming diversity and accommodating inclusiveness.

The emphasis of future projects in promoting cultural, ethical, religious and linguistic diversity should be on education and information. The dominant concepts of ethnical, social and national interest are institutionalised in different ways. Their effects can mobilize or paralyse the civil potential and provoke different kinds of xenophobia and animosity at different levels: to the Other, to the neighbour, to the different civilizations and cultures.

In order to ensure a better understanding of different cultures it is necessary to change the perspective or transition from a simplistic notion

of viewing others to understanding the world as full of different kinds of potential, ready to make our life richer and more complete. A key factor in this respect is education that must alter the attitudes of the young generations. Education is the main instrument in order to create new standards of critical thinking to foster a new spiritual climate of tolerance and mutual respect.

This climate of tolerance and mutual respect can be achieved through, for example, closer examination of educational materials that would promote open-mindedness rather than perpetuating the old discourse of hatred against neighbours, of hierarchy among “big” and “small” cultures, and the discourse of domination, exile, discrimination and oppression. Promoting the culture of democracy means to teach and promote the culture of tolerance towards minorities. Promoting the culture of democracy also means to respect the common interest of every multicultural community. An education of tolerance, dialogue and cultural diversity implies an understanding and tolerance of historical differences, of different points of view of history. By such means we may eventually hope to reach a situation in which people of diverse backgrounds live a rich life together in mutual understanding of their differences.

Obviously, it is easy to talk about dialogue, but difficult to engage in it and implement it in reality. The very start of a dialogue may be difficult in many circumstances. A dialogue is by definition inter-subjective and personalized. Numerous conferences, discussions, workshops have been held worldwide in recent years which had led to a regurgitation of already familiar terms. What is necessary are fresh ideas that will lead to implementing already proposed statements and that give a general direction for future endeavours.

Cultural diversity and real dialogue can exist only among parties that practice mutual respect and recognition. Cultural diversity must be based on the human power of remembering and forgiving, on a subtle and creative memory of the richness of the world, without which there is no art, no culture, no civilization, no dialogue. The appeal of this Panel, therefore, is not to forget the past but to stand on its shoulders, overcome the negative memories, maintain the cultural diversity, and peer into the future with renewed hope and understanding.

Participants of Panel three discussion:

1. Louis Emmerij
2. Sergey Kapitza
3. Carolle von Ins
4. Violeta Karaivanova
5. Ivan Kaltchev
6. Sander Gurbuz
7. Stefano Sgobba
8. Behxet Brajshari
9. Tomàs Fejerdy
10. Vladimir Fedorov
11. Leonid Kishkovsky
12. Theodore E. Mc Carrick
13. Malgorzata Pawlisz
14. Kosta Balabanov
15. Blaze Ristovski
16. Mateja Matevski

Part III
Background Papers



Lake Ohrid

The Potential for Dialogue in South-East Europe

Hans d'Orville

Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO

1. Background

The decision to convene a Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations in Ohrid, 8-9 November 2002, under the auspices of the President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Director-General of UNESCO, was one of the major outcomes of the High-Level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe, which was held at UNESCO headquarters, on 4 and 5 April 2002.¹

This Conference, attended by Ministers and senior officials from South-East European countries, representatives of Member States of the European Union and several other Western countries, as well as from important regional and international organizations and institutions, was considered a timely opportunity to deepen co-operation and to support countries of the region in their efforts to integrate the European structures.

The Conference underscored that a period of conflict and human suffering has been followed by the democratic election of governments in all countries of the region, committed to the same shared values and objectives. Emphasis was placed on the fact that countries in the region

must continue to rediscover their common heritage of shared values - beyond the diversity of languages, cultures and religions - and that this will require the creation of a common cultural space entailing full participation by civil society. This space will 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. The Conference thus strongly echoed the United Nations definition of 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".²

The High-Level Meeting further defined the main priorities for regional co-operation to be pursued within UNESCO's fields of competence - education, culture, science and communication - emphasizing the importance of developing initiatives and projects aimed at confidence- and capacity-building in these domains. This process should be sustained through intra-regional dialogue and co-operation as well as bilateral and multilateral co-operation among countries of the region, through the full involvement of civil society, and while acknowledging the valuable role to be played by international and regional organizations.

The Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations builds on, and further expands, these conclusions. The Forum is part of a wider effort to pursue and deepen UNESCO's long-standing mandate to enhance dialogues among cultures and civilizations, and to do so in concrete terms, highlighting obstacles to, and benefits from, such dialogue³.

Recent developments, such as the Ohrid Framework Agreement (16 November 2001) and not least the parliamentary elections on 15 September 2002, make the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia a well-suited venue for this important endeavour.

A pillar of regional harmony in the Balkans, Macedonia lends itself to a trans-national exploration of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations within its constitutive pluralist paradigm. 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 co-operation, or structural incentives to co-operation, 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 whilst at the same time coming to terms with very significant minorities living within their borders.

The Regional Forum coincides with current efforts within UNESCO to render the dialogue among cultures and civilizations more inclusive and participatory, and to link these efforts, especially at the practical level, to the recent adoption of the Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the 31st session of UNESCO's General Conference in Paris on 2 November 2001, applying key elements of the Declaration's Plan of Action in each region.

The UN Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted by the General Assembly in November 2001, has further invited UNESCO to continue to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields.

Set within this broader perspective, the Ohrid Regional Forum will be a test-ground for the proposal, which has achieved increased recognition in recent years: 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 societies⁴.

2. Broadening the scope of dialogue

UNESCO's long-standing commitment to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations culminated in 2001, the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, "inviting governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization...to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject".

Subsequent to the General Conference resolution 31 of 17 November 1999, endorsing the terms of proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, UNESCO organized a launch event for the Year at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5 September 2000, on the eve of the historical Millennium Summit.⁵ UNESCO subsequently engaged in initiating, sponsoring, and organizing numerous events, conferences and colloquia on the Dialogue in several parts of the world in accordance with the principles and strategies set out in its own Action Plan for the celebration of the International Year.⁶

The Action Plan re-emphasized the principal 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 “inter-cultural”. 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.

UNESCO’s Action Plan also drew attention to the fact that many of the problems faced by today’s world have arisen as a consequence of differences within nations, and that 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.

The celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations during 2001 thus highlighted new dimensions of the Dialogue against the growing interdependence of communities, nations, cultures and civilizations, setting the stage for a broader international debate - and a renewed commitment to dialogue at all levels. The multitude of events and the many forward looking approaches underscored the extent to which the dialogue among civilizations has moved to the centre stage in today’s globalizing world.

The tragic events of the 11 September 2001 spurred a new momentum and even a sense of urgency into these efforts. UNESCO’s General Conference adopted unanimously a resolution (31 C/39), in which it considered that “all acts of terrorism are a denial of the principles and

values of the United Nations Charter, the UNESCO Constitution and the UNESCO Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance (1995) and represent an attack against humanity as a whole". The resolution affirmed, among others, that the Dialogue among Civilizations "constitutes a fundamental challenge based on the unity of mankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of its cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture".

The General Conference further agreed that efforts would have 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 other" in an overall desire to live together. A sense prevailed that there was a renewed need for the dialogue among cultures and civilizations, underlining the lead role that UNESCO must take in reinforcing and working towards a realization of the principles of dialogue.

Against this background, UNESCO is currently intensifying the dialogue among communities, cultures and civilizations, with a view to broadening its scope and increasing its relevance for current challenges through different fora in various regions. This entails reviewing the concept and approaches to "dialogue among civilizations", soliciting recommendations on new orientations, and assessing the coherence and complementarities between different regional and sub-regional approaches, including a better identification of obstacles to dialogue.

The Ohrid Regional Forum is set within the broader framework of this endeavour.

3. Constructing pluralism through dialogue

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. Such an acceptance does not signify a levelling process, or suppressing or ignoring of differences, but the capacity to transform this diversity, maintained and recognized in its specificity, into an advantage and a factor of individual and collective enrichment.

This view implies that cultural diversity should not simply be tolerated, but fully recognized and integrated into the democratic game plan. 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.

The primary condition allowing a constructive pluralism, indeed that which embodies all the others, is the achievement or at least the pursuit of a democratic ideal that is defined, in the very broad sense, by the capacity of a society to recognize individual and collective rights and to assure the full participation and representation of every section of society in political and economic life. The construction of pluralism therefore takes place in a context determined by the imperatives linked to respect for human rights and particularly the right of minorities. The defence of cultural rights (or the right to a cultural identity), in particular the right to practice one's religion and to speak one's own language, is inseparable from this general defence of human rights and fundamental liberties.

This reorganization of the political and social scene made possible by the presence of cultural pluralism has its equivalent at an individual level, in so far as contact with different cultures leads to a rethinking of the meaning of personal identity. Identities change, decompose, recompose. There is no unchanging identity; there is no trans-historical permanence in identities. By favouring the emergence of this open and dynamic identity, cultural pluralism makes possible a redefinition of the human being, which avoids rigid compartmentalization and takes account of the multiplicity of life choices and ways of thinking that are open to the individual.

A constructive pluralism thus favours seeking compromise through dialogue, within the framework of contractual relations between majority and minorities in order to arrive, by negotiation, at solutions which are agreeable to all parties. Such dialogue is never likely to end definitively, however. The fluctuating character of intercultural relations, the arising of unforeseen obstacles and the willingness or otherwise of the concerned parties to continue listening to their partners mean that negotiations and dialogue have to remain permanently open.

The acceptance of compromise - in and through dialogue - and the pursuit of a necessarily shifting equilibrium is expressive of the will to construct a certain special form of relationship, which is able to guarantee equitable power-sharing and the participation of all communities in democratic life.

4. The pluralist challenge in South-East Europe

The stabilization and rebuilding of the Balkans after a decade of ethnic wars builds upon the commitment to democratic principles, protection of human rights and the rule of law, as well as respect for and protection of minorities. Multi-ethnic democratic states and the

development of good neighbourly relations and co-operation are prerequisites for regional peace and stability.

Stated most concisely, pluralists argue that, under critically important conditions of open communications and equality, contact between groups generates mutual understanding and co-operation, 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 co-operation - or what has been termed a "civic culture".

This view suggests that incentives for co-operation can be found in society itself, in interests that intersect with and moderate the appeal of ethnic identities. This is the essence of the "cross-cutting cleavages" hypothesis widely cited in political science. "Cross-cutting cleavages" contribute to the moderation of conflict when they become the basis for political identity, electoral competition, and participation in representative institutions and decision-making processes.

- **Access to information and communication media**

The openness of inter-group contact and communication is therefore an essential element in the pluralist paradigm. For example, it suggests the importance of efforts to overcome segmentation in the realm of communications. From this perspective, efforts to ensure the openness 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.

The transition in South-East Europe 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; sensitisation 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 internationalisation of the media and trans-national information flows.

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.

Moreover, the production and dissemination at the local, national and sub-regional 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.

Intellectual co-operation and dialogue are key tools for mobilizing the 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.

• **Strengthening democratic citizenship**

Similarly, the pluralist approach suggests that common educational institutions valuing group identities and cultures equally – especially at the university level – are a potentially powerful means of fostering inter-group contact, communication, and understanding, and encouraging the discovery of shared values and interests.

The most radical changes in the educational systems of East European countries have occurred in the field of higher education. In particular, university autonomy, accountability and quality assurance have been identified as most critical areas in seeking to establish university links with institutions in the West. While some countries in the region have already achieved encouraging results in their educational reforms, there is a basic need to further national and institutional capacities and skills in policy-making, good governance, and the strategic management of higher education institutions, including trans-border mobility among the younger generation of intellectuals.

The need to make systematic educational efforts to strengthen democratic citizenship and respect for human rights is of also paramount importance in South-East European context. As well as the great variety of individual talents, education here has to face the wide range of social, cultural, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds of the groups making up

society. Everyone should be able to find their place in the community - in most cases local, to which they primarily belong - and at the same time be given the means to open out to other communities, values, belief systems and faiths. Any education policy must therefore be able to meet the challenge of how to turn cultural diversity into something that makes for social cohesion.

This “civic education” is not a matter of cold, intellectual analysis, but an emotional receptiveness to the viewpoint of others, which is the surest means of deconstructing false representations, prejudices and stereotypes associated with each group. To achieve this, dialogue between different communities at work, at play, through the voluntary sector and at neighbourhood levels must be encouraged.

Particular attention must be paid to the way in which the history and development of intercultural relations are presented in the media and schoolbooks of countries, which have participated in acts of violence or crimes. The education system therefore will have to accord the diversity of the cultures a place in study programmes (particularly in the teaching of languages) while at the same time emphasizing the role played by these cultures in the history of ideas and recognizing the contribution of ethnic minorities and immigrant populations in every field of knowledge.

The development of quality education is crucial for the entire endeavour, as the notion of “quality education” does not merely encompass aspects of educational attainment, but especially the aspects of curricula and their content focussing on peace, shared values, human rights, democracy, tolerance and mutual understanding.

Without calling into question the very foundations of the education system, it is thus possible to supporting the reform of curricula and syllabuses and by redefining the scope and content of the different subjects taught. The latter should take greater account of the diversity of cultures and of the need to establish links and paths of dialogue between them. The placing of localized intercultural conflicts in a larger spatial and temporal context allows debate to become less heated and facilitates a calmer negotiation of a way out of the crisis. In this way, education for pluralism becomes a partner of political action for pluralism.

- **Building scientific, technical and human capacities**

The education of each citizen must continue throughout his or her life and become part of the basic framework of civil society and living democracy. It even becomes indistinguishable from democracy when

everyone plays a part in constructing a responsible and mutually supportive society that upholds the fundamental rights of all.

At present, the challenges emanating from globalization and from the trends in many areas are becoming ever more complex, often driven by scientific and technological insights and breakthroughs, and they carry manifold implications. Policies to address these 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 underpinnings and consequences, drawing on input both from the natural sciences and the social and human sciences.

The contribution of science cannot only be based upon terms of research and knowledge, but must also be justified by its relevance and effectiveness in addressing the needs and aspirations of societies. In order to guarantee that the sciences are geared towards work for sustainable peace and development, all groups of society and all societies – with due consideration and respect for diversity – must be able to participate in democratic decision-making on scientific matters. The pluralist challenge cannot be circumvented in the rapid advance towards the construction of knowledge-based societies.

In South-East European region, rebuilding scientific networks and infrastructures and enhancing increasing co-operation among institutions is both urgent and important. This will necessitate the development of institutional capacities and human resources in the different disciplines and the promotion of co-operation between the natural, social, and human sciences, with adequate attention given to the ethics of science.

Moreover, inter-active partnerships among scientific communities in West and East European countries need to be reinforced both at the institutional and individual levels. The disintegration of former Yugoslavia, for example, was both preceded and followed by massive emigration of individuals aged 25 and 40 with a high proportion of university graduates and scientists, pursuing scientific careers in West European institutions of higher learning and gathering experience of high relevance for their countries of origin.

With the aim of preserving and integrating scientific resources in countries afflicted by conflict, sudden economic and social transformations, or difficult transitions, university teaching and research at the national level must be strengthened, along with the development of capacities to access data. To further counter the “brain drain”, participation

in international exchanges of scientific and technological information must be facilitated along with the participation of researchers – especially women and young researchers – in cooperative and international research.

- **World Heritage: heritage as a shared experience**

The Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations takes place in Ohrid; a distinguished site on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Like all other heritage sites, Ohrid is a receptacle of memory, for cultural heritage – both in its tangible and intangible forms - embody the symbolic values of cultural identities and constitutes 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.

As in many parts of the world, the South-East European experience has demonstrated that the heritage of others may become they 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, the heritage must be made a cause for the protection of the diversity of cultures and of dialogue between them.

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. Protecting the impressive cultural wealth of South-East Europe will require sustained efforts, including international support. The 54 cultural and natural sites inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List in the region call for the special attention of the Organization, especially as regards training in, and dissemination of, the relevant legal instruments. Special programmes for municipal administrators on the protection of cultural and natural heritage are particularly urgent. The development of a culture of conservation and of respect for the multi-ethnic heritage of the region will remain a priority for South-Eastern countries in the years to come.

During 2002, proclaimed United Nations Year for Cultural heritage, UNESCO chose the theme of reconciliation and development as the focus of its activities. In his message for the year, UNESCO's Director-General Koichiro Matsuura said, “The biggest challenge facing UNESCO,

designated lead agency for the year by the United Nations, is to make the public authorities, the private sector and civil society as a whole realize that the cultural heritage is not only an instrument for peace and reconciliation but also a factor of development”.

The challenge everywhere – but especially for South-East European countries - 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.

5. Towards the future

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 one of the important lessons of the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, where cultural diversity was acknowledged as inseparable from the economical, social and ecological concerns, and qualified as a “collective force” at the service of sustainable development in the final Declaration of the Summit.

Cultural diversity may be defined as a principle for organizing sustainable cultural plurality, both within and across societies; hence the pluralist approach is oriented toward openness and participation. In the longer term, the identification, or creation, of crosscutting divisions and their representation in political decision-making processes in the state, as well as the creation of conditions that encourage cooperative action across ethnic cleavages on the social level, holds the greatest promise for moderating inter-group tensions and preventing conflict.

This approach fosters the “politics of interest”, not the “politics of identity”. It fundamentally depends on goodwill among citizens who recognize inter-group co-operation and dialogue as an opportunity or means to secure shared benefits.

As representatives of the nation and custodians of democracy, parliamentarians are the prime defenders of this crucial endeavour. Responsible for defining and implementing the political and legislative choices of the nation, they reflect the concerns of their electorates and adopt approaches conducive to appropriate solutions.

For dialogues about states in competition repeat themselves, and imposed settlements engender resentment that can endure in collective

memories. The Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations will compel recognition of the blend of historical conditions that determine some dimensions of the present – and mould the image of the future.

Notes

1. The conference received a proposal for, and supported the convening of, a Regional Forum on “Dialogue among Civilizations”, to be held in Ohrid under the sponsorship of the President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, H.E. Mr Boris Trajkovski, and the Director-General of UNESCO, H.E. Mr Koïchiro Matsuura. This proposal was included in the conclusions by the Chairperson of the Conference. The proceedings of the Conference have been published in “Co-operation between UNESCO and its South-East European Member States” (UNESCO, 2002).
2. UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: “Culture of Peace” and A/RES/53/243: “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”.
3. Document 165 EX/27, paragraph 9.
4. The World Culture Report, UNESCO Publishing (2000), Towards a Constructive Pluralism. UNESCO/The Commonwealth Secretariat (2000); The Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).
5. Dialogue among Civilizations. The Round Table on the Eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit. UNESCO Publishing (2001).
6. 161 EX/INF 14

People, Ethics and Civilization

Kiril Temkov

Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje

Before us lies an open abyss of uncertainty. Dangerous conditions and bad relations threaten our existence. Plants and animals are not the only species facing the danger of extinction. Among the most endangered species are human beings, who are responsible for the ecological catastrophes and conflicts that menace them.

The world has changed in the past century. Formerly, rural lifestyles were dominant, families and generations were connected, and people had similar values, problems and ethics. Most lives revolved around survival and raising children. Levels of production were low and products did not reach far beyond the region. Modesty was the most common teaching and people believed in temperance, respect and dedication.

Over one century, the world's population grew from one billion to six billion. Now, people mainly live in open societies where they are free to move and work as wish. The number of states is ten times greater, most social environments are urban, and production is industrial or post-industrial. Families are fragmented and generations are in conflict. Traffic is a fact of life; people fly all over the world and the amount of information available is endlessly expanding. Production levels are high and wealth has multiplied. The world has become one "big village". However, traditional lifestyles have been destroyed. People are lonely, strained and confused.

There exists an attitude that the same values do not apply to everyone and there are no moral norms. We argue that norms do not exist and that good cannot be readily distinguished from evil.

Now, everyone wants everything to be new. Material, spiritual and cultural values do not last. Life is a search for change. Space has been explored, biological depths have been penetrated and many secrets of life have been revealed at enormous speed. Such dynamics and discoveries are the spirit of our existence.

These changes have brought about many fantastic and creative things, especially in terms of information. The spirit of criticism has also developed, addressing all questions of human existence and action. Great cultural exchange on the world cultural scene gives joy and fulfilment. Different artistic values compete and there is activity everywhere.

At the same time, great suffering is apparent. It becomes clear that this world is not the best possible. Idealism is suffocated by realism and pessimism. Nature is damaged and the environment is polluted. Improved food is dangerous to one's health, as are many other things in this developed world. Eyes disciplined to see beauty must face the ugly side of life, as well. Man recognizes himself as a mean creature, with evil intentions and uncontrolled behaviour, acting mindlessly. He is responsible for his problems.

The worst thing is that the development of the world has not brought about better relations between people. Instead of relating, they remain strangers. Although they are inspired by the same cultural artefacts and they have similar goals, they are spiritually distant. Conflicts increase in intensity and destructive force. Everyone is afraid of violence, terrorism and wars, because the clashes are extremely powerful and wreak destruction worldwide.

Civilization is in danger. The unintentional wasting of resources threatens to make them extinct for the next generation. Nature cannot purify what man has created. Water, air and soil are more and more polluted. The flora and the fauna suffer and die. Man separated from nature and other beings endangers all existence and humiliates himself. People from this world behave as if they want this civilization to be the last.

In the age of evil, Saint Clement of Ohrid taught "we should distance ourselves from evil and do good." In the age of war by everyone against all, Thomas Hobbes reminded man "he who hath by experience, or reason, the greatest and surest prospect of consequences, deliberates best himself; and is able, when he will, to give the best counsel unto others." The greatest

philosopher from this region, Aristotle, underlined that modesty is the truest humanity.

People, meaning us, are gifted with thought and have the potential to recognize problems and approaches to solving them. Only humans can correct their lives - humans as individuals, as couples, as friends and family, as communities. No one can escape from the responsibility to make the world better for himself and for others. That is the basic condition of humans, who have the strength to understand and the will to find solutions.

Ethics require orientation through the processes of life. Everyone should respect everybody, nothing should be destroyed, and life must be quiet, constructive and calm. Understanding is better than clashing and to help is more human than to steal. Everything can be solved in a human way. Ethics lead us through those complicated life paths, touching on life's questions to find the internal, intimate, efficient human answer for the challenges faced and to give courage to overcome them.

Civilization needs ethics to survive and advance. Is it possible to find true values, goals and methods, which will lead us to the real path of salvation from difficulties, which will open perspectives on goodness and non-violence, that could be acceptable to all?

That is not only an act of the mind. It is not only a question of building the right feelings. The necessary knowledge does not come only from laboratories. Such deep and common answers can only be found through the connection of all people, considering the experiences of all nations, by emphasizing the moral ideals of the best and bravest, by seeing the moral visions of the wisest thinkers of all times and places. That can only be a product of humanity's moral and ethical unity.

For the connected world to be united with a powerful common spirit, people need a universal set of ethics. UNESCO calls for a united spirit of humanity. All intellectuals and statesmen are members of this distinguished spiritual community, which asks that we dedicate ourselves to the improvement of humanity, to the development of a culture of living that will care for the world and rescue it from troubles man has made. We should care for the young especially, encouraging their creativity, joy in knowledge, freedom and responsibility to create rather than destroy.

How and where should we look for ideas that allow us to cross over this abyss of suffering, to overcome the heavy fear of uncertainty and to engage our strength in order to foster understanding in the world? We must re-establish the links between ethics and civilization that existed in

the most creative epochs of man, when there was an intimate connection between good will among people and the desire to do right.

Everyone should try to find in themselves, as responsible human beings, an openness to the goals of humanity - peace, universal ethics, dialogue and tolerance.

The Concept and Implications of the Dialogue among Civilizations : a Macedonian Perspective

Ferid Muhic

Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Skopje

1. Context

Humanity is more than a notion. Humanity is a project. The entire history of humanity is a process whereby isolated, disoriented, unconnected, opposed, warring human groups gradually organize themselves into greater communities, which become aware that the elements joining them together by far surpass the factors that until then divided them. The foundation of the United Nations is understandably the most significant date in this world saga, inspired by the knowledge that we are all one nation of people – Gens una summus. The UN's activities, from their foundation to the present day, have created conditions for considerable progress by humankind.

In November 1998, the United Nations General Assembly declared the year 2001- the first year of the third millennium of our era – the Year

of Dialogue among Civilizations. Simultaneously, the attitude that “peace must be based on intellectual and ethical solidarity of all humanity” has been accepted as a universal axiom.

Bearing this great mission in mind, on 5 September 2000, as the first accord of the epochal UN Millennium Summit in New York, addressed by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, leaders from every continent gathered together at the round table in order to share their views, knowledge and wisdom, to declare their common vision of a world of mutual respect, tolerance, peace, co-operation and prosperity. They reconfirmed that the essential prerequisite for this gigantic undertaking is the dialogue among civilizations. In Vilnius, Lithuania, between 23 and 26 April 2001, the Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, opened the Dialogue among Civilizations Conference, where leaders from five continents gathered again to share words of understanding and respect.

Even the greatest buildings are constructed piece-by-piece, just as the longest road is walked step by step. It became clear that once promoted and consensually accepted, the great idea of an intercivilizational dialogue could be efficiently implemented by means of a sequence of well-organized and coordinated regional dialogues. At the High-Level Conference on Strengthening Co-operation in South-East Europe, held at UNESCO's headquarters on 4 and 5 April 2002, President Trajkovski and Director-General Matsuura agreed to organize the first regional Forum on dialogue among civilizations in Ohrid.

It is difficult to imagine another region in the world where successful dialogue among civilizations could be of greater importance than the one that is being led here, in the heart of this peninsular cradle of so many civilizations and cultures.

2. Tradition of dialogue: the Macedonian contribution

The UN efforts towards the promotion of dialogue and co-operation among civilizations find here extraordinarily fertile soil for their full accomplishment. No matter whether we deal with intra-regional, bilateral or multilateral co-operation, citizens, domestic political institutions and the international community will encounter an exceptionally long and rich tradition of multicultural models, constituted by and developed on the principles of dialogue.

UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, adopted at the 31st Session of UNESCO's General Conference (Paris, 2 November

2001), as well as the UN's Global Agenda on Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted at the UN General Assembly in November of the same year, rightfully cite the great significance of regional forums for the affirmation of dialogue.

It is vital to recall that the Balkans represent an area of continuous and intensive dialogue of civilizations, which has gone on for at least 2,500 years, perhaps longer than on any other place in the world. One could hardly find a better, more appropriate location to implement the UN and UNESCO's goals.

This region has always been a place where cultural standards and civilizational norms have determined the structural features of social life, and with great efficiency, have prevented the outbreak of large-scale intercultural conflicts, violence and separatism. It has known periods of peace and co-operation between different cultures, religions and civilizational models for longer than any other multicultural area in the world.

It is customary to present the Balkans, as a whole, and the area of Macedonia, separately, in the light of conflicts, separatist and irredentist programmes and eruptions of violence. These phenomena are part of the history of this region. Nevertheless, the Balkan region is both a historical, cultural and civilizational whole. Its peoples, throughout their history, parallel to the periods of conflicts, have worked on building a life together. The performance of their role in the modern world, based on obligations originating against the background of their huge contribution to world culture, civilization, philosophy, science and art in the past, certainly obliges them to promote the principles of dialogue. The people of the Balkans want to systematically affirm the knowledge of civilizational unity and historical, political and economic integration of the entire region, and to strategically incorporate it into European and global politics.

From a historical perspective, it is hard to estimate the civilizational values and cultural contributions of the Balkan peoples to the world as a whole. Before 1492, the world picture comprised only three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. It was the Balkan region that linked and united them all. Therefore, for centuries, the geographical zone of Macedonia was known by the name *Catena Mundi*, i.e. the pole, the link, the chain of the worlds. The outstanding position of the Balkans has determined its special role in world history. Not only has it been a crossroads, but also a connection; not only the main avenue but also the central square for the meetings of civilizations from three continents. Therefore, nowhere has there been so much turmoil, so many conflicts, and yet so much creative contact among peoples with such different and yet cooperative models of life practice.

If the human spirit had a certain shape, it would assume the topography of the peninsula. Joined to the continent, the peninsula becomes attached to its firm compactness, and as it stretches into the sea. It simultaneously aspires towards the horizon of the open sea, full of challenge and uncertainty. The best synonym for the history of humanity is the peninsular form, which so clearly embodies the everlasting advancement towards the new and the unknown, and the unbreakable linkage to the never-ending continent of the entire tradition of human experience.

In the Balkans, and separately, through the territory of Macedonia, the world was connected by an East-West axis from Persia to Iberia, as well as by a North-South axis from Egypt to the Baltic. Here, both Indo-European and Mongolic – Turan people, Macedonians, Iliric people, Greeks, Tracians, Romans, Sassians, Celts, Normans, Germans, Hunes, Avarians, Slavs and Turks lived next to each other, made wars, entered into alliances, traded and exchanged goods, mixed their blood and genes. Dialogue is a way of life, conducted in all the languages spoken here. Cultures, ethnic communities, various ideologies, civilizational standpoints and religious practices coexist. They have merged with each other and are intensively symbiotic. The Balkans and Macedonia can rightfully be called the first and the greatest laboratory for dialogue among civilizations in the history of the world. The contribution of Macedonia, with its value, quality and influences on this imposing tradition by far exceeds its geographic proportions. Over 25 centuries of experience, many misunderstandings, conflicts and wars have been recorded. But they have been exceeded by the number of agreements, the scope of creative communication and the duration of peace. Nowhere in the world have different groups representing big, monotheistic religions lived together, without conflict, for so long. For the past fifteen centuries in Macedonia, there has been no slave-owning regime. That form of subordination was abolished as late as the second half of 19th century in some European colonies. Macedonia is the only point in Europe, where the proclamations of rebels against the Ottoman regime promoted the principle of unconditional respect for the religious and national freedoms of all of its inhabitants, one hundred years ago at Ilinden, in 1903.

There was room for both capitalist and socialist historical practice, just as there was vigour to abandon the latter when its ideological limits and inherent weaknesses were ascertained. There had been no inter-ethnic, cultural or civilizational war for more than a thousand years. One crucial fact is that Macedonians and Albanians are perhaps the only two

peoples that have shared the same territory but never, in the whole of history, fought against each other! In addition, this is the area from which the most creative surge of early Christianity spread, the all-Slavic literacy; the only part of the European territories of the Ottoman Empire, where after the fall of the Ottoman state there was neither systematic expulsion of Muslims nor mass destruction of sacral edifices; it is a territory where Jews, practically the first in Europe, found shelter and safety immediately following their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

During the last decade, we have marked this period of sovereignty and independence by the constitutional incorporation of national minority rights, which by far exceed the rights enjoyed by minorities in neighbouring countries. We confirmed the contribution of our own experience to the great and indispensable art of dialogue among civilizations by the resolution to solve the conflict in 2001 through dialogue and agreement. The Framework Agreement signed here, in Ohrid, is proof of the deep roots a culture of peace in this country. It demonstrates the maturity of its citizens, and at the same time acts as a signpost and an example both for the region (which, unfortunately, had to go through terrible conflicts with great casualties and material damage) and for all other multi-ethnic and multi-cultural areas in the world, which are passing through the trials of transition.

These are the reasons why, in brief, the successful outcome of this regional Forum for Dialogue among Civilizations is of such relevance for all countries in the world that accept and understand the notion of “civilization” as a universal, pluralist, and non-hierarchic phenomenon, pursuant to the definition given in UNESCO’s Plan of Action (161 EX/INF 14), and a phenomenon which is in harmony with Macedonia’s own historic tradition and commitments.

3. Pluralistic experience versus hegemonic trends

One of the key aspects of the Macedonian concept of dialogue among civilizations is to assure that historical facts are properly understood and the inherent potentials of the Macedonian cultural model are accordingly assessed, while asserting the principle of pluralism. It is completely clear that to implement an authentic cultural pluralism entails rejection of all forms of inter-cultural antagonism, exclusivity and xenophobia in places where they are the dominant manifestations of historical experience.

Throughout the history of Macedonia, forms of dialogue have developed among local communities, cultural collectives, and civilizational

practices. Openness to diversity and the capability to accept the reality of “the other” have been the prerequisites for collective progress.

The best evidence of this is the vehement refusal by citizens, regardless of their ethnic, cultural origin, or religious affiliation, of proposals to divide territories and peoples that were recently presented by certain scholarly and political authorities. Additional proof is to be found in the results of research conducted throughout this country, which, even after the conflict begun in 2001, has shown that over 70 percent of citizens have retained mutual trust, and more than 80 percent have opted for the formulation of a common life in a common state.

These indicators are the central encouragement for reasonable and suitably led political action. They lucidly verify that among the citizens here, there is clear political awareness of and sensible commitment to building a democratic society where cultural and other differences will be an integral power and a constructive factor. In that respect, the presence of cultural pluralism can grow from a threat and obstacle into a precondition for productive dialogue among key actors. The participation of all collectivities in building a democratic society, as an element of the collective historical memory of all communities living in the country, can and should be a basis and incentive for the defeat of hegemonic tendencies, no matter where they come from.

In every society, dialogue between different sides never ends, and the fundamental principles underlying dialogue remain valid. Macedonian historical experience has unequivocally established those solid principles. Therefore, they need not be inserted in Macedonian social tissue, where they already exist. It is sufficient to reiterate the historically verified principles of agreement, especially in the delicate sphere of regulating the relations between groups that are still being defined, in compliance with the quantitative criteria of majority and minority. Provided that this prerequisite is satisfied, and under the condition of non-discriminatory application of legal regulations, the democratic concept of Macedonia will become a framework for a higher form of civic integration, where cultural differences will be asserted as autonomously postulated features and all claim that these represent obstructions and sources of confrontation can be denied.

4. Strengthening of Pluralism by Intensifying Dialogue in the Region

From the perspective of Macedonian historical experience, and in view of the strategic location of Macedonia, the concept of dialogue among

civilizations has multiple implications. On a practical level, it is directly relevant to the stability of the region and thus to the rest of Europe; at the level of civilizational progress, the Macedonian concept is the sum of original practices, inventive methodology and summarized collective knowledge that affirms the priority of dialogue in all potential conflict situations.

Released from the heavy mortgages of inter- and intra-ethnic wars, Macedonia is an extremely substantial element for the stabilization of the turbulent Balkans, and for the promotion of peace through dialogue. Established as a multi-ethnic state, Macedonia's positive potential is enormous. Following this line of comparatively exclusive historical experience, Macedonia can have a central influence on its neighbour's relations, contributing to respect for human rights, elaborating and ameliorating the principles of protection for the rights of the national collectivity. In so doing, its potential influence on the successful application of democratic principles both in the country and in the region harmonizes with its central geographical position of balancing relations and neutralizing the effects of historical conflicts in the four (prospectively, five) most powerful countries in the region.

In reality, the bottom-line of the delicate task for equilibration of interests in the multiethnic Balkans is the imperative for an efficient encounter with the challenge of pluralism and its institutional implementation. The identity of the area of Macedonia, not considering its immediate political identity in certain historical epochs, is mainly based on systematic development of contacts between the ethnic collectivities in the region, and development of co-operation, confidence, and, in particular, of unreserved mutual respect, as its dominant constants.

If one recalls that from a historical perspective, in America, the principles of tolerance were developed based on the balance of power between different cultural and religious communities, where no single one could efficiently impose its hegemonic model for a single century, it is reasonable to conclude that in Macedonia, the millennia-long experience of balancing utterly contradictory cultural influences has created mental capacities and cultural matrices of peace and dialogue of great relevance to world experience.

Within this key area of the referential framework of communications and information, the Republic of Macedonia has a relatively long tradition of harmonization with international standards of freedom. Its information system has not been usurped or monopolized on ethnic or cultural grounds. Not a single cultural, ethnic or other religious group has had a

dominant hold on public information. The problem, in essence, is to reorganize elements that were ideologically controlled, with emphatic denial, even at that time, of national or ethnic priority. From that aspect, a truly proportional distribution of logistic potential in this sphere is necessary, as is openness to international influences.

As a matter of fact, cultural, educational and entertainment programmes cover all major ethnic, linguistic and social collectivities, generating solid backgrounds for the assertion of efficient cultural pluralism. Consequently, the promotion of co-operation, dialogue, exchange of information and knowledge becomes grounds for linking the public and private sectors as well as an exemplary demonstration of standards that can serve as a model for the region.

Intensive intellectual co-operation among distinguished scholars and media representatives also contributes to this wealth, regardless of ethnic origin or linguistic affiliation.

An explicit illustration of this is that a university where the teaching is done in three mandatory languages - Macedonian, Albanian, and English - is already working in Macedonia. It is the South - East European University, which has already achieved outstanding results, and which day by day acquires an improving local and international reputation. Its establishment, and the recent recognition of Tetovo University came after severe disputes, emphasizing the value of dialogue as the most adequate, proven form of solving problems. On the other hand, since their foundation, the existing universities of Skopje and Bitola have incorporated into their structure elements of systematic respect for the significance and contribution of all cultural collectivities in the region, with Albanian and Turkish ones at the forefront. Humanistic education at the university level, here, has a tradition over eight decades long, representing a substantial centre for the dissemination of the ideals of democracy, tolerance, mutual understanding and esteem for the great milestones of humanity. Inter-university contacts in the region, not yet harmonized with the capacities of all countries in the region, have a long tradition, interrupted only in the last decade, after the well-known events brought about by the disintegration of the SFR of Yugoslavia. Since stabilization of the political situation in the Balkans, the promotion of pluralism has received strong support from the Macedonian concept of dialogue among civilizations,

accordingly presented and implemented first at home, and afterwards in productive dialogue with neighbouring countries.

Certainly, satisfying this primary condition does not decrease the importance of building a scholarly network conceptualized in a contemporary manner, of properly organized institutional capacities and infrastructure, as well as correct distribution and usage of human potentials. This country is strongly shaken by economic problems – one of the neuralgic spots of all Balkans – which considerably limit its capability to promote its high civilizational and humanistic capacities. Tens of thousands of highly educated people under 30 years of age have left Macedonia in the last decade, probably forever, thereby reducing its young intellectual generation by half. The intensification of an efficient and contemporary international scholarly dialogue, of technological information and of participation in international research projects could be sufficient to halt this “brain drain”. At the same time, it could be the most effective option for integrating modern innovation technologies and capacities into the rich pluralistic experience and cultural heritage of Macedonia. Its final goal is to stimulate development policy as a factor of national unity, as a foundation for the modern democratic state.

5. A Philosophy of Dialogue and Respect - the Macedonian Vision

Notions of culture and civilizational experiences are intrinsic to this country's identity. To its citizens, cultural diversity and the interaction of cultures typical in this region, are imperative to having respect for cultural versatility, cherishing of one's own cultural features, and creating preconditions for unhindered cultural pluralism. These are part of the everyday mentality. To the citizens of Macedonia, the unbreakable connection between economic, social and regional political interests is clearly located in respect for the principles of cultural pluralism, as a kind of collective power and a crucial requirement for regional stability.

In Macedonia, the philosophy of dialogue and the categorical imperative to respect the culture of “the other” is expressed by awareness of the importance of respect for interests and cultural identity. The disproportionate dynamics of the manifestation of these two spheres, have led people to conclude that cultural identity must never be sacrificed. On the contrary, only by respecting identity, as a fundamental principle of common life in multicultural communities, can there be an equal and productive basis for co-operation, where no one is compelled to sacrifice or privileged to enforce the standards of one's own cultural identity.

The semantically precise as well as poetic toponym of their common peninsular home is deeply impressed in the collective memory of all cultural and ethnic communities, which have more than a thousand-year common experience in Macedonia. If it is true that name is destiny - *Nomen est nomen*, then the Balkan toponym, in a sovereign and incomparable manner, epitomizes the quintessence of the Macedonian philosophy of dialogue and respect in the same way that it delineates its vision of civilization.

Bal-Kan – as one can read it, in etymological terms has real meaning, and the inhabitants of this Peninsula would prefer to believe it means this - a phrase that blends the substances of honey and blood: 'bal' means 'honey', 'kan' means 'blood'. Both the value of honey and the preciousness of blood are universal. No monopoly can be established over either honey or blood. They do not tolerate exclusivity. They are common for all - inclusive. Just as the best of the world of nature (honey, as a symbol of concentrated healing quality, nutritional values, sweetness - the things everyone is entitled to) cannot be appropriated only by some, in the same way the vital substance, the liquid of life of all people – blood – is essential to all! Neither honey nor blood allows gradation or discrimination. Hence, for the sake of its inhabitants, the Balkans has retained in its name, as a warning. The message is that there can be life together, only if the common rights of all are respected.

This mighty metaphor also contains the Macedonian vision of dialogue among civilizations. Perhaps its main message for the world is that everyone will play a role in the creation of and access to common values, and no one will have the right either to exercise violence or to destroy human lives.

The world is to become a place where everybody will gather honey and no one will shed blood!



Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, addressing the opening of the Ohrid Forum



Ambassador Ahmed Jalali, President of the 31st session of the General Conference of UNESCO at the podium



Hans d'Orville, Director of UNESCO's Bureau of Strategic Planning; Jordan Plevnes, Ambassador and Macedonian Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and Blagoj Stefanovski, Macedonian Minister of Culture; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO and Jasmina Sopova, UNESCO's Bureau of Public Information



Ann-Belinda Preis, Senior Programme Planning Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning; Ambassador Ahmed Jalali, Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO and President of the 31st session of the General Conference; FW (Russ) Russell, Information Manager, Bureau of Strategic Planning; Liliana Kotevska Plevnes and Ambassador Jordan Plevnes, Macedonian Permanent Delegate to UNESCO



President Boris Trajkovski and UNESCO's Hans d'Orville finalizing the Message from Ohrid



Risto Blazevski, Executive Secretary of the Ohrid Forum Secretariat and Advisor to President Trajkovski and his team.

Programme

Thursday, 28 August 2003

Arrival of delegations and participants and check-in
("Metropol" and "Bellevue" Hotels)

20:30 Opening ceremony of the "Struga Poetry Evenings" (optional)

Friday, 29 August 2003

10:00 Opening of the Forum by
Branko Crvenkovski
President of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia (Plenary Hall,
"Metropol" hotel)

Statements by Hosts of the Forum

Boris Trajkovski
President of the Republic of Macedonia
Ko chiro Matsuura
Director-General of UNESCO

Statements by the Sponsors of the Forum:

Rabbi Arthur Schneier	President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation
Giandomenico Picco	Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Dialogue among Civilizations
Ilinka Mitreva	Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

Statements by Heads of State

Alfred Mojsiu	President of Albania
Dragan Covic	Chairman of the Presidency Bosnia and Herzegovina
Georgi Parvanov	President of Bulgaria
Stjepan Mesic	President of Croatia
Ferenc Madl	President of Hungary
Svetozar Marovic	President of Serbia and Montenegro
Janes Drnovsek	President of Slovenia

Followed by statements of

Kiro Gligorov	former President of the Republic of Macedonia
Zhelyu Zhelev	former President of Bulgaria
Harri Holkeri	former Prime Minister of Finland and Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)
Ahmed Jalali	President of the General Conference of UNESCO
Mongi Bousnina	Director-General of ALECSO

Friday, 29 August 2003 (cont'd)

Statements of Personal Representatives of Heads of State and Government and by other distinguished personalities.

- 13:30 Family photo
Luncheon hosted by
Branko Crvenkovski President of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia
- 15:30 - 19:00 Panel discussions on the following topics:
Peace and Stability (moderated by
Srgjan Kerim Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia) – Hotel Metropole, level -1
Matthias Kleinert Democracy and Civil Society (moderated by Vice-President, Daimler-Chrysler AG), Hotel Metropole, level -1
Louis Emmerij Culture and Diversity (moderated by Co-Director of the UN Intellectual History Project – Hotel Metropole, level -1
- 20:00 Classical music concert – offered by
Boris Trajanov baritone
Ino Mirkovic UNESCO Artist for Peace violin and
Olivera Mirkovic piano
Church of St. Sofia – transport will be offered from Hotel Metropole (departure 19.45)
- 20:45 Reception hosted by:
Boris Trajkovski President of the Republic of Macedonia, and
Ko chiro Matsuura Director-General of UNESCO

Saturday, 30 August 2003

- 10:00 Panel discussions (conclusion)
- 11:00 Plenary session chaired by
Ko chiro Matsuura Director-General of UNESCO
Statements
Presentation of Panel results by Rapporteurs
Adoption of the "Message from Ohrid"
Concluding Statement by
Boris Trajkovski President of the Republic of Macedonia.
- 13:30 Luncheon hosted by
Ilinka Mitreva Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia
- 17:00 Sightseeing of cultural and historical monuments in Ohrid (optional)

Annex I

32nd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO

Resolution 47 of the General Conference

New perspectives in UNESCO's activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures, including in particular follow-up to the New Delhi Ministerial Conference²

The General Conference,

Recalling its Resolution 31C/39 on "Call for international co-operation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism", the United Nations Global Agenda for the Dialogue among Civilizations 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 civilizations celebrate the unity in diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilizations,

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

Affirming 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;

Welcoming the lead role UNESCO has taken at all levels in promoting a dialogue among civilizations and cultures and highlighting its unique role in building new bridges between civilizations 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 civilizations 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 Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives;
2. Endorses the Message from Ohrid adopted by the Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, 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;
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-civilizational discourse and are the best guarantors of peace in the world;
6. Stresses the need for enhanced intercultural dialogue through international co-operation 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 civilizations; 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 civilizations 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 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;

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 civilizations 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.

Annex II

General Conference
32nd session, Paris 2003

32 C

32 C/60

7 October 2003

Original: English

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 CONFERENCE
Report by the Director-General**

OUTLINE

The present document provides background information about recent activities by the Organization with respect to activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures. It sets out the terms of the decision adopted by the Executive Board at its 167th session. It also reports about recent activities and conferences organized or co-sponsored by UNESCO together with Member States, in particular about the July 2003 New Delhi International Ministerial Conference on the "Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives" and the August 2003 Ohrid Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations.

Complementary information to this document is contained in document 32 C/INF.15.

Decision required: This document does not require a decision.

1. At its 167th session, the Executive Board adopted 167 EX/Decision 3.1, part III on "Action pertaining to the Dialogue among Civilizations", which reads as follows:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 31 C/Resolution 39 of the General Conference on "Call for international co-operation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism", the United Nations Global Agenda for the Dialogue 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 by the General Conference by 31 C/Resolution 25,

2. 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. Recalling 164 EX/Decision 6.2 of the Executive Board by which it had approved the use of the carry-over of the unspent balance of funds from 2000-2001 to the 2002-2003 biennium, among others for the purpose of intensifying the dialogue and identifying new perspectives and approaches relating to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations,
 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 the dialogue among civilizations,
 5. Welcoming UNESCO action with respect to dialogue as reported in paragraphs 405 and 406 of document 167 EX/4 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 cultures and civilizations,
 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 UNESCO's domains;
 8. Welcomes and endorses the New Delhi Declaration on "Dialogue among Civilizations – The Quest for New Perspectives", as adopted by the International Ministerial Conference held in New Delhi, India, on 9 and 10 July 2003;
 9. 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. Equally 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 made by the New Delhi and Ohrid conferences 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 to 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".
2. By this decision, the Executive Board, inter alia, welcomed and endorsed the New Delhi Declaration adopted by the International Ministerial Conference on the theme "Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives", co-organized by the Government of India and UNESCO, held in New Delhi, India, on 9 and 10 July 2003, which is contained in Annex I to this document; and the Message from Ohrid

- adopted by the Ohrid Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations, co-organized by the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and UNESCO, held in Ohrid on 29 and 30 August 2003, which is contained in Annex II to this document.
3. As requested by the Board's decision, the Director-General has transmitted on 25 September 2003 the text of both documents to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, requesting that they be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under an appropriate agenda item.
 4. The Director-General also wishes to inform the General Conference, that in his report on the execution of the Programme adopted by the General Conference, submitted to the Executive Board as document 167 EX/4, Part I he reported in paragraphs 405 and 406 on recent activities by the Secretariat in connection with the dialogue among civilizations. These paragraphs read:
 405. A number of activities was undertaken by the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) with respect to the Dialogue among civilizations, including the setting-up of a global (electronic, internet-based) network, involving competent organizations and research institutions as well as individual researchers, philosophers and intellectuals; the publication of scientific and policy-relevant papers and speeches in UNESCO's "Dialogue Series"; presentations at international conferences and meetings on UNESCO's involvement in the dialogue among civilizations; and, the co-organization and sponsorship of international conferences, meetings and events on the dialogue among civilizations (see document 166 EX/5, Part I: 164 EX/Decision 7.1.3 – Report by the Director-General on UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations). Highlights among these activities were: (a) the "International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations – Quest for New Perspectives", held on 9 and 10 July 2003 in New Delhi, India. This Conference resulted in the adoption of the Delhi Declaration on the Dialogue among Civilizations, identifying new avenues for future activities and orientations, especially as regards education, science and technology and values
(see <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001/delhi/index.html>) ; (b) the joint UNESCO/UNU Conference on "Globalization with a Human Face – Benefiting All", held at UNU headquarters in Tokyo on 30 and 31 July 2003
(see <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001/tokyo/index.html>); and (c) the second colloquium jointly organized by UNESCO and L'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE), Paris on "Les civilizations dans le regard de l'autre", held at Headquarters on 30 January 2003. Substantive and organizational preparations have also been made by BSP for the holding of other conferences on the subject of the dialogue among civilizations: the Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilizations in Ohrid, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 28 and 30 August 2003
(see <http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001/ohrid/index.htm>), the Symposium on the Dialogue among Civilizations, to be held in Sana'a, Yemen, on 25 and 26 October 2003 (Note: since rescheduled to February 2004); and the International Expert Symposium on "The Culture of Innovation and the

Building of Knowledge Societies”, scheduled to be held in Moscow, Russian Federation in November 2003. BSP also contributed to meetings of the Task Force of National Commissions for the Euro-Arab Strategy in Cairo, Egypt, 18 and 19 June 2003; the conference by the AMAR international charitable foundation on “Dialogue between Civilizations: Women’s Empowerment”, held in Brussels, Belgium in March 2003; and a workshop on the future of world order in Tripoli, Libya in May 2003. Consultations were held with ISESCO and ALECSO to identify issues and projects for joint endeavours concerning the dialogue among civilizations during 2004 and 2005.

406. BSP also completed arrangements for an innovative public-private partnership between UNESCO and DaimlerChrysler supporting practical activities related to intercultural dialogue and exchange with the support of the German National Commission. Entitled “Mondialogo – Intercultural Dialogue and Exchange”, this partnership aims at contributing to a dialogue between civilizations and cultures through a school contest, organized with UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project network (ASPnet), an engineering award, implemented by the Science Sector, and a dedicated Internet portal supporting the partnership. The partnership will be officially launched in October 2003.
5. The New Delhi Declaration and the Message from Ohrid set out new approaches, concepts and perspectives for future activities with respect to the dialogue among civilizations and defined future UNESCO action and follow-up.
6. Mention must be made of the extraordinary high level of participation in each of the two events. The Delhi Conference was opened by the Honourable Prime Minister of India and the Director-General of UNESCO and was attended by representatives from over 80 countries representing all regions, among them some 30 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 senior 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.
7. The Ohrid Regional Forum was a historic event bringing together eight Heads of State from the South-East Europe region – The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (host country), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia. Personal representatives of Heads of State from 20 other countries, both from within and outside the region, also attended as did the President of the UNESCO General Conference, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the High Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of UNMIK, the President of the Appeals of Conscience Foundation, the Director-General of ALECSO and the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Dialogue among Civilizations. More than 100 other personalities from the regions and international organizations as well as religious and spiritual leaders and representatives of the private sector contributed to the work of the Ohrid Forum.
8. The Director-General, in an information document submitted to the Executive Board at its 167th session, paid tribute equally to all other initiatives undertaken and events with respect to the dialogue among civilizations organized by many

governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, the academic community, the private sector, religious and spiritual leaders and communities, and various actors of civil society. The results of all these events will help to focus and inspire future action by UNESCO and the international community at large. Information on these activities can be found on the dedicated UNESCO dialogue website at

<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/conferences.html>.

9. To assist the General Conference further in its deliberations, a separate information document is being circulated, containing a summary of the salient points presented by the Secretariat in background documents prepared for the New Delhi conference and the Ohrid Forum.

Annex III

General Conference
32nd session, Paris 2003

32 C

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 co-operation 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”.³
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 co-operation, or structural incentives to co-operation, 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.⁴
 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 co-operation are prerequisites for regional peace and stability. Under conditions of open communications and equality, contact between groups generates mutual understanding and co-operation, not conflict. Contact in shared institutions is not necessarily an agent of cultural assimilation;

³ 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”.

⁴ The World Culture Report, UNESCO Publishing (2000), Towards a Constructive Pluralism. UNESCO/The Commonwealth Secretariat (2000); The Universal UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).

but sustained contact under conditions of open communications and equality can contribute to the emergence of a shared culture of interaction and co-operation – 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 co-operation 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.

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes



REGIONALEN FORUM ДИЈАЛОГ МЕЃУ ЦИВИЛИЗАЦИЈИ
REGIONAL FORUM DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS

Охрид, 29-30 Август 2003

Ohrid, 29-30 August 2003

"I wish that this forum would come up with an appeal different from the refrain that "Carthage must be destroyed!" I wish that we all together change it into "Carthage must be saved!" No Carthage should be ever reduced to ruins, no foundations of any culture should be shattered and no nation should ever ravage the soil of other civilizations or nations so that nothing can ever grow in it! I wish for our appeal to become a new refrain that will echo throughout the world and become a call for dialogue."

Boris Trajkovski
President

We are convinced that dialogue represents a new paradigm of security, especially in a globalizing world with its manifold new challenges to individuals, communities and countries.

A commitment to dialogue among civilizations is also a commitment against terrorism. Pursuing reconciliation and seeking security through dialogue requires a dynamic and pro-active civil society. It necessitates a mobilization of political leaders, parliamentarians, scholars, spiritual and religious leaders, media and non-governmental organizations as well as women and youth who all must play their roles and assume their responsibilities.

Message from Ohrid

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

