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# Dialogue among Civilizations

International Conference:  
Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations  
through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives

Rabat, Morocco, 14 - 16 June 2005



CENTER FOR KULTUR OG UDVIKLING | CKU  
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**Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**  
**Mongi Bousnina**  
**Hans d'Orville**  
**Ekmelleddin Ihsanoglu**  
**Olaf Gerlach Hansen**  
**Traugott Schoefthaler**  
**Gabriele Mazza**

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

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## Foreword

The Rabat Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 14 to 16 June 2005 under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI. Convened by six co-sponsoring organisations - UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures - and with the participation of the Council of Europe as observer, the Conference was a shining example of constructive multi-stakeholder partnership and cooperation. Its major aim was to move away from the declarative approach to dialogue among cultures, towards a more proactive definition of concrete, results-oriented actions, to be implemented within a given time frame in the areas of education, the sciences, culture and communication.

The need to translate dialogue among cultures and civilizations into more concrete terms should not be seen as a dismissal of previous efforts and achievements in this important domain. For several years, core issues emerging from intercultural dialogue activities have been addressed in many conferences and meetings worldwide, giving rise to an international consensus on important core principles, definitions, values, and attitudes. For one, the departure from the reductionist view of a “clash of civilizations” - including the underlying perception of world history that overlooks both the reach and influence of different cultures across civilizations and the extent of internal diversities within them - has led to a more nuanced understanding of contemporary grievances and of the sources of intellectual confusion that can cause dangerous divisiveness among societies.

Indeed, we live in a complex world where a sense of shared vulnerability fuelled by polarized perceptions and intercultural dissent can lead to violence and conflict and the spread of fanaticism and extremism, threatening international stability. In several parts of the world, political conflicts that are tied to relations between identity and culture are now increasingly becoming violent. This situation is sometimes worsened by media practices, which weaken internationally agreed standards for ethical reporting. Misguided views encourage stereotyping, which in turn incites hostility and deepening mistrust. There is at present a growing conviction and commonly felt responsibility on the need to forge new

avenues of understanding, build greater tolerance, and provide genuine impetus for the reconciliation of different points of view.

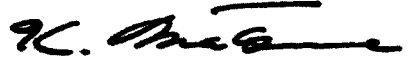
The Rabat Conference brought together a variety of experts, notably practitioners, with demonstrated experience and knowledge in areas that can benefit from intercultural dialogue at national, regional and international levels. They worked on a variety of issues, ranging from the reform of school and university curricula and the revision of textbooks, to the promotion of scientific collaboration across regions and intercultural training programmes for the media. This broad-based expert-level event involved educators, journalists, artists, writers, spiritual leaders, youth representatives, scientists, engineers and various technical experts - all together, men and women from more than 30 countries. It resulted in the adoption of a series of conclusions and recommendations - "the Rabat Commitment" - which the participating organizations pledged to pursue, jointly or individually, from 2006 onwards.

I am therefore proud to present to you the conclusions and commitments of the Rabat Conference as the 13th edition in UNESCO's Dialogue series. The Rabat Commitment is an instrumental framework for promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and includes an ambitious action plan with several challenges formulated for the years to come. New momentum has since been gained from the United Nations World Summit in September 2005, when the world's leaders committed themselves to taking action for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and a culture of peace at the local national, regional and international levels and assigned UNESCO a lead role in this endeavour.

It is my hope that systematic stock-taking of the progress made since the adoption of the Rabat Commitment will be undertaken as a built-in feature of its implementation, with a view to fine-tuning approaches and further consolidating our determination to make dialogue among cultures and civilizations a reality of our daily lives and hence to build peace among the nations and cultures of the world.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for the support they gave to making the Rabat Conference a success. I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Aziza Bennani, the Permanent

delegate of Morocco to UNESCO, for her initiative and hard work. This remarkable event will guide and inspire the many dialogue-relevant activities of UNESCO and its partners in the future.



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

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## THE RABAT COMMITMENT

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RABAT CONFERENCE ON DIALOGUE AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS THROUGH CONCRETE AND SUSTAINED INITIATIVES

**Rabat, Morocco, 14-16 June 2005**

1. A broad-based expert-level “Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives” was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 14 to 16 June 2005 under the high patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI. Convened by six cosponsoring organizations - UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures - and with the participation of the Council of Europe as observer, this event represents a unique international partnership initiative. It is aimed at identifying concrete and practical steps in various domains - based on a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples - that the participating organizations pledged to pursue, jointly or individually, from 2006 onwards. The Conference was attended by some 100 participants from more than 30 countries.

#### I

2. At the opening session, senior representatives of all participating organizations set out their vision and expectations for the Conference and the practical follow-up.
3. For ISESCO, it’s Director-General, H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, called for enhancing dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete initiatives that should be integrated into the process of sustainable development. He suggested that there was a need to acquire a profound knowledge of “the Other” along with related history and values, and to establish relations on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of cultural and civilizational diversity. The Director-General called for a mobilization of energies and capacities in order to promote

a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence among people and respect for their diversity. Intercivilizational dialogue should not be the monopoly of a single organization nor of an academic, cultural or political institution. It should rather draw on the contribution of multiple stakeholders from all walks of life. ISESCO stood for a constructive dialogue that interacts with “the Other” and shared common interests with all partner organizations.

4. For its part, ISESCO had taken a number of specific initiatives - through conferences, symposia, publications and studies - and was currently implementing a programme on establishing chairs for dialogue in Western universities and designating ISESCO Ambassadors for the Dialogue among Civilizations.
5. For ALECSO, its Director-General, H.E. Dr Mongi Bousnina, underlined the necessity of dialogue and its efficient role in counteracting the mistaken theses of a clash of civilizations. Dialogue was at the heart of the Arab Islamic culture, which encompasses dialogue and openness to others. He further reviewed various initiatives and measures that ALECSO had taken in the field of dialogue. In the field of education, prior attention should be focused on the purpose of learning to live together. This can be attained by means of textbooks and curricula, as well as through promoting the teaching of foreign languages, leading to a better knowledge of “the Other”. With regard to the cultural field, Dr Bousnina stressed the importance of translation and the conducting of joint cultural events in fostering mutual knowledge between cultures and civilizations. And as concerns the role of the information, ALECSO’s Director General impressed the need for bending efforts towards highlighting the image of “the Other” in the media and finding new ways of presenting it via the Internet.
6. Representing the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Hans d’Orville called for a bridging of the theoretical approach to dialogue with a more specific and effective implementation, based on a concrete set of actions and modalities to be pursued by all partners in their work programmes. Many activities had been undertaken in the past dedicated to fostering a dialogue; yet the practical results and impact had remained limited and insufficient. Hence, there was a need for new and more refined

approaches, which UNESCO for its part is proposing: a more dedicated focus on regional and sub regional constellations, a discussion of specific thematic issues which are strategic entry points for true dialogue activities, and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, beyond the traditional governmental representatives. As a result, such efforts will allow a more direct dialogue among peoples and communities. The search for innovative approaches will also extend to artistic creation and creativity through an interaction between melodies and musical instruments from different cultures, to be demonstrated in a special concert during the conference. Ultimately, dialogue must contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration through education, sciences, culture and communication.

7. Representing the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), H.E. Mr Saad Eddine Taib reviewed the significant efforts undertaken by his organization over the past years to spread awareness of the importance of intercivilizational dialogue in many parts of the world. He suggested that new approaches and measures were required, grounded in practical steps, to address the new global circumstances. He pointed to the rising danger of Islamophobia. New initiatives had already been launched by OIC, including with OSCE. He also noted that OIC had set up an observatory for monitoring and documenting cases of Islamophobia. Furthermore, he called for a review of textbooks and curricula in the West to counter an environment hostile to Islam. OIC was in favour of opening cultural and social dialogues with Western governments and Islamic communities in these countries with a view to building confidence and resolving practical problems. Dialogue cannot be an objective for its own sake, but must lead to real rapprochement and mutual recognition and understanding.
8. The Director of the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, Mr Olaf Gerlach Hansen, underlined the urgency of implementing a range of practical initiatives which might foster cultural diversity and universal values, bringing it from the philosophical level to concrete and sustained action, particularly in the areas of the media, culture and education. Such action must address ignorance's, stereotypes and prejudices, create true dialogue instead of violence and conflict and build on the

rich cultural diversity of humankind as a positive starting point. A particular challenge will be the contextualization of art and culture. He suggested that participants in the Conference serve as facilitators in their respective communities and organizations, thus advancing the implementation of the action plan of Rabat. He offered to co-organize and host in Denmark in 2006 a follow-up conference to the Rabat conference, in the context of a major cultural festival on “Images of the Middle East”.

9. The Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Euro - Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Mr Traugott Schoeffthaler, called for engaging youth, for a dynamic understanding of universal values in the spirit of common standards to be achieved and for a particular focus on education. He underscored the necessity of going beyond traditional forms of dialogue between cultures, towards cooperation without mental and national frontiers. Priority of educational efforts should be provision of the intellectual skills necessary for dialogue, dialogue being understood as occurring between individuals and groups, each of them exercising the human right to cultural self-determination. Cultural diversity should not be linked to diversity between nations, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups. As stated in the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, dynamic, overlapping and multiple identities must be fully recognized. Mr Schoeffthaler welcomed the working document for the Rabat Conference as a platform shared by all six-convenor organizations, and he invited the Council of Europe to join this endeavour.
10. On behalf of the Council of Europe, its Director of Education, Mr Gabriele Mazza, expressed the support of the Council for the Rabat initiative. He underlined the meaning of unity in diversity in relation to the building of a humane and democratic Europe as a political and cultural project. Contributing to the diversity and to the establishment of a democratic culture had recently been declared a priority by the 46 Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, who had reaffirmed the pivotal role of education and cultural activity for understanding, solidarity and social cohesion. The Council stood ready to pursue and intensify its efforts in favour of intercultural dialogue and cooperation, including the religious dimension. For this purpose it would

continue to redeploy all the means at its disposal in crucial areas, such as education for democratic citizenship and human rights, language education, heritage and cultural policy, media, teacher training, pupil exchanges and youth cooperation.

## II

11. The Conference conducted its work in three separate workshops dedicated to concrete proposals for intercultural dialogue in the areas of education, culture as well as communication and science. The participants welcomed the background document prepared by the Steering Committee for the Conference, composed of all partner organizations, and endorsed the various action proposals contained therein. Moreover, the workshops agreed by consensus on the following set of action recommendations

### **EDUCATION**

#### **12. General recommendations:**

- a) Intercultural dialogue must be based on universally shared values and the principles of peace, human rights, tolerance, and democratic citizenship, forming an integral part of quality education. It must therefore be fully taken into account in curriculum renewal and improvements in content, methodology, teacher education and the learning process, also involving parents and communities. Such dialogue plays an equally important role for the revision of textbooks, the production of new educational materials and the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- b) In curricula renewal, care should be taken to avoid oversimplifications and to raise awareness about cultural heterogeneity, its multiple dimensions and different sources and contributions.
- c) More emphasis should be given to integrating intercultural learning in pre-school education and basic education, while pursuing it at secondary school level, in higher and continuing adult education in a lifelong learning perspective.

- d) Due attention should be paid to integrating dimensions of intercultural dialogue into non-formal education, literacy campaigns and to extracurricular activities, such as youth exchanges and encounters.
- e) Intercultural education should also be situated in relation to the phenomena of school and community violence, and the need to respect differences and to address them in participatory and empowering ways.
- f) Educational programmes should provide sufficient information, especially for young citizens, on the major religions, and highlight their shared values and ethical concerns, drawing also on history, philosophy, literature and the arts.
- g) Broader access to existing educational networks and initiatives, managed by international and regional organizations, and a much fuller and more creative use of their potential for intercultural dialogue should be pursued as a matter of priority.

### **13. Specific proposals:**

- a) Clarify the concepts and reach consensus on definitions used in relation to intercultural dialogue and learning.
- b) Promote national legislation and international normative standards or instruments to guard against the defamation of “the Other” in school curricula.
- c) Produce guidelines on intercultural education, building on the research, publications and practice already carried out, such as with respect to world heritage and history education.
- d) Create a resource base of materials on good practices in intercultural education, which could support teaching practice.
- e) Elaborate learning materials for intercultural education and dialogue, both for scientific and teacher education purposes, and ensure their broad dissemination.
- f) Ensure that intercultural dialogue and engagement become core content of both in- and pre-service teacher education.

- g) Develop capacities of learners to acquire life skills and competencies, with emphasis on problem-solving and critical thinking, as a prerequisite for intercultural learning.
- h) Pursue studies on stereotypes conveyed in school textbooks concerning the culture of the “Other” and take action to correct them.
- i) Establish an interregional observatory on textbooks to monitor stereotyping, prejudices, inaccuracies and misconceptions in different subject areas and make provisions for corrective action.
- j) Place greater emphasis on the role of languages and their teaching as a means of intercultural dialogue and to pay particular attention to local languages, especially in mother tongue literacy; furthermore, promote the teaching of Arabic outside Arabic speaking countries to foster understanding.
- k) Encourage intercultural dialogue in schools through creative learning, art education, drama, role-play, song and music.
- l) Ensure intercultural dialogue across the curriculum, including physical education and sports, with emphasis on traditional games and sports, youth encounters and exchanges as an important bridge to communication between cultures and youth in particular, and within the framework and follow-up of the 2005 International Year of Physical Education and Sports.
- m) Encourage intercultural dialogue at various levels of education, through the conduct of practical projects and exchanges as well as competitions, building on the positive results already achieved with existing initiatives such as the Mondialogo partnership.
- n) Promote the creation of prizes rewarding excellence in intercultural exchange practices at national, sub regional and regional levels and organize school-based festivals celebrating cultural diversity.
- o) Create additional university chairs on intercultural dialogue in various countries and cultural regions.
- p) Take full advantage of and mobilize existing networks



relevant for dialogue activities specialized in dialogue within the partner organizations.

- q) Promote youth exchanges and summer school programmes and special intercultural events.
- r) Intensify the use of audiovisual materials and ICTs in support of interactive and participatory learning approaches to intercultural dialogue.
- s) Launch a media education project focusing on the need to instil and apply objectivity and critical thinking.
- t) Promote, in all these initiatives, the use of the Internet for enhanced impact and broad diffusion of materials and resources, and for intensified exchanges among teachers, students, researchers and curriculum developers.
- u) Ensure in all these activities and initiatives the full participation of girls and women, covering the entire range from conceptualization and planning to implementation.

## CULTURE

### 14. General recommendations:

- a) Key concepts pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations, especially those relating to the construct of culture, civilization and religions need to be revisited by competent organizations and academic scholars in order to arrive at definitions that can genuinely form a basis to further the dialogue. Consideration should be given to place culture as a frame for local belonging whereas civilization denotes a more universal phenomenon conferring a sense of recognition. Particular focus should be on commonalities rather than on differences.
- b) Creating the new space of a common educational platform is of considerable importance, so that cultural handicaps between teachers and students and gaps in knowledge and educational opportunities can be reduced. There is a particular urgency to tackle and ultimately eliminate ignorance, stereotypes and rejection of “the Other”, which requires a strong political commitment and engagement from all parties involved.

## 15. Specific proposals:

- a) Governments, especially in the Arab world, should more purposefully make use of bi- and multilateral cultural agreements as platforms for the promotion of intercultural dialogue.
- b) Governments should provide sufficient and predictable funding within their culture budgets for the encouragement of intercultural dialogue. These resources should be devoted to capacity building of grass-roots cultural organizations, especially those aimed at empowering women and youth. Thus, civil society organizations should be encouraged and induced to monitor the implementation of cultural projects.
- c) International and regional organizations should identify, document and analyse “best practice” approaches and action at various levels in support of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.
- d) The essential features of the partner organizations’ work on cultural diversity should be communicated and presented through appropriate learning materials at various educational levels, also drawing on contributions by partner organizations of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.
- e) Governments and international organizations should offer programmes aimed at strengthening creativity in education, thereby also countering fundamentalist tendencies.
- f) Teaching history should also be linked to the teaching of art for children, allowing a canvassing of the world’s cultures. Special encounters should be organized to foster the ability of children to express themselves through arts and interaction without language constraints.
- g) Public and private entities managing museums should take initiatives to make museums more inclusive and to transform them into truly multicultural spaces.
- h) Practical measures should be taken by all actors engaged in intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue to tap the power of music and musical creativity. Live interaction between music, melodies, original instruments and

artists is a promising innovative approach to further the objectives of dialogue, which international and regional organizations should more systematically promote.

- i) Consortia should be formed between private and public partners to undertake the translation and publication of the great universal works and classics.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **16. General recommendations:**

- (a) There should be full recognition that education requires communication, and communication always contains educative elements.
- (b) The education system and the media have a role to play in order to avoid parochialism and contribute to the creation of conditions for intercultural dialogue.
- (c) There is a need to set up educational and media projects focusing on mutual information and the fighting of ignorance between the West and the Islamic world.
- (d) Face-to-face dialogue plays an important role for the creation of mutual confidence and trust.
- (e) Approaches must be developed to endow media professionals with the capacity to tackle intercultural issues within multicultural societies, especially in the Western world.
- (f) In the Arab world, media should be encouraged to mirror truly the rich diversities in the region and serve all segments of the population.
- (g) A discussion should be conducted among media professionals about ethics and professional standards.
- (h) Measures should be taken to exploit fully the potential of the Internet for decentralized and diversified information flows and to enhance the opportunity for easy communications with members of other cultural and social groups irrespective of national or other boundaries.

## 17. Specific proposals:

(a) Joint activities for communication and information professionals:

- Twinning projects at all levels targeting managerial, technical and editorial staff as well as reinforcing “visiting journalists” programmes;
- Joint production of broadcasts, newspapers, magazines and websites by journalists from different cultural backgrounds;
- Providing access to content through joint distribution projects, for instance through satellite broadcasting;
- Establishment of a satellite channel for intercultural dialogue on a non-commercial basis, to be funded by private and public sources;
- Reporting missions to specific areas/events fostering concrete collaboration between professionals with different cultural backgrounds, *inter alia*, through the use of scholarship programmes;
- Journalism school collaboration, including joint curriculum development, particularly in the field of multicultural reporting, as well as exchange programmes for both students and teachers;
- Establishment of an award for best media product in the area of intercultural dialogue.

(b) Capacity-building:

- Design of training aimed at fighting stereotypes, promoting facts-based journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting;
- Promotion of language training for media professionals to lower language barriers for successful dialogue;
- Training in the use of ICTs for dialogue, especially for and through youth;
- Empower local minority communities to use media, including ICTs, for obtaining and disseminating information aimed at learning to live together;

- Strengthening media literacy and capacities to analyse critically media messages;
- Capacity building of information professionals to set up and access a public domain of information in diverse languages.

(c) Research:

- Undertake empirical studies on the portrayal of different cultures and civilizations in the media and on different forms of (self-) censorship and their impact in both Western and Arab media;
- Conduct impact analysis of major intercultural events and initiatives and disseminate results.

### III

18. The partner organizations commit themselves to an implementation of the various recommendations set out above. To that end, they agreed to maintain the steering committee of the co-sponsoring organizations which had prepared the Rabat conference, with a view to ensuring the best possible translation of these recommendations into reality and to prepare the Copenhagen follow-up conference in 2006. The Council of Europe will be associated with these efforts as observer.

19. The participants in the Conference also urge the General Assembly of the United Nations, in the outcome document to be adopted at its High-Level Meeting scheduled to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005, to give full recognition to the conceptual and practical lead role performed by UNESCO and the other partner organizations in promoting the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples and in bringing about practical results through education, science, culture and communications and to reaffirm UNESCO's continued lead role in this respect.

**IV**

20. The participants expressed their profound appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for the excellent facilities and the support extended. They thanked all co-sponsoring organizations for their initiative and preparation and, in particular, ISESCO for its invaluable contribution to the organization of the Conference at its headquarters city, Rabat.

# Message to His Majesty King Mohammed VI

*His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God protect him  
Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco  
The Royal Court  
Rabat*

May peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

The participants of the international conference on “Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives” held in the capital of your felicitous Kingdom from 14 to 16 June 2005, under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, are honoured to extend the utmost gratitude and appreciation to Your Majesty for your gracious patronage of their conference, which has made them supremely proud, and in which they see an expression of Your Majesty’s belief in the message of dialogue, the path of coexistence, and the principle of tolerance as a means of establishing sound international relations on the basis of respect for international law and cooperation conducive to the higher interests of the international community.

They are pleased to inform Your Majesty that this conference, jointly organized by six international, Islamic, Arab and European organizations, has been a great success, as witnessed by the agreement on a plan of action in the fields of education, culture, science, information and communications designed to strengthen dialogue among human cultures and civilizations through a series of activities and programmes, which the international intellectual elite from different civilizational orbits and cultural spheres, who participated in the conference agreed were realistic, practical and concrete, and met the conditions for sustainability and continuity.

They are pleased, too, to express their satisfaction and delight at the launch of these cultural and civilizational initiatives in the capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, the land of constructive dialogue, the stronghold of creative tolerance, and the refuge of productive coexistence.

May God protect Your Majesty and grant you success in maintaining the course of progress and prosperity in your noble land under your wise leadership. May He continue to grant you the blessing of good health and vitality. May He gladden your heart with the heir to your throne, His Royal Highness Prince Moulay al-Hassan. And may He strengthen you with the support of your brother, His Royal Highness Prince, Moulay Rachid, and all the members of the royal family.

*Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon your Sublime Majesty.*

*On behalf of all participants:  
Dr Abdulaziz bin Othman Altwaijri,  
Director-General,  
Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)  
16 June 2005*



# Keynote Addresses

## **Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**

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

*Praise be to Allah, and peace and prayer be upon His Messenger,  
along with his kith and kin*

I am delighted to address you at the opening of the international conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives. I am also pleased to extend my thanks to you for responding favourably to the invitation that the organizing parties sent to you in order to participate in this conference. I would like also to thank the honourable attendance.

First of all, I am most honoured to convey, on behalf of the six organizations convening this conference, the highest marks of thankfulness, appreciation and consideration to the Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Majesty King Mohammed VI. May God protect him, for granting his high patronage to this international conference, as a token from His Majesty. May God preserve him, of his faith in the culture of dialogue, coexistence and tolerance, and of his honourable country's adherence to the principles of dialogue among civilizations and cultures along with the objectives that it seeks to achieve.

May God protect His Majesty and preserve the Kingdom of Morocco, the home of dialogue, the stronghold of peaceful coexistence and the resort of steadfast human tolerance.

I also extend my innermost thanks to the five organizations that cooperated with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - ISESCO in holding this international conference, namely the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -UNESCO, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization -ALECSO-, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, and the Danish Centre for Culture and Development. I hope that this conference will be a new advance in the process of dialogue among civilizations and cultures and cooperation among these organizations and institutions with a view to effecting progress, prosperity, security and peace in the world.

My deepest thanks go also to the Moroccan authorities for their kind assistance and cooperation in facilitating the organization of this international conference.

The state of today's world compels us all, each from his position, to mobilize our energies and capacities in order to promote the culture of dialogue, peaceful coexistence among people and the respect for cultural and civilizational specificities and cultural diversity. For more than a decade now, dialogue has been one of the chief concerns of humanity. Actually, the six organizations co-holding this Conference have accumulated academic and theoretical expertise in this field. However, we are invited today to enhance inter-civilizational and inter-cultural dialogue, take pragmatic actions and incorporate them into the process of sustainable development through concrete initiatives.

The subject of inter-civilizational dialogue should not be the monopoly of a single organization nor of an academic, cultural or political institution. It should rather come from the different fields of knowledge and be fed with diversified international expertise, including the expertise of international organizations, of universities through the interaction between students and teachers, of Orientalists and Occidentalists, and of minorities interacting with contemporary societies.

It goes without saying that the efforts we can deploy at the political or economic level will remain futile unless we acquire a profound knowledge of the Other and of his history and values and we establish our

relations on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of cultural and civilizational diversity. This is the sole means of achieving sustainable development.

The first step we have to make in this respect consists in defining the fields wherein dialogue and peaceful coexistence among civilizations is to be enhanced. There is indeed diversified expertise that can be beneficial in this kind of dialogue. There are vital areas to which dialogue should be oriented, most importantly education, information, human rights, democracy and the expansion of popular participation.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization believes in the dialogue that interacts with the other, and appreciates well the interests all of us share. ISESCO is fully aware of the need to work towards achieving man's welfare, away from the imaginary and fabricated boundaries between the different civilizations and cultures.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has issued the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which was adopted by the fourth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers held in Algiers last December. This is a document, which reflects the vision of the Islamic world on cultural diversity and supports the efforts deployed by the international community represented by UNESCO as regards the drafting of the International Convention on Cultural Diversity.

The Islamic Organization has devised a Strategy for Islamic Culture Action in the West, which was adopted by the Islamic Summit Conference. It is a working document geared to serve Islamic communities in the West, with a view to preserving the civilizational and cultural specificities while at the same time providing support on the educational and cultural levels.

In the same vein, the Islamic Organization has devised a Strategy for "Bringing Muslim Madahib Closer Together", which was adopted by the Islamic Summit Conference, and which constitutes a general framework for Inter-Islamic dialogue.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has shouldered its responsibilities as regards the enhancement of dialogue

among civilizations and cultures. Indeed, it has displayed successful initiatives, both through convening a series of international conferences and symposia on dialogue among civilizations and cultures, and preparing and publishing studies, researches and books, of which we can cite “The White Book on Dialogue among Civilizations”. The Islamic Organization is currently implementing a promising programme on the establishment of chairs for dialogue among civilizations in some Western universities, as well as appointing some prominent figures from the Arab, African and Asian regions as ISESCO’s Ambassadors for dialogue among civilizations. These are concrete and sustainable initiatives, which reaffirm the will of the Islamic world to enhance dialogue among universal civilizations and cultures in order to bring about a secure and prosperous future for humanity.

At the end of this address, I am pleased to reiterate my thanks to you for accepting the invitation and attending the Conference to enrich it with your bright ideas and constructive suggestions. I beseech Allah the Exalted to grant us success in our endeavours and in fulfilling the objectives we seek and the hopes we put on the Conference to achieve the well being of mankind at large.

## **Mongi Bousnina**

Director-General, Arab League Educational,  
Cultural and Scientific Organization, ALESCO

On behalf of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), it is my pleasure and honour to greet this distinguished gathering and to participate with you in the opening of this important international conference on “Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives”. A distinguished group of thinkers, educators, intellectuals and media personalities from around the world has been invited to discuss this dialogue.

I am pleased that ALECSO is actively involved in the convening of this conference and that the organization has been a tireless contributor to the dynamic of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations which the world has seen in recent years. This is a sign of ALECSO’s firm conviction of the necessity and usefulness of dialogue in countering conflict and clash of civilizations.

As we gather today at the generous invitation of the Kingdom of Morocco, it is a source of pride to me that our conference is being held under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God protect him. We are thus bound to extend our profound gratitude to His Majesty for his gracious gesture and support to an issue that we know is of concern to His Majesty and the Kingdom of Morocco, a country, which has always been open to “the Other” by virtue of its geographic position, historical path and felicitous political choices.

I also take this opportunity to express once again our immense gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God protect him, for his continuing patronage, support and encouragement extended to our organization, which can only increase our energy and goal to carry out better the civilizational mission which ALECSO strives to advance in order to further develop the fields of education, culture and science in the Arab world and link its culture to the cultures of the wider world.

I would also like to state here how pleased I am to meet the esteemed

colleagues and friends who share our belief in the dialogue of cultures and civilizations, and with whose organizations we cooperate in the furtherance thereof. I am referring to UNESCO, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, ISESCO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

ALECSO's involvement in the convening of this conference is rooted in strategic considerations concerning the nature of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations that have guided its activity in this field in recent years. ALECSO's approach to this dialogue is neither an impulsive response to specific events nor does it take the form of an intellectual contest between certain theories. In fact, ALECSO has been planning its approach since the 1980s, when it set out the "Comprehensive Plan for Arab Culture", and the first medium-term plans for action, which included a number of orientations and priorities aimed at increasing the dissemination of Arab-Islamic culture and strengthening the links of dialogue with other cultures of the world.

The first reason for the invitation to dialogue is that Arab-Islamic culture is one of dialogue with and openness to "the Other"; this is attested to by its ancient past, with its dialectics of give and take with neighbouring civilizations, and by its present, replete with a diversity of local cultures which together form the great river of Arab culture.

While it is our civilizational background to knock at the door of intercultural dialogue, the impetus for this dialogue in the view of ALECSO, even before the emergence of Huntington's theory on "the clash of civilizations" and the events of 11 September 2001, stems from the need to help alleviating the prevailing tension in international relations, to put an end to the conspicuous inequality between geo-cultural spaces, and to break down the barrier of ignorance or indifference between cultures and the consequent negation of, or hostility towards, "the Others" simply because they are different from us.

ALECSO has established foundations for such dialogue, the need for and soundness of which have been confirmed by the various manifestations of globalization, including the globalization of culture that have swept across the world since the late 1990s. Also more recent events have threatened and continue to threaten international peace and security

and coexistence between many communities, in addition to worsening economic and social inequality between the developed and developing worlds, as well as the trend towards the hegemony of one culture at the expense of cultural pluralism and diversity.

ALECSO considers that dialogue among cultures and civilizations can help to reduce these tensions, threats and various manifestations of imbalance provided that the parties to the dialogue believe in a set of principles, perhaps the most important of which are the acceptance of “the Other” despite his/her difference from ourselves, the belief in equality in dialogue, the unacceptability of attitudes of superiority of one culture over another, and the rejection of preconceptions, and other prerequisites and bases for dialogue.

What we have put forward here is not mere theorizing. We have also proposed mechanisms to ensure the translation of this dialogue into a tangible reality, embodied in action and practical work on the ground, along the lines of our conference today. In this context, we believe that education, culture and the media are solid bridges for the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. To this end, we have presented ideas for programmes and activities to achieve dialogue, with education, culture and the media as the preferred tools, in dialogue forums held in Europe, the Ibero-American region, in the context of Russian and Chinese culture, in the planning for dialogues with China and Latin-America, and in cooperation agreements concluded with international and regional organizations and national foundations.

In the field of education, it has been our firm conviction that there is a need to pave the way for the dialogue among cultures and civilizations by helping the younger generations to understand that, despite their differences, “living together” actually represents the richness and creative diversity of humankind. In light of the recognition of diversity and difference, the preparation for this living together will require a better knowledge of “the Other”. Educational curricula and textbooks must provide this, not only by including subjects that will inform about other cultures, but also by excluding from their contents all elements that may give a distorted or degrading picture of “the Other”.

Among other things, this means that we should strive, within the various cultural spaces engaged with dialogue, and with joint agreement, to

revise textbooks, particularly on subjects such as history, religious education and civic education, in order to remove anything that could incite hatred and initiate conflict.

To this end, ALECSO is collaborating with the working group on the Euro-Arab dialogue of the National Commissions for UNESCO and only recently attended a workshop on textbooks held by the French National Commission. ALECSO is also planning to collaborate with the Council of Europe to implement a project addressing history curricula in both Europe and the Arab world by means of a comparative study. I believe that these and other ideas put forward by ALECSO, such as the introduction of comparative religion as a subject in educational curricula, the development of the teaching of foreign languages and instruction in dialogue and pluralism, are valid areas for discussion that will enrich the conference workshop on educational initiatives to foster dialogue.

Convinced, as we are that education is the soil from which a better dialogue among cultures and civilizations may grow in the future, we are equally convinced that joint cultural action between different spaces is the indispensable context for dialogue to develop.

In this regard, we have repeatedly stated that translation is an excellent bridge for intercultural dialogue, and have striven to put this into practice by collaborating in the translation of books from and into Arabic with international and regional organizations such as the International Organization of the Francophonie and its competent executive body, the Intergovernmental Agency of the Francophonie, and with national organizations such as the Andalusian Heritage Foundation in Spain.

We likewise believe that mutual exchange of knowledge among different cultural spheres of their artistic creation and cultural production through joint festivals and exhibitions is an indispensable step towards knowing “the Other”, not only in terms of difference and distinctiveness but also of common points which unite us and flow into one river - the great river of humanity.

Within this framework, we should mention in passing the significant role played by ALECSO in the preparations for the Arab participation in the 2004 Frankfurt Book Fair and our involvement in side event



and exhibitions of various kinds. We should also include here the Arab cultural programmes and activities being planned with our partners in Europe and Latin America.

The workshop of this conference on the role of cultural initiatives in fostering dialogue may be the best place to expand upon the achievements and programmes of ALECSO in this regard and to share knowledge and experience in this field with other conference participants.

The role of the media in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations complements those of education and culture. Indeed, perhaps even more than education and culture, it conveys the image of one party to the other in varying degrees of objectivity and with backgrounds and intentions which are variously positive or negative, thereby having a positive or negative impact on the conception of “the Other”, on the development of attitudes and perhaps also on the determination of patterns of behaviour.

As you are well aware, there is no need for me to draw your attention to the false and distorted image of “the Other” in the media, which hinders dialogue and obstructs its progress. Accordingly, we took the initiative of convening a forum in Paris last year on the role of the media in intercultural communication between the Arabs and the West, the proceedings of which led to the establishment of the concept of an Arab-Western media “alliance” to serve the interests of the dialogue between the two parties by displaying more truthful images of each other.

ALECSO is ready to present to the conference workshop on communications and the media its experience relating to the image of “the Other” and its role in fostering dialogue among cultures and civilizations, as well as its past and future projects for disseminating Arab-Islamic culture on the Internet. ALECSO is still looking for partners; UNESCO may well be one of the first, given the contacts between the two Organizations in this regard.

I know that this opening session is not the place for an exhaustive and detailed review of past and present ideas and projects for furthering the implementation and practical application of the dialogue among

cultures and civilizations. However, I would like to give a few examples of ALECSO's initiatives at this level to show that progress along this path is not difficult, if we take the trouble to develop genuine ideas and if cooperation between the organizations present here, as well as others, is marked by careful, long-term planning and continuity.

If we wish to do something useful, we could perhaps start thinking now about mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of such clearly defined projects as may emerge from the workshops. One such mechanism might be to make this conference a regular event, whereby we meet every year or every second year to take stock, review progress, and give fresh impetus on each occasion to the dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions.

It is my hope and the hope of you all that our aspiration for dialogue among cultures and civilizations may become a concrete and sustained reality. As such, I hope that we will succeed during this conference in choosing the best means of achieving this. I wish the proceedings every success.

## Hans d'Orville

Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO

On behalf of UNESCO, one of the six co-organizers of this event, I have the pleasure to welcome you to the conference entitled, "Encourage dialogue between cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustainable initiatives".

First and foremost, I would like to pass on the best wishes of UNESCO's Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, who very much regrets not to be amongst us today.

Mr Matsuura wishes to respectfully convey his utmost gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, who has granted his patronage to this event. The Director-General is honoured by the special close relationship with the Kingdom of Morocco and is particularly delighted with the cultural activities and those relative to heritage that the Organization is undertaking with Morocco.

As regards the key role Morocco has played in facilitating the holding of this remarkable event, please allow me to pay special tribute to Ambassador Aziza Bennani, who was not only the intellectual instigator of this innovative initiative, but also the navigator who led all the partners in the right direction during the Steering Committee meetings in Paris. Your Excellency, one cannot sufficiently highlight your contribution and inspiration.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today. In fact, due to the joint efforts of all the organizers, this is the first time that we have succeeded in bringing together politicians and dialogue specialists, committed to the same goal which constitutes the main objective of this conference, that is to say: to act as a bridge for the definition and adoption of a series of measures and concrete and practical activities in the domain of dialogue between cultures and civilizations, and to explore the ways to attain these specific objectives through various means of dialogue, all the while identifying the methods already underway in the regions represented. These measures will be adopted by each organization

involved so as to translate them into concrete activities in the framework of work plans.

For some time now, politicians and experts have spoken of the necessity of intensifying a constructive dialogue on all levels, without, however, having succeeded in mobilizing and launching activities which go on to produce tangible effects and results. We find ourselves impatient, if not in a situation of complete inertia. We claim to know what to do to strengthen the power and impact of dialogue, but in reality we never seem to put it to practice. Why is this? Perhaps it is difficult to sustain the momentum needed. Maybe we are not sufficiently convinced of the theory and concept of dialogue. Perhaps we are unaware of the knowledge already attained because it seems simple and trivial. But most likely this is precisely where we can find the secret for success in the future. It is here in Rabat that we can once again conceptualize effective techniques with the help and contribution of all the experts.

It is without a doubt that the task that awaits us in the days to come is anything but simple. It essentially consists of establishing a bridge between the theoretical concept of a “dialogue between civilizations” and joint and concrete actions based on precise thematic questions, from which tangible results can be obtained in the fields of education, culture, science, communication and information. Basically, we have to promote a dialogue between nations and governments as well as a dialogue between the people and the different actors of civil society and different communities. This in fact sums up the new and promising direction to be undertaken: dialogue - its meaning and its practices - has to be deeply rooted in everyone’s minds everywhere, especially in the minds of the young; but it must also completely implicate women. For this to be done we must make sure that the ideas of all the partners and all the people concerned are taken into consideration.

Fortunately, regarding our discussions, we can rely on a solid foundation constituting the sum of all the efforts of the organizations present here. Indeed, one of the first successes of the multilateral engagement of these last decades is the fact that the international community, through a series of conferences and events, has reached a common basis of understanding of a set of shared universal values - the most important one being tolerance - but also mutual comprehension, respect of

“the other”, non-violence, respect of human rights, women’s rights, democratic practices and of cultural diversity. These values are now accepted and highly valued by all cultures and civilizations.

Let me briefly recall the most recent efforts of the United Nations and UNESCO in the area of dialogue among civilizations - an issue which lies at the very core of the mandate given to the UN and to UNESCO, which is dedicated to “building the defenses for peace in the minds of men” and to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, and culture and communication.

Overall, the global Agenda on the Dialogue among Civilizations adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 56/6 at the end of the United Nations Year for a Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001 has provided inspiration and a common framework for future action. The Global Agenda states that dialogue among cultures and civilizations is a process aimed at attaining justice, equality and tolerance in people-to-people relationships. The objective of the dialogue among civilizations is to bridge the gap in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and societies; to lay the foundations for dialogue based on universally shared values, and to undertake concrete activities to achieve this.

As a follow-up, UNESCO co-organized and co-financed a series of international summits, conferences, meetings, and colloquia in various parts of the world. Dialogue among civilizations - along with the hopes associated with it - was thus re-visited and actualized.

UNESCO’s action is also based on Resolution 31 C/39 of its General Conference “Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism”, which was adopted in the autumn of 2001. The resolution emphasized that a commitment to dialogue among cultures and civilizations is also a commitment to fight terrorism. It noted that terror rests always and everywhere upon prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, upon the rejection of any dialogue.

First and foremost, however, the Organization’s many-faceted dialogue activities are guided by resolution 32 C/47, which set out the framework for concrete and practical activities in the area of dialogue among cultures

and civilizations, and in the domains of expertise of UNESCO and this is precisely what we pursue with our partners during this conference.

Over the past two years, we at UNESCO have already introduced three new significant modifications into our approach and practice concerning the dialogue among civilizations. The first, is a focus on regional and sub-regional levels, as this permits to develop more concrete activities. Let me in this context refer to a regional conference for the Arab States region, which UNESCO organized in February 2004 in Sanaa, Yemen. It concluded with “The Sana’a Call for Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations”, defining, inter alia, the role of education as an indispensable element to nurture and sustain dialogue, along with the need to strive for cultural diversity. The “Sana Call” is indeed a call for a focused and substantial dialogue in the entire Arab region and beyond.

The second is the focus on thematic issues, such as education or culture. The third is the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders beyond the traditional actors like governments.

Here in Rabat, we are poised to give further impetus in this respect, as you find them reflected in the conference programme and background paper. We now must move to the next and most challenging stage of the process, namely to identify and introduce concrete and practical measures and steps and to introduce them as an integral part of the work programmes of our respective organizations, individually and jointly.

There is one more new dimension which we will experience - and hopefully enjoy - in Rabat. It is the focus on the power of artistic creation and creativity in the form a dialogue among melodies and instruments hailing from different regions and cultures. This symbolic, multicultural interaction, which will be performed this evening at a special concert, is particularly meaningful in the wake of the elaboration of a draft convention on artistic creativity and content, which was just completed by an intergovernmental expert group at UNESCO. Melodies for dialogue promises to offer a new and practical track in the dialogue context to bring people together, to get to know each other better and to interact in the most peaceful of ways - through music.

Before I conclude, let me briefly mention two important principles for a genuine dialogue, which we may wish to keep in mind during our deliberations in the coming days.

First, a word on the notion of “civilization”, which is not very easy to define and sometimes even subject to misinterpretation: Clearly, no civilization is “pure”. The quest for a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples is deeply associated with interaction among countries, cultures and civilizations. No civilization can assume sole responsibility for all humanity; neither can a single civilization claim exclusive rights to provide an ultimate and universally valid vision of how to be a human being in the complex and multifaceted world of today - and tomorrow. We are all rooted in cultures and civilizations that have nurtured and enriched themselves through cross-fertilization with other cultures and civilizations. Hence, all civilizations celebrate unity in diversity of humankind.

Second, with regard to the potentially significant dimension of inter-religious dialogue, it is important to remember that all faiths convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity. All religious leaders, like other civil society and community leaders, have the potential to exercise a moral and positive influence on how people in society understand each other and interact. Reconciliation of religious views is an increasingly significant challenge of our age. This also entails the need to create more awareness among peoples and government authorities about the need to respect the traditions of the use of religious symbols, images and expressions. Furthermore, religious beliefs and practices as well as ethnic values and traditions have a fundamental influence and impact on education systems and their quality as well as on the way how people behave in their natural environment. Dialogue must therefore also be at the core of continued inter-religious cooperation.

I wish to express my whole-hearted and profound gratitude to the host country for its generosity and willingness to co-organize with UNESCO, ISESCO, OIC, ALECSO, the Danish Center for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, this most timely conference. The excellent arrangements made by our hosts and partners augur well for our deliberations.

In conclusion, I wish to pay particular tribute to our partners who so willingly joined in this endeavour with ideas, proposals and funds. The first stages in our partnership were most encouraging indeed.

Let us now continue and begin the real task by turning ideas into dialogue, and dialogue into action.



## **Ekmelleddin Ihsanoglu**

Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

Read by: Saad Eddine Taib, Advisor to the Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference

It is highly gratifying for me to welcome you to this Conference organized under the joint auspices of UNESCO, OIC and ISESCO to enhance inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue through dynamic and effective activities. I wish here to express special thanks to ISESCO for its efforts in preparing this Conference and to the Moroccan Government for kindly hosting the Conference. We sincerely hope that this Conference come out with ideas and recommendations that will impart a concrete boost to inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue.

Over the past years, our three organizations have made significant efforts in spreading awareness about the importance of inter-civilizational dialogue in many parts of the world. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has adopted the initiative of H.E. Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on dialogue and civilizations and supported its inclusion in the agenda of the United Nations, which resulted in the Year 2001 being declared as the Year of Dialogue among civilizations across the world. This international move succeeded in containing the alarmist trends that were announced by some concerning the inevitability of a clash of civilizations, so much so that this theory has now lost its shine and has been rejected.

While past activities have been successful in achieving the targeted objective of raising awareness of the importance of inter-civilizational dialogue, we at the OIC believe that the current situation calls for new approaches grounded in practical, not merely theoretical and academic steps, as dictated by the new circumstances experienced by the Islamic world and endured by Muslims around the world.

Among the most important circumstances is the rising danger of Islamophobia in the West, particularly after the September 11th events and the frequent attempts to link Islam with terrorism. This has become a serious phenomenon that deeply preoccupies the advocates of human

rights even among the Westerners themselves, who have issued many reports on the matter covering hundreds of pages and raising many real concerns about the oppressive treatment of Muslims and the unfair instigation of Western and world opinion against them.

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference has been quick in responding to this danger and raising it at the level of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights in Geneva, which adopted a resolution denouncing any use of the word terrorism linking it to any heavenly religion including Islam. The Organization has also addressed the UN General Assembly to adopt a similar position, which is now on its way to be implemented. In the same vein, the OIC resorted to other practical modalities the most important of which is the opening of an earnest official dialogue with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which for the first time has taken on board the idea of including the issue of Islamophobia in its agenda for discussion, deliberation and definition of appropriate measures. A few days ago, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe held an international conference on fanaticism and terrorism in the Spanish city of Cordoba, devoting an entire session to the issue of Islamophobia. The Organization of the Islamic Conference participated in this Conference and, in the course of the dialogue and discussions called, for the recognition of the Islamic faith in those OSCE Member States that have Muslim minorities, and of the related rights and commitments of the Muslims living in Europe and in the West in general. The OIC also called for the need to develop appropriate measures to protect Muslim minorities and communities against segregation in housing and employment and in public services as well as religious practices.

Moreover, the OIC called for the need to review textbooks and school curricula in the West, which include various defamatory untruths aimed at tarnishing the image of Islam and Muslims thus creating an intellectual environment hostile to Islam. We also called for a review of literary works or studies that bear in their folds racist propositions inciting hatred and xenophobia particularly against Islam and Muslims.

Similarly, the OIC called on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to coordinate efforts to reach out to the Western media, engage in dialogue and prompt them to adopt more

moderate stands in their presentation of issues related to Islam and Muslims and to monitor the sources of Islamophobia in the West in all their manifestations. The OIC also called for cultural and social dialogues between Western governmental officials and representatives of the Islamic communities in their countries, with a view to building confidence, resolving problems and ironing out obstacles that may stand in the way of a dignified and peaceful life for these communities in the West.

In parallel to all this, the OIC General Secretariat set up within its framework an Islamic Observatory to keep track of and document cases and sources of Islamophobia and to approach these sources and engage in dialogue in dialogue with them.

It is my opinion, says the OIC Secretary General in this connection, that the present circumstances are appropriate for an earnest dialogue to be opened between Islam and Christianity, particularly with the start of the new papacy, and based on the achieved interaction with the former Pope, and the Eucharistic congress in terms of the new, appropriate approaches initiated since the 1960's to Islam and pursued since. I have in mind in particular, the "World of Light Encyclical" which included orientations in favour of an Islamo-Christian dialogue issued by the Eucharistic congress in 1965 and which, for the first time, acknowledged the value of the Islamic faith and its importance in human history. We hope that His Holiness the Pope and the Vatican will take a new position initiative in the same direction.

These meetings and dialogues should be taken advantage of, enriched and developed for the benefit of a new historical era of Islamo-Christian concord after such long eras of mutual ignorance and distance. All these rapprochement steps are quite in accord with the Islamic faith's clear stand towards Christianity and the veneration which Islam reserves for Jesus Christ and his mother, the Virgin Mary. It is beyond any doubt that the common spiritual hallmarks of both religions, the geographical proximity of their followers and the civilizational interchange between them can facilitate this mutual outreach. This possibility has been well depicted by the American scholar Richard Polet in his recent book "The Islamo-Christian Civilization" where he stated that "civilization co-relation" in these days of globalization represent a historical occasion

for an Islamo-Christian merger. It is well known that in Islam the idea of faith diversity is a common one, as Islam recognizes all the earlier heavenly religions and enjoins against the use of coercion in religion.

In the midst of the unjust campaign waged against Islam and its civilization, a particular Western State, namely Spain, has taken the initiative of launching a world campaign under the theme of “Alliance of Civilizations“ aimed at promoting respect and cooperation among civilizations and at putting an end to all conflict and misunderstanding between them. The Spanish Prime Minister launched his call from the UN General Assembly’s forum last September and the Spanish State coordinated action with the UN General Secretariat, the OIC, the League of Arab States and many other UN Member States to further elaborate this initiative and win support for it.

The OIC welcomed this idea and vigorously encouraged it, for it views it as a bearer of a goodwill initiative that is of interest to the Islamic world and which will help alleviate the unjust conditions endured by Muslims in terms of their human rights and the unfair campaigns waged against them. The OIC invites all the Islamic States and Organizations to back up this good initiative in view of its obvious benefits for all mankind.

It is my belief, says the Secretary-General, that if we wish the inter-civilizational dialogue activities to be effective and fruitful, these activities should not remain confined to the official, intellectual and academic spheres. Rather, those in charge of this dialogue should broaden its scope to include civil society institutions and the public sphere and all other components of society such as political parties, parliamentarians, youth and sport clubs, artists, municipalities, charitable institutions, and others who can exchange visits, organize exhibitions, festivals, sports events, galas etc. likely to attract vast audiences and have a positive impact on them within a view to creating an environment of mutuality, understanding and cooperation.

Indeed, political or cultural dialogue was never meant to be undertaken for its OWN sake as an ultimate objective. It is rather an instrument among many others, used to promote understanding and mutual recognition and rapprochement. Under the present difficult circumstances witnessed

worldwide, we need to make greater efforts and do our best to create new circumstances and opportunities for real rapprochement and mutual recognition and understanding, away from any domination scenarios. Indeed, there is no alternative if we really wish to live in peaceful, shared and positive coexistence with other cultures, civilizations and peoples. And this is quite what our religion urges us to do; as we are taught that we have been created as humans to reach out to each other and to respect each other for the common benefit of all.

# Olaf Gerlach Hansen

Director of the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD)

First of all, I want to express my gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco and to all our partner organisations for the wonderful work you have done to make this conference possible. We are indeed very grateful to you.

The Danish Center for Culture and Development (DCCD) is co-sponsoring this conference, because we feel a strong sense of urgency.

For a long time many have been speaking of the dangers related to the prophesy of a “clash of civilizations”. We can no longer just talk. It is now an urgent matter to take the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations from the philosophical level, to the level of concrete and sustained action. This is indeed the aim of this conference. We agree on this. This is why we are supporting the conference.

## **What are concrete actions?**

We are interested in new actions relating to the media, culture and education. These initiatives must in short:

- address ignorance, stereotypes and prejudices;
- create dialogue between cultures in areas where people fear a “clash of cultures”;
- have a positive starting point: the rich cultural diversity of humankind. Common universal values, such as those defined by the World Commission for Culture and Development when it formulated a global ethics and subsequent declarations by UNESCO.

The following are examples - in part drawn from the background paper - of concrete initiatives in which we are interested and hope will be discussed during the following days:

### **Media**

- concrete initiatives to develop “cultural journalism” in the daily practise of the media. i.e. changing the tradition of traditional

“news-journalism” to give a higher priority to cultural and social portraits of the daily life, values and concerns of ordinary people; the human story, which can create identification, fascination and intercultural understanding.

- concrete initiatives on the use of “images” in the media and in public spaces, which challenge the stereotypical “images” we all carry about people from other cultures. This will require new experiments of using photography, film, and scenography in the media and in advertising.
- concrete initiatives to develop “intercultural competencies” in the training of new generations of journalists in schools of journalism, in-service training, etc.
- concrete initiatives for links and exchanges between journalists, editors, media-institutions, which encourage intercultural co-operation, collaboration, etc.

### **Culture and Art**

- concrete initiatives on new models for using cultural festivals and events to nurture dialogue. All too often major events such as the Olympic games, Cultural Capitals, etc. do not use their potential for creating dialogue. DCCD has developed one model, the Images Festival; next year it will be “Images of the Middle East”.
- concrete initiatives, which focus on the problems of understanding, which arises when art and cultural expressions from one culture is transferred to another culture. How to counteract this through workshops, meetings, education, the media, etc. This is also called “contextualisation” of art and culture. A concrete initiative could be an art laboratory, where artists, educators and media-workers themselves address the problems related to their own works in a setting where their work is presented to another culture.
- concrete initiatives to strengthen the management of arts and cultural production to foster genuine dialogue and understanding. Without strong “cultural management and administration”, there will be few sustainable activities where art and culture can be used as a tool for dialogue. This is true in general, but not least

for important new work done by artists. It is also an important point for minority cultures, indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, etc.

### **Education**

- concrete initiatives to integrate “citizenship education” and “multicultural education” in school curricula. Working with educational planners, teacher training, etc. at central and regional levels.
- concrete initiatives for curriculum development through new educational materials and the revision of existing textbooks. There is a lack in both North and South of updated materials of relevance in contemporary life, culture and society, not least in the urban life of young people in the Middle East.
- concrete initiatives developing school linkages and exchanges as a method for advancing intercultural learning and global ethics content in schools. School linkages and exchanges also require the active involvement of the local community around the school, e.g. through volunteer host families, twinning arrangements, etc. This requires new initiatives for partnerships between NGOs, local and central authorities in education.

### **How do we turn concrete initiatives into reality?**

It is important to:

- identify the core agents implementing the new initiatives in education, communication and culture. It would be wonderful if after this conference we can increase the number of organisations and experts, who are the ones who will carry the new initiatives forward. One of our major criteria for success is the increased involvement of civil society actors in addition to governmental and private actors.
- indicate what each of the partner organisations (UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, Anna Lindh Foundation, DCCD), will do to help the core agents, i.e. those who will carry out the “real work”. UNESCO has a special role here and we hope that its regional offices will be able to prioritise concrete follow up.



- use our co-operation structures and channels to create an international enabling environment. We need to identify what should be done by all of us. This could e.g. include:
  - a) Joint references/secretariat, which can help initiatives avoid overlap and strengthen synergies.
  - b) Financial incentives/pool of financial sources in focal areas.
  - c) Follow up meetings and conferences.

After the conference:

- the experts should act as facilitators for getting concrete initiatives off the ground;
- the partners should seek to implement the final document, and meet to agree on a plan of appropriate follow-up;
- a focused conference should be organised to take stock of how the implementation proceeds. We would be happy to co-host this conference to take place at the occasion of the Images of the Middle East cultural festival in Denmark in August-September 2006.

### **DCCD's contribution**

a) A long-term commitment to follow up:

DCCD has a long-term commitment to work with the content of the conference. We are presently seeking to implement following initiatives:

- media: partnership with the international NGO “International Media Support” on the challenges in the media with a very broad range of media institutions in the Arab world, and in our own country;
- culture: partnership on an “International Danish-Arab Culture Network” focusing on the challenges for contemporary production of art and culture;
- education: collaboration with organisations addressing these topics;
- creating an enabling environment: The Rabat initiative, working with UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, Anna Lindh Foundation. We thank the partners for a very constructive co-operation, with promising prospects for the future.

b) A major international cultural festival “Images of the Middle East” next year, which can be used to test new initiatives for dialogue. Next year in Denmark we organise “Images of the Middle East” - a major international cultural festival, with HRH Prince Joachim as the patron. It will be the largest of its kind in the world with a focus on the Middle East. The festival will:

- include music, theatre, dance, film, literature, visual art, photography, design, architecture, publications, as well as a major program in schools/education and a program with the media, both TV, radio and interactive media. More than 400 artists, journalists and educators from the Middle East will participate in the event;
- take place in all the major cities in Denmark, and coincide with a major focus of the National Broadcasting TV, Radio and interactive media on the Middle East during these two months;
- be co-organised by DCCDE with hundreds of cultural institutions, NGOs, local and national authorities in Denmark/Europe, in co-operation with different partners throughout the Middle East region at all levels;
- Based on previous experiences, we expect a major international media-interest.

The overall aim of the festival is to foster dialogue. The focus is contemporary culture and identity. It is the intention to present the rich cultures of the entire region covering the Maghreb, the Middle East proper, and the Gulf/Iran.

DCCD sees a very close link between the “Images of the Middle East” (IOME) festival and the Rabat conference. IOME will be used as a platform to test out new concrete initiatives discussed in Rabat, such as in:

- media (twinning, co-production, etc.);
- education (school links and exchanges, new educational materials);
- art (laboratory for artists);
- experimental projects, such as: photography/images in the public space to raise questions and open dialogue; theatre for intercultural dialogue; popular music and cultural events as instrument for creating new dialogue.

In all, this focus will be on concrete action, which within only one year could become a wonderful symbol. It can also provide a space for discussing lessons learned in developing new initiatives, both failures and successes.

We therefore hope that “Images of the Middle East” can be used as first milestone in the follow up to the Rabat Conference.

In conclusion, let me re-iterate that for a long time many people have been speaking of the dangers related to the prophesy of a “Clash of civilisations”. Taking the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations from the philosophical level, to the level of concrete and sustained action is not only an exercise in creating intercultural understanding. It is also a serious attempt to create solutions based on dialogue instead of violence and conflict. It is actually an alternative security policy. To do this, we need to create a long-term enabling environment, which requires broad-based international co-operation between many institutions and different stakeholders.

We are making an important step in this direction at this conference.

# Traugott Schoefthaler

Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean  
Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Alexandria, Egypt

## From Dialogue to Co-operation

Past generations in the Euro-Mediterranean region have, too often, limited the idea of dialogue between cultures to a dialogue between nations, languages and religions. This way, and against best intentions, it was made possible to misuse culture as a weapon in preparing for a clash of civilisations. Such clash can be orchestrated at global scale, following Samuel Huntington's scenario. We need to escape the logic of cultural determinism. Culture is not only heritage, it is also a space for creativity and making choices.

There is no doubt that global terrorism and, unfortunately, some approaches to combat it, are deliberately fuelled with cultural differences. The September 11 shock and its aftermath should, however, not obscure the "multitude of local claims and regional tensions over scarce resources" that, according to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuellar, have long been masked by the confrontations of the Cold War blocs. They "pushed people into the narrow walls of group identity, feeding a new tide of smaller confrontations between ethnic, religious and national communities" (President's Foreword to the Report by the World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995). It is the everyday "logic of rejection" and the "narcissism of small differences" that, according to Pérez de Cuéllar, "threatens peace and security and violates the inherent dignity of the individual person. Amin Maalouf, in his analysis of "murderous identities" ("Les identités meurtrières", 1998) provides us with Mediterranean experience in this regard. It is always the same mechanism of drawing dividing lines between human beings through assuming and imposing collective identities rather than respecting the human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Theodor W. Adorno and Alfred Horkheimer, in their studies on "The Authoritarian Personality" published shortly after 1945 as a first analysis of the cult of power and violence in Nazi Germany, went deep

into psychological terminology of ego- and ethnocentrism. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and Amin Maalouf come to similar conclusions: Cultural policies need to avoid schematic concepts such as the popular distinction between “Us” and “Them”. They even warn against further using the term of “The Other” which is standard in almost all intercultural education concepts, since it opens the gate for imposing collective identities on the individual. There is no viable alternative to their proposal of adopting a rights-based approach in dealing with cultural diversity.

The “Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity”, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2001, is the first international normative instrument that recognizes the importance of multiple and overlapping identities of individuals and groups. “In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity.” (Article 2). Dialogue between Cultures is essentially a dialogue between human beings, not between anonymous cultural entities. Present and future generations must, therefore, be given the instruments for dialogue. In the Euro-Mediterranean region, they need to be provided the opportunity to learn at least one foreign language, preferably more, and to acquire knowledge about all religions and cultural traditions that have shaped this region as crossroads of civilisations.

The Programme of the Anna Lindh Foundation is based on the following objectives:

(1) Dialogue between cultures and civilizations needs to go beyond exchange of words to co-operation. Dialogue, conceived as a dialogue between human beings, must provide room for the expression of plural, overlapping and dynamic cultural identities. Such dialogue is an instrument to put human rights into practice.

(2) The objective of learning to live together was outlined by the World Commission on Education for the 21st Century chaired by the

former President of the European Commission Jacques Delors. Formal education systems are to be geared towards learning environments, teachers from instructors to organisers of learning, schools to centres for daily practice of tolerance by giving way to others' points of view. Multiperspectivity, the intellectual skill of looking at things from more than one perspective, is a core element of quality education.

(3) Value education. In line with the Delors Report, "values... cannot be taught in the strict sense: the desire to impose from the outside predetermined values comes down in the end to negating them". It is important to reach out to religions and other beliefs. Even the most fundamentalist religious leader will admit that true belief cannot be based on coercion which would negate the constitutive element of freedom to be found in any major religion or belief system.

(4) The Strategy of the Foundation joins the recent international consensus on cultural diversity being as essential for humankind as is bio-diversity for nature. Respect for diversity and pluralism are essential for social coherence. The modern concept of sustainable development builds on synergies between biological and cultural diversity.

A main feature of the work of the Foundation is the 2 + 2 formula. Any project of the Foundation requires the participation of at least two partners from the North and two from the South of the Mediterranean. Youth is the priority target group. Striving for synergies with and adding value to existing activities are essential. The Foundation invites successful bilateral North-South co-operation projects to accept proposals for third and fourth partners. The Foundation gives, this way, incentives for creating a multitude of links between the largely unrelated worlds of bi-ad multilateral co-operation. The Foundation links civil society projects in the region in its main fields of activities: youth, culture, education, communication, science, human rights, sustainable development, democratic citizenship and empowerment of women. The Foundation invites young people to learn and work together. Traditional forms of inter-cultural dialogue would not be interesting for them. Working together builds trust and confidence - much more than words.

Conceptual work focuses on the issue of unity in diversity and seeks to identify benefits from the international debate on cultural diversity for

the Euro-Mediterranean Co-operation. The Anna Lindh Foundation is the youngest institution of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, jointly established by the 25 Governments of the European Union and their ten Mediterranean partners. It is built on commitments agreed upon in the Barcelona Declaration (1995), such as “ensuring respect of cultural diversity and religious pluralism”.

I am pleased to give credit to all National Commissions for UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO of the two regions Europe and Arab States that have - even before the September 11 events - started to develop a common programmatic platform on “Learning to Live Together”, covering educational, cultural, scientific and communication activities. This platform, approved by plenary meetings in both regions, was developed into an interregional strategy, together with all the organisations represented here, and approved by their governing bodies. It inspired the first three years programme 2005-2007 of the Anna Lindh Foundation. The Anna Lindh Foundation, inaugurated only some weeks ago in Alexandria, Egypt, is therefore proud to be among the convenors of this important meeting in Rabat. The joint commitments we are signing here are intended to facilitate the work of all actors within our constituencies who want to contribute to transforming the emerging consensus on cultural diversity into concrete steps of a sustainable dialogue. The contribution of the Anna Lindh Foundation will focus on “learning about cultural diversity”. We cannot continue to live with the existing lack of mutual knowledge between people and groups of diversified cultural belongings and orientations, if our efforts in promoting mutual respect want to be credible.

## **Gabriele Mazza**

Director of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Directorate General IV, Council of Europe

It is both an honour and a great pleasure for me to attend this Conference on the reinforcement of dialogue between cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustainable actions on behalf of Mr Walter Schwimmer, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

The participation of the Council of Europe in this Conference entitled: “Encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustainable actions” is of paramount importance.

Indeed, this Conference aims at pursuing the edification of a structure which was initiated many years ago by our respective organizations, the most striking example of which was in June 2003 with the creation of the “Cairo platform”, the first institutional coordination and cooperation mechanism established between UNESCO, ALECSO, ISESCO and the Council of Europe.

This co-operation was essentially geared toward the apprenticeship of communal living and dialogue, which is at the very heart of the Council of Europe’s preoccupations. Since its foundation in 1949, education for peace, mutual respect, valorisation of differences and our common heritage have formed the basis of the core values of our organization.

These common fundamental values have been a source of inspiration for the Council of Europe’s action in terms of cultural cooperation at large, and particular effort has been made in the field of intercultural dialogue and intercultural education for a better understanding of cultural and religious diversity, as our privileged tools.

These orientations were confirmed during the Summit of Heads of State and Government of our Organization’s Member States, which was held a month ago, on 16 and 17 May. The final declaration of this Summit opens the doors to two axes of cooperation.

First of all, work in fields such as combating corruption, organized crime, human trafficking or terrorism. Those are scourges, which, as



such, ignore frontiers. The struggle against them necessarily entails cooperation with other international organizations.

But it must be emphasized that if European unity depends on reinforcement of cooperation and solidarity between and amongst its member states, the Council of Europe is also keenly aware of the necessity to remain open to cooperation with regions neighbouring Europe and with the rest of the world, which opens the way to a well-structured cooperation between our Organizations.

This will indeed be at the very heart of the theme of a Conference, which will take place at the end of the year in Faro, Portugal, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the European Cultural Convention. This Conference will not only provide the Council of Europe with an opportunity to offer concrete follow-up to the Cairo declaration but also to implement the recommendations that will come out of this Conference.

To you all I wish an enjoyable and enriching experience

PHOTO GALLERY



*From left to right: Olaf Gerlach Hansen, Saad Eddine Taib, Mongi Bousnina, Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Hans d'Orville, Traugott Schoefthaler*



*From left to right: Mongi Bousnina, Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Hans d'Orville*



*Above and below: Workshop conference participants*



# **WORKSHOP REPORTS**

## Workshop on EDUCATION

Rapporteur: Gabriele Mazza, Director of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Directorate General IV, Council of Europe

In the light of the opening remarks of the Chairperson and the four panellists an intensive debate ensued with numerous interventions by experts, which reflected a wide range of views, differences, and common concerns. A consensus emerged on the following basic considerations to be taken into account in the promotion of intercultural dialogue through education:

Intercultural dialogue, based on universally shared values and principles of peace, human rights, tolerance, democratic citizenship, is an inherent part of quality education for all and should be taken more fully into account in pursuing curriculum renewal, improving content, methodology, teacher education, and the learning process, revision of textbooks, production of new educational materials, effective use of information communication technologies, involvement of parents, and the community.

More emphasis should be given to integrating intercultural learning in pre-school education and basic education and pursued in secondary school education, higher education and adult education resulting in life long learning in support of intercultural dialogue.

Due attention should be paid to non-formal education, to extra-curricular activities, youth exchanges and encounters, literacy campaigns and the role of the media.

There is a need for the further clarification of basic concepts of culture/civilization, pluralism/diversity, education / instruction.

In view of the importance and urgency in ensuring intercultural dialogue through education, emphasis was placed on the need to benefit more from the resources and build on valuable work and initiatives underway by the sponsoring intergovernmental

organizations of the Conference, namely UNESCO, Council of Europe, ALECSO, ISESCI, IOC, Anna-Lindh Foundation, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society in general whilst proposing new concrete and concerted lines of action.

### **Concrete Proposals**

- Clarify the concepts and reach consensus on the definitions used in relation to inter cultural dialogue and education.
- Promote national and international legislation to guard against the defamation of “ the Other” in the school curriculum.
- Produce guidelines on inter cultural education; building on the research and publications already carried out and produced by the sponsoring organizations (e.g. World Heritage Kit for elementary schools, adaptation of History of Humanity publication for schools worldwide).
- Elaborate reference and learning materials for intercultural education and dialogue, both for scientific and teacher education purposes and ensure their broad diffusion.
- Teacher education (both in-service and pre-service) in support of intercultural dialogue requires priority as well as capacity building of learners and acquisition of life skills and competencies with emphasis on problem-solving and critical thinking.
- Pursue studies on possible stereotypes conveyed in school textbooks concerning the culture of the “other” and take action to correct them.
- Establish an interregional observatory on textbooks to monitor stereotyping, inaccuracies and misconceptions in different subject areas and take corrective action.
- Create a resource base of materials on good practices in inter cultural education which could support teaching practice.

- Place greater emphasis on language teaching, in particular the importance of local languages in the classroom and in mother tongue literacy, as well as the teaching of Arabic outside Arabic speaking countries as a means to understanding of Islamic culture and civilization and dialogue. Promote the teaching of other widely used languages as a means of inter cultural dialogue.
- Encourage inter cultural dialogue in schools through creative learning, art education, drama, role-play, song and music.
- Ensure intercultural dialogue across the curriculum including physical education and sports with emphasis on traditional games and sports, youth encounters and exchanges as an important bridge to communication between cultures and youth in particular, and within the framework and follow- up of the 2005 International Year of Physical Education and Sports.
- Promote festivals and prizes that encourage inter cultural dialogue, building on and promoting further the experience of projects such as Mondialogo.
- Create additional university Chairs on inter cultural dialogue.
- Take full advantage of existing networks within the organizations concerned in particular with regard to the experience and recent initiatives of the Associated Schools Project Network (e.g. “All Equal in Diversity” school campaign against racism, discrimination and exclusion).
- Promote youth exchanges and summer school programmes.
- Emphasize the effective use of audio-visual materials, video conferencing and information communication technologies (ICT’s) in support of interactive and participatory learning in support of intercultural dialogue.
- Launch a media education project with emphasis on objectivity and critical thinking.

- In all of the above initiatives, use and promotion of the internet for greater impact and diffusion of materials, experiences and resources and exchanges among teachers, students, researchers and curriculum developers.
- In all of the above, ensure the full participation of women in the planning and implementation of action in favour of intercultural dialogue.



## Workshop on CULTURE

Rapporteur: Sherifa Mohamed Bahaa Eldin Fayez  
National Director, The Egyptian Society for Intercultural Exchange (AFS)

The working group on the role of culture in the dialogue among civilizations was chaired by Mr Mohammed Arkoun, Professor emeritus of the history of Islamic thought, at the Université de Paris III, Sorbonne-Nouvelle. Dr Arkoun opened the meeting by introducing the audience to a historic overview of the concept of “civilization” and outlining the reasons for misconceptions and displacements in this regard. He underlined the importance of the approaches developed in social and human sciences since the 1960’s, and said that these tools provided a larger opening than the dialogue in enhancing inter-cultural understanding, including for example in the area of improving educational methodologies and the interpretation of religious texts. Stressing the importance of scientific research for a genuine conceptualization of modernity, Dr Arkoun stated that concepts needed by all cultures today are: transgression (of frontiers and thought systems etc.); displacement (i.e. in order to go further in knowledge) and transposition (of ideas etc.).

Positioning himself from the beginning from a practical perspective, Michael Irving Jensen, the first kick-off speaker announced that the Danish Centre of Culture and Development will be organizing a cultural festival in 2006 entitled “Images of the Middle East”, the aim of which is to create better understanding of different cultures, thus removing cultural stereotypes and prejudices. This festival is the third in a series organised by the DCCD. Mr Jensen showed a video of the Centre’s most recent festival “Images of Asia” emphasizing that, a long-term understanding of the diverse world in which we live is needed and that this type of festival should be replicated in other countries. He also shared with the audience a project that brings art out of the museums and into the streets and other public spaces.

The second kick-off speaker, Lena Larsen, argued that contemporary discussions about religion often turn into politics of identity debates, in which religious belonging becomes “identity”. She referred to her project, based on the “Silks Roads” model, which is intended to reveal,

through the use of various historical sources, the soul and beauty of images of Islam for the school curricula in Norway. Underpinning the project is the ideal that the use of art as a means through which tolerance and mutual understanding can be made.

In the subsequent debate, a large number of participants contributed with concrete proposals all of whom made specific recommendations for concrete action. Several experts and scholars insisted on the fact that we still need to clarify key concepts relating to the construct of culture, civilization and religions in order obtain definitions that can genuinely further the dialogue. Among others, there were proposals to place culture as a frame for local belonging whereas civilizations were more universal, providing a sense of recognition. In the process, focus should clearly be on commonalities rather than on differences.

Among the many concrete ideas and perspectives launched by the experts were the following:

- Governments must increasingly make use of bi-lateral cultural agreements (especially in the Arab world) as avenues for the promotion of dialogue;
- Because of the current approach to the funding of culture and cultural activities by governments, the issue of capacity-building of grass-root cultural organizations should be addressed, especially with a focus on empowering women and youth;
- Civil society can be used to monitor such new types of cultural projects, which have already been launched by DCCD;
- The identification of “best practices” in the area of dialogue among cultures and civilizations must be further pursued; such as those of the “Intercultural Dialogue Platform” in Turkey, the intercultural learning approaches in Bethlehem and the “Melody for Dialogue Among Civilizations” initiatives;
- UNESCO initiatives such as the Global Alliance and the ongoing work on cultural diversity could be implemented in schools;

- Creativity in education should be strengthened with a view to enhancing enlightenment as a peace process and uprooting fundamentalism;
- The teaching of art for children is important as a way to teach history and to draw a canvas of the cultures existing in the world thus obtaining a genuinely cosmopolitan point of departure. Children's conferences should therefore be organised to allow children to express themselves through arts and interaction without language barriers;
- Culture is often viewed as a single absolute. However, culture is complex and defined by a historic context with a political component. Initiatives should be taken to reduce egocentrism - i.e. processes of exclusion and/or inclusion - in museums, which make them true multicultural spaces;
- Music and musical performance is a major component of intercultural heritage. As an important bridge between peoples and its contribution to furthering a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples; music should be promoted through specific initiatives through regional and inter-regional networking and cooperation;
- Projects aimed at the translation of Arab great works and classics should be promoted, such as the complete works of Averroes into all languages, also with a view to reveal the diversity that always lies behind a monolithic appearance. Western scientific classics should equally be translated into other languages. Between absolutes there can be no dialogue, however culture is relative and therefore open to dialogue and shifts;

In closing the debate, the Chairman drew the attention of the audience to the importance of creating a new space for a common educational platform, so that cultural handicaps between teachers and students and other gaps in knowledge can be eliminated. There is a sense of urgency to eliminate ignorance, stereotypes and rejection of the other. To do so requires a strong political commitment and a serious engagement from all.

## Workshop on COMMUNICATION

Rapporteur: Torben Brandt

Journalist, National Public Broadcasting and Media Advisor, Danish Broadcasting Corporation

Report by Mr. Torben Brandt, Media Advisor, Responsible for the DCCD Images of the Middle East Media Twinning Programme. Mr. Rafael Bueno, Coordinator of «Casa Asia», Spain, chaired the working group on the role of communication and information in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations. In his opening speech, the chairman of the session stressed the duty of governments to ensure freedom of speech and the safety of journalists, the responsibility of the civil society to promote free and professional media in society and the important role that media can play in countering ignorance, stereotypes and prejudices. The media have enormous influence. They can be part of the problem or part of the solution as they have the potential to transfer images of conflict and distorted information or to transfer images of mutual understanding and peace.

The first speaker, Mrs. Golmar Mebran, Associate Professor of Education, Al Zabra University, Iran, made the point that education, communication and dialogue cannot be separated. Education requires communication, and communication always contains educative elements. As regards dialogue in the media or in education it is important to realise that cultural dialogue differs from the religious dialogue in the sense that cultural dialogue must mirror the broad diversity without excluding any aspects, while religious dialogue always excludes the non-believers. Thus, the media should be granted freedom to offer a large variety of narratives, from which citizens could choose freely. She underlined the importance to go from self-denial and blaming of the other to self-understanding and a critical look at our own communities and societies. Only with that approach can we create balance, tolerance and respect between civilizations.

The second speaker, Mr. Bastar Mohamed Arafat, President of Civilization Exchange & Corporation Foundation, USA, informed about the challenge his organisation meets when trying to facilitate communication between different Islamic groups and the American

public, as well as with Islamic societies throughout the world. The Islamophobia that has risen in US after September 11 reinforced the need for such communication. Muslims travelling to Western countries like the US are not prepared to meet with a non-Islamic culture, as are the populations in the West. It is important to avoid parochialism and both the educational system and the media have a role to play in this regard. The speaker argued that the Western media was of little help in creating the conditions for the much-needed dialogue.

The third speaker, Mr. Kamel Ben Yoones, journalist for the BBC in Tunis, gave examples of biased reporting in both Western and Arab media. He noted that censorship and self-censorship can stem from both commercial and political pressures. With regard to the role of the Islam, he called for an Arabic media program discussing several dimension of Islam: religion, history, geography and different conceptions of Islam including fundamentalism. Mr. Kamel Ben Yoones concluded that there is an urgent need for a debate on issues such as secularity and democracy in the Arab world.

Finally, Mr. Herbert Pundik, former Editor in Chief of Politiken Daily, Denmark, acknowledged the need to set up educational and media projects focussing on mutual information and the fighting of ignorance between the West and the Islamic world through means such as cultural festivals, translations, and textbook reviews. He however underlined the urgent need to also look into the relationship of majorities and minorities within the two cultures. Here a vicious circle evolved as extremists get media attention and thereby reinforce the irrational fears of the other group. According to the speaker, the only solution lies in getting the moderate communities from both sides to speak out against extremism and intolerance, including through the mass media.

However, even more important is face-to-face dialogue when it comes to creating confidence and trust. Mr. Pundik reported on a 5-year project conducted by his newspaper, which hired young immigrants - so called "tolerance squads" - to visit school classes and discuss issues of being an immigrant or refugee in Denmark. The project proved to be very successful by providing real dialogue on the human-being-to-human-being level as evidenced in several impact analyses.

In the ensuing debate, over 30 participants took the floor both to further develop the concepts presented by the speakers and to suggest practical measures in the field of communication and information for the dialogue among cultures. Some of the main issues discussed are as follows: How to capacitate media professionals to tackle intercultural issues within multicultural societies, especially in the Western world; how to encourage media in the Arab world to truly mirror the rich diversities in the region and serving all segments of audiences; how to stimulate a discussion among the media professionals about ethics and professional standards; how to analytically and critically portray both oneself and the other, while still addressing and attracting mass audiences; how to strengthen editorially independent public service broadcasting; whether feature and fiction genres have a greater impact on cultural perceptions than news journalism; the huge potential of the Internet for furthering decentralized and diversified information flows and to enhance the opportunity to easily communicate with members of other cultural and social groups irrespective of national or other borders, scaling-up and replication of successful initiatives.

The many concrete ideas and proposals launched by the experts can be summarized in three groups: Joint activities for communication and information professionals, capacity building, and research.

#### Joint activities for communication and information Professionals

- Twinning projects on all levels targeting managerial, technical and editorial staff, among other, reinforcing “visiting journalists” programs.
- Joint production of broadcasts, newspapers, magazines and websites.
- Joint distribution projects, for instance through satellite broadcasting.
- Establishment of a satellite channel for intercultural dialogue on a non- commercial basis.
- Reporting missions to specific areas/events fostering concrete collaboration between professionals with different backgrounds, including scholarship programs.
- Journalism school collaboration, including joint curriculum development, particularly in the field of multicultural

reporting, as well as exchange programmes for both students and teachers.

- Establishment of an award for best media product in the area of intercultural dialogue in the Arab region.

### Capacity building

- Further training (separate/joint) on issues such as fighting stereotypes, promoting facts based journalism and conflict sensitive reporting and photojournalism
- Greater emphasis on language training to lower language barrier for successful dialogue
- Training in the use of ICT's for dialogue, especially for and through youth
- Capacitate local minority communities to use media, including ICT's, for obtaining and disseminating information for learning to live together.
- Media literacy and critical understanding of the media to decode question and analyze media messages. Capacity building of information professionals and sensitization of policy- makers in the field of setting up a public domain of (digitized) information in diverse languages.

### Research

- More empirical studies on the portrayal of different cultures and civilizations in the media as well as the different forms of (self) censorship, “the red lines”, in both Western and Arab media.
- Impact analysis projects of major intercultural events and initiatives (such as the Images of The Middle East Festival in Denmark in 2006).

# “Melody for Dialogue” Concert

- Manuel Delgado, Guitar
  - Abdelilah El-Hassak, Oud
  - Edwar Eskandar, Nay
  - Liu Fang, Pipa and Zither
  - Shyamal Maitra, Tabla
  - Bahman Panahi, Tar and Setar
  - Patsy Ranarijaona, Vocals
- 
1. Dance of the “Yi People”, composed by Wang Huiran (China) - performed by Liu Fang on the pipa;
  2. “Global Dialogue” - performed by musical ensemble including tar, pipa, oud, nay, guitar and tabla;
  3. Flamenco melody - played by Manuel Delgado;
  4. “Salute to peace” - performed by Patsy, accompanied by musical ensemble;
  5. “Sundarban” melody from Calcutta - performed by Shymal on the tabla;
  6. ”Paradise”, a composition from ancient Persia - performed by Bahman Panahi on the setar;
  7. “Invitation to Life”, a traditional song from Madagascar - presented by Patsy and accompanied by Manuel Delgado and Liu Fang (Chinese zither);
  8. “Jalaleh”, a Moroccan song - performed by Abdelliah Hassak;
  9. Harmony”, a folk melody from Xinjiang (Northwest China) with improvisation by the musical ensemble.



## **Mehri Madarshahi**

President, “Melody for Dialogue among Civilizations” Association, Paris

### **Could Music be an Instrument of Dialogue among Civilisations and Cultures?**

Once I read, “Music exists and will emerge as a symbol of what might come to pass in a future age when the rage of war gives way to reason”. This statement captures well the vision, ambition and focus of the “Melody for Dialogue among Civilisations” Association, which was founded a few months ago in Paris and which organized last night’s concert.

Music and musical performances are a major component of intangible heritage, which is an integral part of the world’s heritage. We must more explicitly recognize its potential as an important bridge between people and its contribution to furthering a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and people. To that end, we will draw on the power of music, melodies, original instruments and the skills of accomplished artists to interact with each other, to respond to melodies from one culture with musical variations on their instruments. As Professor Mohamed Arkoun so eloquently said last night, this is a most practical and touching approach to harnessing the power of creativity of people for the dialogue and mutual understanding and respect, without having to resort to language and words.

Music is one of the oldest forms of human communications, which can be found in all cultures at all times. In the age of globalization it has become in many ways the most global and accessible feature of the “global village”. It is a universal and common language understood by all, regardless of culture, religion or socio-political orientation.

Music has many facets and many uses. Yet, its primary appeal is to emotions and feelings. As a hymn, national anthem, love song, or political protest song, music may provoke feelings of religiosity, patriotism, romance or revolt.

Despite its multifaceted feature, communication researchers were rather late in devoting systematic attention to the phenomenon. There were

many cultural, institutional and financial reasons for this neglect. And so it was not until the 1970's that the study of popular music and its uniting force began to gain any real role as a research subject.

Going back to history, we find that music has not only been used as a tool to appeal to emotions, to provide inspiration and to enjoy freedom of artistic expression, but also as a tool for repression.

Music in the service of dialogue and understanding among people takes many forms. One Example is Beethoven's masterpiece, the Ninth Symphony. It was written to Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy" as a hymn to freedom and human solidarity. Another example is Benjamin Britten's War requiem of 1961 which evoked the atrocities of two world wars and which was composed as a symbol of reconciliation between Germany, Britain and Russia to the text of 9 poems by Wilfred Owen, a soldier who died in battle during World War I. The Requiem was performed at the consecration of the Coventry Cathedral in 1962 with the ruins of the original cathedral as a poignant reminder of the damage of war.

The Chilean Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda wrote his Canto General as an ode to the struggle of his people for freedom and recognition of their civil and political rights. This poem served as an inspiration for Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis, himself victim of repression in Greece to compose an oratorio of the same name.

Then there is music for charitable purposes, such the benefit concerts by famous tenor Luciano Pavarotti, the proceeds of which went to organizations such as "War Child", helping victims of the war in Bosnia. Miguel Angel Estrella, the Argentinian pianist has created an association to make music more accessible to under-privileged. And of course, let us not forget the wonderful initiatives "We are the World" by British rock star Bob Geldofin in the 1980s, shortly to be repeated by a rock concert in favour of debt relief for Africa in connection with the forthcoming G-8 summit.

So, the power of music often extends to real political power. The famous conductor, Daniel Barenboim and the late Palestinian thinker Edward Said teamed up to put music and musical interaction into the service of conflict resolution. They founded the East-West Divan

Orchestra composed of young Middle Eastern musicians, including Israeli, Palestinians and Syrians musicians, with the aim of encouraging understanding and cooperation in the Middle East.

After a long period with little attention, traditional popular music came back to center stage from the 1970's onwards. It spawned a veritable industry that brought together artists, groups show and label producers. The term "traditional popular music" covers a broad and diverse range: folklore, ethnic music, traditional, popular and folk music. Music's deep connection with social identities has been intensified and further highlighted by globalization. This is due to the acceleration of the transnational flow of popular culture through new technologies and media. The result is that musical identities and styles are globally now more visible and audible, providing for cross-fertilisation and fusion more than ever before.

Today, traditional music is to be found under the "world-music" label, a notion that lumps together ethnic and traditional music from five continents, arranged according to their geographical origin. Traditional music forms the core of this wave and remains as a source intact and provides the basis de facto for a global language drawing on all cultures.

The "world-music" phenomenon carries with it the apology of "interbreeding". A mixture of styles and genres, repertoires and forms, in the image of a society, that dreams ridding itself of its conflicts through the merger of cultures. Even though this appellation masks heterogeneous forms, "world-music" nevertheless proposes a first approach to cultural multiplicity

Let me also refer to Article 128 of the Treaty on the European Union, which considers music as a contributing factor "to the blossoming of the cultures of the Member States with respect for their national and regional diversity, while bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore" and to the creation of an "increasingly closer union between the people of Europe".

Today we can no longer stick firmly to our own roots and show disinterest or hostility to other cultures or other musical genres. Curiosity is

becoming the main quality necessary for traditional music players and is joined along the way by supporters of other aesthetics.

To ensure that this form of dialogue is further promoted, it is our hope that the present meeting could advocate further recognition of this irreplaceable heritage for dialogue among civilizations and to propose directions for regional and inter-regional networking and co-operation in relation to education, supporting live events and dissemination of information.

Let us hope that music from the memory is not reduced to the status of objects destined to fill museums and recordings. Because as Jean Clair stated in his "Reflection on the Fine Arts": "Should the museum win, it is thus that the desert encroaches still further".

# **Background Document**

**CONFERENCE ON FOSTERING DIALOGUE AMONG  
CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS THROUGH CONCRETE  
AND SUSTAINED INITIATIVES  
(Rabat, Morocco, 14-16 June 2005)**

**Albert Sasson, Former Assistant Director-General,  
Bureau of Programming and Evaluation, UNESCO  
in collaboration with Hans d'Orville, Director of the Bureau of  
Strategic Planning, UNESCO and Ann-Belinda Preis, Senior  
Programme Specialist, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO**

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT**

A joint initiative of the:

- I. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- II. Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
- III. Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
- IV. Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO)
- V. Danish Center for Culture and Development (DCCO, Copenhagen)
- VI. Anna Lindh Euro Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (Alexandria, Egypt)

**I. INTRODUCTION**

For several years, and especially since the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001, the issues raised by the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples have been addressed in many conferences and meetings organized by the United Nations, the partners associated in the present joint initiative and numerous stakeholders in a wide range of countries and regions. They have given rise to resolutions, declarations, programmes and publications and it is clear

that an important advocacy role has been fulfilled by these activities, in particular with regard to highlighting that the dialogue should serve several purposes:

- enhancing similarities and common values, while cherishing differences;
- working to adopt and promote a mindset which views the eradication of poverty, racism and xenophobia, terror, extremism, hatred and intolerance as an inescapable moral imperative for each human being;
- moving beyond mere conversation, altruism and participation to concrete problem-solving activities, encompassing education and training, scientific communication and cultural cooperation;
- fostering pluralism, pluralistic approaches and freedom of expression, not only between cultures and traditions, but also within them.

It has been unanimously agreed that dialogue must be based on the following principles, values and attitudes:

- the equal dignity of cultures and their capacity to cross-fertilize, inspire and enrich each other;
- the need to uphold and enhance cultural diversity;
- mutual respect, with the ultimate goal of learning to live together;
- openness and self-critical attitudes - as each culture or civilization can be critical towards others; but should also be critical towards itself, including a critical examination of historical memory;
- self-respect and awareness of one's own values and ideals as a basis to lay the foundations of a non-arrogant and fruitful dialogue leading to mutual enrichment.

In a world characterized by a great diversity of cultures - as recognized and appreciated in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and also the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004), by globalization of changes affecting all areas of human activity, and by a recognition of the role of religion in societies, it is necessary

to reconcile the values of the individual, the community or national identities with universally shared values. Globalization should not prevent local cultures from thriving and developing, while emphasis on local dimensions should not run counter to regional and universal orientations and approaches.

Worldwide, religions have played and are still playing an important role in shaping the cultural identity of individuals, communities and peoples, and they are a key component of the building of civilizations and cultures. Religions can and should have a role in the promotion and support of a positive intercultural dialogue and building on contributions emanating from inter-religious and interfaith dialogue.

Universally shared values are those which link citizens to their community and at the same time commit them to share a vision for their future, based on tolerance, justice, solidarity, trust and mutual respect and understanding, moral behaviour, awareness of the need for democratic governance and sustainable development, the responsible exercise of authority, and the recognition and treatment of others as equals. Above all, there is a need to strive for a better reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic dimensions of other peoples, nations and communities.

## **II. THE ROAD AHEAD: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A JOINT INITIATIVE**

The advocacy for a constructive dialogue among cultures and civilizations is a task that must be anchored in, and nurtured by, the nations and peoples, as well as by the international, regional governmental and non-governmental organizations. It is part of a much needed pedagogy, particularly through the current difficult times when a mistaken notion of “clash of civilizations” is invoked by some quarters.

There is an overwhelming conviction worldwide, if not a sense of urgency, that concrete and sustained activities should be designed and implemented in all regions and by the widest range of partners and stakeholders, so as to make the dialogue a reality of our daily life and to buttress peace within and among the nations through a series of concrete, results-oriented actions.



This need has been strongly emphasized by the governing bodies of the organizations involved in the present joint initiative. However, this does not mean a start from scratch. Rather, the challenge is to build on the already numerous declarations, reports and initiatives containing a rich font of activities, actions and ideas building on and fostering dialogue; they need to be strengthened, made sustainable and translated into concrete and specific measures that can realistically be implemented within a given time-line. They also need to be extended to, and diversified in, the areas of education, the sciences, culture and communication.

This is why the partners who have launched this joint initiative considered it an important, if not indispensable step, to call an international conference, to be attended mostly by experts and practitioners with demonstrated experience and knowledge in the various areas which can benefit from intercultural dialogue at national, regional or international levels. The conference will also bring together specific members of the secretariats of the organizing, supporting and cooperation institutions. Indeed, their presence, involvement and commitments are particularly crucial for the desired and necessary follow-up to the Conference through the work plans of the organizations.

The Conference should thus be seen as a launch pad for the development and adoption of a series of concrete measures and activities exploring how specific objectives can be achieved through various dialogue modalities, strengthened and encouraged at national, regional and international levels, identifying good practices from the regions represented.

### **III. AREAS OF FOCUS: INDICATE ELEMENTS FOR A PROGRAMME OF CONCRETE ACTION**

#### **1. Education**

Quality education is a prerequisite for dialogue among cultures, civilizations and peoples because it encompasses not only quantifiable measures of educational attainment, but also the qualitative aspects of curricula and their contents including shared values, human rights, tolerance and mutual understanding. Educational institutions and

learning materials can uniquely serve as a vehicle for dialogue and intercultural understanding. This also involves working with obstacles for educational planners at central and regional levels. In fact, there has been and there is a repeated appeal from governments, politicians, parliamentarians, educators, decision-makers and civic society representatives to use education as a privileged tool for fostering the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

- a. Citizenship education to teach adolescents and young people their legal rights and obligations, law, commitment to shared values, equity and justice, tolerance and respect for the “Other”. This should focus on developing the capacity to live together in a democratic environment, while respecting the persons, but not their opinions when/if these are inherently intolerable and opposed to human rights and basic freedoms.
  
- b. Multicultural education aimed at enhancing and improving knowledge of culture, civilizations, religions and traditions, in particular through the teaching of foreign languages, the popularisation of works in the social and human sciences, literature and arts, and the creation of university chairs on subjects relating to dialogue among cultures and civilizations.  
Both civic and multicultural education can be achieved through the design and broad dissemination of teacher’s guides and curriculum models, through the revision of national textbooks and school handbooks as well as of university curricula, particularly in key disciplines such as history, geography, philosophy, social and human sciences. This is a long-term task, but an imperative one, which could be carried out at sub-regional and national levels by teams of teachers and university specialists with the assistance of international and regional organizations (e.g. UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, specialized foundations and NGOs).
  
- c. Textbook revision & exchange programmes  
Textbooks appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> century indeed need to reflect more inclusive pedagogies and diversified content, it not only impact academic knowledge, but also engage

learners in interactions leading to the acquisition of life skills and universally-shared values within a human rights perspective. Textbooks present an opportunity for engaged dialogue between students, between teachers, and by extension between students and their families, and ultimately between cultures. It is therefore relevant that this proposed part of the future plan of action be thoroughly discussed at the Conference.

Discussions are proposed to focus on the:

- methodologies for examining textbooks from a gender and a human rights perspective, so as to eliminate stereotypes and develop a positive approach to gender issues and to respect of human rights and basic freedoms;
- ways and means of integrating balanced and accurate views of other cultures and civilizations, e.g. in the teaching of history and sociology of religions and civilizations at secondary school level;
- the role of the teacher in interpreting and developing textbook materials that are unbiased and free from stereotypes;
- expected results from modernisation of textbooks include the acquisition of competences and skills necessary for dialogue between cultures such as critical thinking and the ability to observe from more than one perspective (“multi-perspectivity”)

School links and exchanges have also a deep impact on intercultural learning in schools if intercultural exchanges are integrated as a strategy for curriculum development and reform. The Conference would be invited to discuss ways and means to foster interregional and sub-regional level school exchanges and links.

## **2. Science**

The key modalities of dialogue-related action concern the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms in the Scientific Fields with a view to increasing and systematizing knowledge of diverse cultures.

Efforts should also include the promotion of scientific collaboration, networking and interaction, for example through the creation and strengthening of scientific networks and twinning arrangements among universities. With increasing globalization and changing patterns of work organization, international dialogue is also particularly important in the engineering sciences in the context of professional practice in such areas as standards, quality assurance, accreditation and mobility.

Discussions could focus on:

- the study and documentation of ethical principles and practices in the main scientific issues, such as genetic research, fresh water, etc, and the promotion of a common stand on these issues, in respect of the Cultural and religious considerations;
- the promotion of scientific and technological exchange and the quest for sustainable development, in particular through sharing and networking among knowledge holders from all knowledge systems;
- interdisciplinary global networks of specialists and partner institutions, including public and private sector partnerships.

### **3. Social and Human Sciences**

A priority should be given for the continuation of dialogue between philosophers of the Arab world and those from other regions in order to promote mutual understanding between philosophical traditions and especially the establishment of intellectual partnerships in order to better understand major problems confronting the various cultures concerned and their consequences for social stability and prevention of conflicts. Within this framework, in November 2004 UNESCO ready launched a philosophical dialogue between the Arab world and Asia, which will continue in 2005 in Seoul (South Korea) on the topic of democracy and social justice.

Emphasis should be placed on the promotion of philosophy in order to widen and enrich the debates in progress on the problems faced by the contemporary world open to civil society; for this purpose, the implementation of the three pillars of UNESCO's intersectoral strategy for philosophy, together with the celebration of World Philosophy Day could constitute major assets.

Analysis of new forms of violence, the promotion of democracy, human rights, human security and knowledge societies strong domains to reinforce a dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and this, at a time when the debate on the long-term nature and effects of the processes of globalization is at a turning point in various parts of the world.

The contribution of historians to the dialogue among civilizations must be reinforced through interregional partnerships aiming at offering a tribune for the different perceptions of historical processes, in particular, those that touch contemporary history, following the example of the conferences organized by UNESCO on “Civilizations in the Eye of the Other” parts I and II.

#### **4. Culture**

A particular challenge lies in demonstrating that cultural heritage and identity can become a powerful symbol for fostering national and regional understanding, reciprocal knowledge and indeed reconciliation, where appropriate. Once respect for cultural heritage allows people to understand themselves, it will also be a key to understanding others. Attention should also be paid to the re-creation of stereotypes, prejudices and xenophobia in contemporary culture (specific cultural forms and expressions). Concrete cooperation can contribute to intercultural dialogue e.g.:

a. Cultural festivals and events

There is considerable scope to set a more effective agenda of dialogue in most cultural festivals and events, such as global sport events, cultural foray and capitals, art and book fairs, youth festivals and encounters. For instance, the IMAGES festival has been held in Denmark since 1991 to foster dialogue and cultural understanding among the public in this country; the event is based on extensive networking, cooperation between civic society, co-funding and partnership.

b. Cultural and musical creation and interaction

Possibilities shall be explored to promote dialogue involving

diverse aspects of cultural creations from different cultures. Such interaction of cultures may include musical interaction involving songs and original instruments from various cultures as well as exchange and partnership between writers, painters, musicians or producers, with a focus on translation and joint productions, in order to consolidate and foster the human dimensions of dialogue.

c. Arts, arts management and creative industries

Artists and producers of cultural goods can foster genuine intercultural dialogue and understanding. An enabling environment should be created in this regard. This can be done through a variety of initiatives, which include exchange of best practices, training, education, and networking. For instance, in cooperation with the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity and the International Network for Cultural Diversity, partnership programmes can be established between regions to strengthen viable cultural industries and foster art management and exchanges.

d. National museums

Although national museums focus on the various facets of national culture, sections or departments devoted to multicultural aspects and issues can be very useful to inform the public at large about the contents and purpose of intercultural dialogue. Temporary and itinerary exhibitions can fulfil a similar role. The topics to be selected could be: history and sociology; history of science and contribution of different civilizations to science advancement; history of arts, etc.

e. Training and retraining of staff in charge of cultural development

It is advisable and even necessary to introduce cultural elements and information about shared values into the training and retraining programmes of staff in charge of cultural development, so as to enable them to tackle intercultural issues. This kind of action would also apply to the training of religious leaders and mediators.

## 5. Information and Communication

Since the mass media play a key role in shaping public opinion, they have great potential to facilitate the dialogue among cultures and civilizations by expanding the public's knowledge about cultural, ethnic, social and religious communities. This can be done at all levels and in all media, from news over feature stories to fiction and cartoons. All levels means that international, regional, national and local media can play an active role in the dialogue context.

In developing countries, radio is still the most efficient media to help initiate and develop dialogue, such as through the use of live round-table or panel discussions with open lines for callers. Radio can reach the isolated, and often excluded, through community radio stations.

The Internet offers individuals the opportunity to easily communicate with members of other cultural and social groups irrespective of national or other borders. These new forms of media contribute greatly to increased, diversified and decentralized information flows. Linguistic variety in terms of internet content, better, cheaper and possibly automated translation services, along with a greater emphasis on foreign language education, will help the language barrier to a successful dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

- a. Addressing ignorance, stereotypes and prejudices in the media (text and images)  
This should be an objective of training and retraining of journalists, as well as an obligation in performing their daily work. In addition to short- and medium-term measures, long-term planning can deal with twinning of journalists, editors and media institutions from different cultural regions.
- b. Using images in the public space to struggle against stereotypes
- c. Intercultural competencies in the training of journalists and media professionals  
A set of intercultural competencies, to be specified at the conference, could be instilled in new generations of

journalists. This is a long-term action that could be illustrated through specific projects in selected schools of journalism, belonging to different cultural regions and working in partnership.

In view of the range and outreach of satellite broadcasting, dialogue among cultures and peoples can also be promoted through dedicated TV programmes and live meetings between children, youth and members of civil society associations worldwide with the aim of exchanging viewpoints on issues related to their daily preoccupations.

In line with the Declaration of Principles and Action Plan issued by the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva 2003, practical measures should be developed to help overcome the digital divide through digital solidarity, promoting cultural diversity and cooperation in this field.

The setting up, at the regional and international levels, of networks between media and communication personalities aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect.



# **Annexes**

## **ISESCO's Role in the Promotion of Dialogue among Civilizations**

### INTRODUCTION

The keen interest shown by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation to the issue of dialogue among cultures and civilisations and the necessity of interaction between them dates back to many years and reflects the strong belief of ISESCO that dialogue is the best means to achieve co-existence among peoples, remove the causes of misunderstanding and distortion of the image of its cultures and civilizations. Keeping in line with its mission and scope of action, the Organisation has played a distinguished role in formulating a new, comprehensive, and well-balanced perception of dialogue at different levels such as Dialogue among civilisations or Dialogue among cultures or Dialogue among religions. According to ISESCO, dialogue finds base in strong foundations and well-devised rules and rests upon three factors, mutual respect, justice and equity and rejection of bigotry and hatred.

### CONDITIONS AND ORIENTATIONS OF DIALOGUE

Based on ISESCO's perception of dialogue, and given its civilizational import which has been established in part thanks to the efforts of the Organization, one can safely argue that the type of dialogue likely to achieve the expected universal goals and which can seriously be considered by the Islamic world should fulfil the following conditions:

**First:** Dialogue should be balanced, based on equality and common will, and should be conducted on an equal footing with the interlocutor. It should also be conducted on many a level, in such a way as to be comprehensive, and involving people from all walks of life, be it on the governmental level or on the level of the relevant organizations concerned with such issues and fields as those set for this dialogue.

**Second:** Dialogue should seek to benefit both parties and secure their respective interests that are relevant to progress in cultural, scientific, economic and social life. It should also seek to fight injustice and aggression against peoples and nations, and eliminate the causes of conflict, which claims the lives of innocents. In this way, dialogue would be effective in improving the overall relations between Muslims and the West, and would benefit all parties.

**Third:** Dialogue should be civilized and should eschew such controversial issues as those, which can never be settled, unless either of the two debating parties renounces one of the fundamentals of its faith. In this way, highly sensitive issues should be averted so that dialogue does not reach a stalemate.

**Fourth:** Dialogue should be conducted along mutually exclusive, parallel lines and according to preset programmes. So the progress of dialogue in one way is not

contingent upon the completion of the other ways, although there are common links between the different ways, which only makes the sought goals integrative.

#### DIALOGUE -ORIENTED ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED INDIVIDUALLY OR JOINTLY BY ISESCO

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has implemented a number of activities within the framework of its Action Plans and the co-operation programmes it has concluded with a number of Arab, Islamic and international organisations and institutions. These activities included the organisation of a number of meetings and symposia and the preparation of a number of strategies focusing on intra-Islamic dialogue and optimisation of the role of Muslims in building human culture, as well as the publication of a number of important authoritative works addressing the subject. ISESCO also participated in a number of specialised conferences and symposia organised by other parties. The Islamic Organisation's contribution to the **International Year for Dialogue** was distinguished and widely acclaimed at the international level.

#### CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA AND MEETINGS

The conferences, symposia and meetings addressing the subject of dialogue among civilisations and cultures within the Islamic world and outside it in which the Islamic Organisation participated are as follows:

- **8th General Conference of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo** (Egypt): 24-27 July 1996. The Director General of ISESCO participated in this Conference and presented a study on "Islam and the Future of Civilisational Dialogue". The study was subsequently published in Arabic, English and French.
- **International Meeting on Dialogue Among Religions and Civilisations: Cairo** (Egypt); 8-10 November 1998, organised by the Islamic Council for Call and Relief.
- **Meeting of the Co-ordination Committee in charge of Islamic-Christian Dialogue, Amman (Jordan):** 22-23 April 1998.
- **10th General Conference of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, Cairo** (Egypt): 2-5 July 1998. In this conference, the Director General of the Islamic, Educational and Scientific Organisation presented a paper on "Islam and Religious Co-existence on the threshold of the 21st Century". The paper was later published in the three working languages of the Organisation (Arabic, English and French).
- **Meeting of the Drafting Committee of the Two Universal Documents on Dialogue Among Civilisations, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia):** 5-7 February 2000. The meeting was held at the Headquarters of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue and Co-existence of Civilisations and Cultures, Berlin (Germany):** 5 July 2000. The symposium was organised jointly by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the Muslim

World League and the Imam Khaouii Charitable Institution.

- **International Symposium on the Contributions of Human Civilisations to Promoting the Principles of Human Rights**, Rabat: 25-27 November 2000. This Symposium was organised by Amnesty International.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue Among Civilisations in a Changing World, Rabat (Morocco)**: 10-12 July 2001, organised by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Sovereign of Morocco.
- **International Symposium on Inter-Civilisational Dialogue, Kyoto-Tokyo (Japan)**: 3-6 August 2001, organised by the United Nations University and UNESCO. The Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, presented a study on the “Political Aspects of Dialogue Among Civilisations from an Islamic Perspective”.
- **International Symposium on Inter-Civilisational Dialogue: Theory and Practice, Tunis**: 12-13 November 2001, organised by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation under the patronage of His Excellency the Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.
- **International Symposium on Muslim World Image in Western Media: Between Fairness and Bias, Rabat**: 9-10 January 2002, organised by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation under the High patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue Among Civilisations for coexistence**: held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Damascus, from 18 to 20 May 2002, under the patronage of His Excellency the Syrian President Dr. Bachar Al-Assad.
- **International Symposium on the West and Islam in the Media**: held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in London, from 20 to 21 June 2002.
- **International Conference on Religion and Racial Discrimination**: held by the Association of Islamic Organisations in Europe, within the framework of the Islamic-Christian Dialogue (United Kingdom): 11 - 15 July 2002.
- **International Symposium on Peace, Harmony and Human Values from an Islamic Perspective**: held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Singapore, from 14 to 16 September 2002.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue Among Cultures and Civilizations: Comprehension and Mutual Understanding**, held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Liechtenstein, from 23 to 24 October 2002, under the High Patronage of H.S.H. Hereditary Prince Alois von und zu Liechtenstein.
- **International Symposium on Islam, Jihad, Conflict Resolution**, held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in cooperation with the International Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington, from 2 to 3 November 2002.
- **International Symposium on Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief, Oslo (Norway)**: 7-9 December 2002, organised by the Oslo Coalition.
- **International Symposium on Islam and Peace**, held by the Organisation of the

Islamic Conference (OIC) in Tunis, from 15 to 17 April 2003. In this Conference the Director General presented a paper on the Role of the Muslim Countries in the West, in Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations.

- **International Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations: the Key to a Safe Future, Warsaw (Poland):** 23-26 April 2003, organised by the Polish Asia Pacific Council Association.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue of Cultures, Chania, Crete (Greece):** 1-4 May 2003, organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum.
- **International Symposium on Partners in Humanity, Amman (Jordan):** 26-29 July 2003, organised by Search for a Common Ground Organization and Majlis El Hassan.
- **Regional Symposium on Cultural Diversity, Tunis (Tunisia):** 7-9 September 2003, held by Intergovernmental Agency for Francophony for the elaboration of an international convention on respect of Cultural diversity, within the framework of the WTO negotiations, in the horizon of 2005.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue Among Civilisations: Diversity within Complementarity,** held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Hessen (Germany), from 29 to 30 September 2003.
- **International Symposium on Dialogue Among Civilisations held, within the framework of Arab-European Dialogue,** in cooperation between the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the ALECSO, the European Council, and UNESCO's German National Commission, at the headquarters of UNESCO, in Paris, on October 2nd, 2003.
- ISESCO's Director General took place in the proceedings of **the Sixth International Conference**, held by the Association "Beirut the Heritage", in the Lebanese Capital, on the theme (*Heritage, Modernity and Dialogue Among Cultures*), on the period 8-10 December 2003, during which he presented a paper on the theme (Globalization and Dialogue Among Civilizations: an outlook in view of ISESCO's experience).
- **International Symposium on "Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures"**, Sanaa (Republic of Yemen), 10-11 February 2004: The Director General made an opening address and presented a paper on (*Cultural Diversity within the context of current influential factors*).
- Lecture on (**Integration of the concept of human rights and dialogue among civilizations into educational curricula**) organized by ISESCO as part of the Second Arab Forum of Education, convened by the Arab Thought Foundation in Beirut, on 17-20 February 2004, in cooperation with ISESCO and a number of other organizations.
- The Director General participated in the International Symposium on (**Religion and Democracy**), held by the Paris-based Association for Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Dialogue, on 24-25 February 2004.
- Lecture on (**ISESCO's role in promoting inter-cultural dialogue in the West**), delivered by the Director General on 14 March 2004, in Kuwait, as part of the Kuwaiti Educational and Cultural Week.
- International Forum on (**Ibn Battuta and Dialogue Among Civilizations**). In this Forum, held by UNESCO in Paris on Tuesday June 8th, 2004, the Director General of ISESCO participated and delivered a speech in the Opening Ceremony.

- **International Symposium on “Tent of Dialogue: Muslims meeting with Geneva and its Population” (Switzerland):** 24 June - 4 July 2004, organised by the Cordoue Foundation of Geneva and the Inter-knowing Foundation.
- The Director General took part in **the meetings of the tenth session of the Committee for Islamic-Catholic communication affiliated to the World Islamic Forum for Dialogue**, held in Cairo on 16 and 17 July 2004. The Director General delivered an address at the opening of the proceedings of this committee.
- **International Symposium on “Cultural Diversity and Dialogue between Civilizations”** held by ISESCO in Nouakchott (Islamic Republic of Mauritania), on 23-25 September 2004.
- The Director General of the Islamic Organization took part in the **“First World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace”** which was held in Brussels, on 3-6 January 2005.
- **International Symposium on “Arab-European Cooperation and Cultural Diversity in Knowledge Societies”** held by ISESCO in Tunis, on 23-25 March 2005.
- **Symposium on: “Europe and the Conduct of the dialogue among Euro Mediterranean cultures: towards an Arab approach to energizing dialogue and supporting interests”**, held by the School of Economics and Political Sciences in the University of Cairo, on 10-12 April 2005.
- The Director General of the Islamic Organization took part in the **11th session of the Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee: The Relationship between Religion and the State in the Land of Islam, and the Relationship between Religion and the State in Christendom”**, held in the headquarters of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue in Rome on 9-10 June 2005.
- **International Conference on “Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives”** held in Rabat, on 14-16 June 2005, in cooperation between ISESCO, OIC, ALECSO, UNESCO, Danish Centre for Culture and Development and Anna Lindh Foundation - EUROMED-.
- ISESCO Director General participated in **the 16th annual session of the Crans Montana Forum**, held in Monaco, on 23-25 June 2005.

#### SPECIALISED STRATEGIES AND SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

In this field, the Islamic Organisation prepared three strategies on the issue of intra-Islamic dialogue, rapprochement among the Islamic Madhahib, the role of Muslims in redressing the image of Islam in the West, and how the Muslim world can benefit from its migrant brains and put them to contribution to bridge the cultural and scientific gap between civilisations.

These strategies and publications include:

- Strategy for the Rapprochement of Islamic Madhahib.
- Strategy for Benefiting from Migrant Brains.
- Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action in the West and its Implementation Mechanisms.

ISESCO PUBLICATIONS ON THE THEME OF DIALOGUE

- **Dialogue and Civilizational Interaction from an Islamic Perspective** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in three editions in Arabic, English and French.
- **Islam and Religious Coexistence** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in three editions in Arabic, English and French.
- **Prospects of Dialogue Between Muslims and the West:** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in three editions in Arabic, English and French.
- **Dialogue from an Islamic Perspective:** (Dr. Abbas El Jirari). The book was published in three editions in Arabic, English and French.
- **Ethics of Difference in Islam:** (Proceedings of a symposium held by the Islamic Organization in Tunis, in co-operation with Al-Zaitouna University, published in Arabic.
- **Islam Between Truth and Allegations:** Responses to major Allegations against Islam (Group of authors). The study was published in three editions in Arabic, English and French.
- **Islamic perception of Coexistence:** (Dr. Abbas El Jirari). The study was published in a single edition in Arabic, English and French.
- Three books in Arabic, English and French on: *Correcting the Errors and Misconceptions on Islam contained in the Islamic Encyclopaedia* published by Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, on the following subjects:
  - a- The Holy Quran
  - b- The Biography of the Prophet
  - c- The Islamic Faith
- **The Conflict of Civilizations from an Islamic Perspective** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in a single edition in Arabic, English and French.
- **The characteristics of the Islamic civilization and its future prospects** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in a single edition in Arabic, English and French.
- **Muslim communities and institutions and their role in highlighting the image of Islam** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in a single edition in Arabic, English and French.
- **Globalization and the cultural life in the Islamic world** (Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri). The study was published in a single edition in Arabic, English and French.
- **The White book on Dialogue among Civilizations:** the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation published, during the year 2002, a first and a second up-dated edition of the White book, and also a third edition in 2004, in cooperation with the OIC, on the occasion of the Declaration of 2001 the United Nations year of dialogue among Civilizations. It contains all the resolutions, recommendations, communiqués, declarations and executive programmes which have been issued by the International and Islamic Organizations concerning dialogue among civilizations.

## PROSPECTIVE PLANNING

Based on ISESCO's Charter which calls for consolidating constructive dialogue with other cultures for the purpose of civilizational coexistence and respect of cultural identity of all peoples, as well as on the Medium-Term Plan for the years 2001-2009 which attaches special attention to programmes on **dialogue and communication between the Islamic culture and other cultures**, ISESCO has included, under its prospective planning, a complementary field of action titled : "*Active and interactive Islamic Culture*", developed in the light of an all-embracing perception of the dialogue's foundations, its mechanisms and goals.

One of the salient features that have marked Islamic culture over the centuries has been its interaction and openness to other cultures and its propensity to allow a two-way process of give and take. By opening up to them, it has benefited from other cultures and civilizations without for that matter losing its characteristics and distinct specificities. It has given birth to an effective Islamic culture with a human dimension that has enriched the course of other civilizations. Yet, this culture has witnessed moments of crisis and indicators of weakness that fluctuated according to history and geographical location. It also came face to face with crucial challenges that rose with the colonialist hegemony that tried, in all manners possible, to dampen the vitality of the Islamic culture and erase the unique Islamic identity. But the Muslim world is slowly but surely regaining its leading civilizational role thanks to independence and reform movements that have endeavoured to liberate Muslim societies from the evils of westernisation and ignorance. Islamic culture has resuscitated and resumed spreading its universal human message in accordance with Almighty Allah's words "We sent you but for all humanity". (Saba' Sura, Verse 28).

According to the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic world, it is impossible for any culture to survive with no interaction, but, instead, multicultural reality has become the norm. As stipulated in the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, the latter cannot let religious differences or sect affiliations rule in such a way as to hinder the march of cooperation and joint action. As long as the basics and constants are agreed upon and based on the provisions of this Strategy with regard to the openness of Islam to other religions and cultures and the positive effects of this spirit, in view of all this it has been decided to dedicate this field of action to persevering in cultural dialogue activities inside and outside the Islamic world. This inter-cultural dialogue will be crowned by the drawing up of a strategy of rapprochement between Islamic doctrines and strengthening the cultural identity of Muslim minorities and communities within the framework of the strategy of Islamic cultural action in the west as prepared by the Islamic Organization to optimize dialogue between Islamic culture and other cultures and which the Organization had started to implement through reference studies and their posting in the Organization's working languages on the Internet.

Amongst the axes closely related to intercivilizational dialogue, included in this field, there is the axis on interaction between cultures and communication mechanisms between Islamic culture and challenges faced by the Muslim World, while the second axis concentrates on areas of cultural exchange between Muslims and means of



promoting and developing it, and in particular with respect to encouraging exchange of cultural products between Muslims and publicize the various forms of the Muslim Ummah intellectual innovation and activate the role of expatriate Muslim minorities and migrant brains in correcting the image of Islam and transfer the results of scientific and technological progress to the Muslim World.

### **First axis: Interaction between cultures**

The dialogue between the Islamic culture and other cultures is on-going programme in ISESCO's Action Plans. Therefore, the Organization's efforts were geared towards elaboration of studies and publications on the correction of widespread errors about Islam and Muslims carried by publications issued in the West. ISESCO's efforts were also concentrate on dialogue between cultures from an Islamic perspective and on orientalism at large. These efforts also focussed on round tables held by ISESCO in Europe, in order to raise the awareness of western policy-makers about the values of Islam and portray it in its true image, given the fact that Islam is a religion of dialogue and peaceful coexistence among peoples as Almighty Allah said in the Holy Qur'an: "Invite (all) to the Way of they Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious:

For thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance" (Nahl Sura, Verse 124). "God forbids you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For God loveth those who are just" (Mumtahana Sura, Verse 7).

Efforts will be continued under this axis in order to promote the culture of peace within children and youth and broaden the interest of Islamic culture to include contemporary cultural challenges to contribute to standing up to the adverse effects of cultural globalisation and prepare the human resources operating in the field of strategic studies in the cultural area.

#### **A- Dialogue between the Islamic culture and other cultures**

The previous Action Plans devoted several publications and meetings, most important of which was the one on dialogue and coexistence among cultures and civilizations held in July 2000 in Berlin, Germany, and various other publications on the subject in order to address ways of encouraging dialogue between civilizations and religions. The 2001-2003 Action Plan will work on promoting dialogue between the Islamic culture and other cultures, and stress complementarity and solidarity in the face of the joint challenges posed by globalisation. The meetings that will be held in this regard will be an opportunity for the representatives of the Ummah to illustrate the contribution of Islam, as a civilization of tolerance, peace and coexistence. Therefore, the programme would rely much on cooperation with the institutions of the United Nations and the OIC systems, as well as on International non-governmental organizations working in the fields of culture. In order to prepare rising generations for dialogue among cultures, the skills of human resources would be consolidated in this field, in cooperation with UNESCO and the institutions of the OIC system.

## B- Islamic Culture and the Cultural Challenges

Assimilating the nature and the various aspects of the contemporary cultural challenges is a pre-requisite if we are to avoid energy wasting in the settlement of secondary problems of little importance, mainly that they are common challenges among all Islamic countries who should work together to take them up. Therefore, consultation on the typology of challenges and the priority that they should be given will be conducted as part of cooperation with the institutions of the OIC and the Ummah, during sub-regional meetings that will be held in the three linguistic areas. The recommendations issued by these meetings will be submitted to the Member States so that they could take them into account in their cultural policies. Being aware of the paramount importance of the human dimension in the cultural field, ISESCO will hold training sessions destined to train human resources, working in this field.

### **Second axis: Cultural exchange between Muslims**

Since the advent of Islam, Muslims have never ceased to exchange cultural traits, even though the balance, as in any cultural exchange, was not often guaranteed. For ISESCO, this exchange should be organized in a fairly balanced manner, because there is no hierarchy in the realm of culture, especially when we deal with relationships within the same civilization of Islam. Therefore, ISESCO devoted, several activities under its previous Action Plan, to cultural exchange between Muslims and to the ethics of difference in Islam. These activities covered the rapprochement of Islamic madhahib and the revival of the languages of Muslim peoples through publishing glossaries of African languages, such as the Fulani and the Swahili. Other activities were carried out for the Muslim minorities in Europe. The development of a strategy for the Islamic cultural action in the West, adopted in Croatia in 1998, should be highlighted, as well as the draft strategy of benefiting from migrant brains. However, the Organization is aware that the inter-dependence and unity bonds holding together all Muslims, inside and outside the Islamic world, should continuously be consolidated. Cultural dialogue among Muslims should be promoted, support to inter-Muslim cultural exchanges enhanced and migrant brains harnessed. In this perspective, ISESCO intends to implement, in cooperation with the institutions of the OIC system a number of programmes related to “cultural dialogue among Muslims”, “Promotion of Islamic culture of the minorities and communities”, “the activation of exchange of Islamic cultural products” and “the strategy on the brain-drain and the harnessing of migrant brains”. These programmes will be implemented in cooperation with the institutions of the OIC system, as well as with other Islamic institutions and cultural centres of Muslim communities.

### A- Cultural Dialogue Among Muslims

Cultural dialogue is one of the most ancient forms of cultural exchange between Muslims. To ensure a better promotion of this dialogue, ISESCO will assess its cultural, intellectual and religious dimensions, during international sub-regional meetings. However, in order that this dialogue remain a means of mutual understanding, the right to difference should be acknowledged squarely. That is why, the representative

of Member States and of Muslim minorities will be invited to pursue reflection, started during the previous Action Plan, on the ethics of difference in Islam and its impact on the cultural dialogue. The implementation of the strategy on rapprochement between the Madhahib will feature high on the agenda of an international symposium on the subject. Cooperation, within the framework of this dialogue, will be carried out with the Organization's traditional partners of the OIC system and other specialized Islamic institutions.

#### B- Promoting Islamic Culture of Muslim Minorities and Communities

ISESCO's previous Action Plans have given special consideration to Muslim minorities and communities, during several international and local meetings and extended support to cultural institutions, mainly through cooperation with the World Islamic Call Society (Libya). These actions will be carried on and consolidated, with ISESCO's traditional partners of the OIC and other specialized Islamic institutions, for a more fruitful cultural dialogue. To this end, relevant activities will be materialized in the Action Plan through the working out of a strategy of Islamic cultural action in the west. Two coordination meetings of the Muslim minorities and communities will be held, in a first stage. These sessions will make recommendations that will be submitted to all cultural institutions of the Muslim minorities and communities. Support will also be extended to these institutions to facilitate the cultural expression of the Muslim minorities and communities. In this vein, a special attention will be granted to women and children who will benefit from Islamic art and handicraft training workshops, as well as holiday camps to discover Muslim countries. The women training is designed to help them preserve and acquire artistic and handicraft skills that will contribute to the flourishing of the Islamic civilization.

#### C- Promoting Exchange of Islamic Cultural Products

In contrast with the programme on the cultural industries, which focuses only on the exchange of products, the present programme covers all cultural products, mainly painting, calligraphy, handicraft and photography. The promotion of exchange in the field of culture is fraught with obstacles that need to be removed. That is why; a reflection will be conducted by experts from Member States on means to facilitate the movement of cultural products, in cooperation with several of our partners, such as ISESCO, OIF and ALECSO.

Moreover, emphasis will be laid on the promotion of creativity, because quality needs to be enhanced if we are to boost exchange. Consequently, the teaching of certain Islamic arts -such as calligraphy and ornamentation, should be supported or introduced in Member States, where they are less developed or not existing, especially in sub-Saharan states. The proper exchange will be boosted through the holding by ISESCO of exhibitions on cultural products, in cooperation with the countries selected and the Organization's partners from the OIC system and other specialized Islamic institutions.

#### D- Strategy for addressing the phenomenon of Brain Drain and Benefiting from migrant brains

The brain drain has, indeed, social, economic, political and scientific roots that go beyond the competencies of the Islamic Organization. However, the Organization is determined to study this phenomenon by developing a strategy to benefit from the capabilities of migrant brains in response to the instructions of the Organization's Executive Council issued at its 20th Session, on the ground that they bore on the cultural and intellectual flourishing of the Ummah. Accordingly, ISESCO will continue analysing the deep reasons of the phenomenon of brain drain and the means likely to help benefit from migrant scientists.

Such analysis was already started during the international expert meeting of Potsdam, held in June 2000. The meeting paved the way for the working out of a strategy in this field. To this end, international meetings will be held in cooperation with the institutions of the OIC system and other Islamic bodies, with a view to finalizing the mechanisms for implementation of the strategy on the phenomenon of brain drain and on ways of taking advantage from the capabilities of migrant scientists.

#### MECHANISMS OF PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

ISESCO's prospective planning includes a number of new projects and programmes derived from the Organization's education, science and culture strategies and from the major guidelines of the Medium-Term Plan (2001-2009). These projects and programmes aim to keep pace with the progress experienced worldwide in education as well as to promote tolerance, dialogue and democracy, foster the respect for human rights, spread the culture of peace, and develop science, technology, communication and informatics.

To achieve the objectives of this plan, cooperation will be reinforced with international, Islamic, Arab and national institutions of common interest within the framework of equitable, balanced co-operation relations that would ensure the intellectual renaissance of the Muslim Ummah in line with the teachings and values of Islam as well as our civilizational heritage.

With regard to the joint Islamic action at the OIC level, ISESCO will intensify its participation in meetings to be held at the highest levels concerned with taking decisions within OIC, such as the Islamic Summit Conferences, Islamic Conferences of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of Education, of Culture, of Information and of Planning as well as in joint meetings with OIC General Secretariat on co-ordinating policies and programmes.

Likewise, joint action will be carried on with similar institutions and organizations to follow up the implementation of the resolutions of world conferences held during the last decade of the twentieth century, such as Toronto Conference on Global Knowledge, the Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, the World Conference on Science, the World Conference on Higher Education, and the International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education. In this respect, ISESCO will give special consideration to consolidating and expanding the scope of the present co-operation mechanisms and programmes, in priority areas under its Action Plan, with UNFPA,

UNEP (in education, information, population and environment), with ILO (to improve the conditions of teachers), UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO (in the care for children and education for refugees). In addition to that, ISESCO will seek to establish new co-operation relations with other institutions to amplify the impact of co-operation activities.

Similarly, ISESCO will continue its consultations with international, regional and governmental organizations as well as with developmental and regional banks, such as the World Bank, UNDP, IDB, the Arab Development Bank in Africa and other funding Islamic and international institutions. Action will also be strengthened through special accounts that have been opened to implement co-operation activities with several partners, such as the World Islamic Call Society, UNFPA and the Kuwait Waqf Fund for Development Studies.

Action in this field aims to activate the co-operation agreements signed by ISESCO with similar Islamic, Arab and international organizations as well as to look for new partners to implement programmes and activities jointly and obtain additional financial resources.

The Islamic Organization starts a new stage in the development of partnership and the diversification of cooperation by establishing contacts with financing institutions and donors that are able to support large-scale projects, particularly when the difficulties and challenges levelled at the Member States in their march towards global development are too tremendous to be overcome by ISESCO's resources alone. By this new orientation, ISESCO aims at raising awareness about the necessity to gear the interest of financial institutions and reshuffle their priorities so that they might fulfil gradually the urgent needs of the Member States.

## **Dialogue with the Other: Rationale and Principles**

### **The Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Arab Position on Dialogue and Cultural Diversity January 2006, ALECSO**

#### **The rationale for dialogue with “the Other”**

Globalization strengthens the flow of ideas, goods and services between countries and peoples. It is increasingly moving the world towards uniformity in political, economic, social and cultural areas, but such uniformity carries the new inherent risk of destroying cultural diversity. As globalization has reached the stage of unipolar world domination, many peoples and cultures have been marginalized. A number of States, including Arab States, are therefore trying to combat and avert the dangers of globalization and they have held many conferences on political, cultural and economic dialogue, attended by eminent intellectuals who have discussed issues crucial to identifying the shared interests of Arab and other peoples. These issues have included, for example, the problem of identity, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the dangers of failure to distinguish resistance from terrorism, the wholesale fabrication of a clash between Islam and the West, the gap between the rich North and the poor South and problems such as the environment, desertification, unemployment, hunger, disease and illiteracy.

The need for dialogue with “the Other” is more pressing than ever before. The globalized world must therefore be analysed on the basis of such fundamental issues as political democracy, economic liberalism and the construction of a modern State capable of disseminating the up-to-date knowledge and advanced technology that constitute the basis of production in the light of the social and economic changes in the world today.

To engage in dialogue with “the Other”, however, the Arabs must first engage in dialogue among themselves. As neither dialogue takes precedence over the other, they must be concomitant and premised on a firm belief in cultural diversity, self-knowledge and self-questioning, establishment of reference points to ensure constructive dialogue with the Other, the rejection of tyranny and of all forms of ethnic and religious discrimination, and the deliberate choice of a civil State capable of establishing social justice and sustainable human development. Self-dialogue also means preserving cultural diversity within the Arab nation in furtherance of unity, ensuring openness to universal culture and rejecting all forms of fanaticism, isolationism, haughtiness and racism; it is tantamount to acceptance of the Other, to a greater spirit of tolerance and to respect for the spiritual and cultural heritage of all peoples.

The Arabs today are at the heart of world conflict on the political, military, economic and cultural fronts. The Arab intellectual cannot stand idly by while the Arab and Muslim peoples are beset by inauspicious upheavals in the Middle East.

Accordingly, Arab intellectuals are calling for dialogue with other peoples. They

strenuously reject exclusionary attempts designed to cut them off from decisions crucial to the future of the Arab States, peoples and culture.

Through positive and constructive dialogue with “the Other”, the Arabs hope to be at the forefront in a globalizing world, refusing to allow others to determine their place in the world for any reason or on any pretext whatsoever. The Other is not only the West but also all the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with whom the Arabs share many political, cultural and social concerns, including purely human issues faced by all.

At this crucial phase of human history, the Arabs seek a dialogue based on freedom of choice, the right to difference and respect for others irrespective of colour, ethnicity, language, religion or culture. As one of the primary conditions for success Arab intellectuals must therefore, in their discourse, rid themselves of any guilt complex or feeling that they are under suspicion; they must stop being constantly penitent and on the defensive. It must be borne in mind that the dialogue initiated by the Arabs in the age of globalization, is set in an extremely complicated international context in which programmes and plans are to be imposed.

The international environment is so complex that the Arabs, indeed all peoples of the world, must as a matter of urgency engage in dialogue in order to set international relations on a new basis of rationality so that the principles of peace, mutual respect and the right to difference will triumph over the rationale of force and hegemony, over the law of the strongest, and over arrogance and rejection of the Other.

### **Principles for dialogue among equals**

Dialogue with the self and with “the Other” first requires the establishment of shared bases for mutual understanding among human groups with different religious beliefs, political systems and approaches to life. It requires commitment to abide by the rules and principles of rational dialogue with “the Other”, as set out below.

1. Self-knowledge and self-criticism are prerequisites for a firm grasp of the economic, social and cultural situation faced by Arabs today. That situation has resulted in the current state of weakness and division at the regional level and consequent inaction at the international level. The Arabs’ self-image in their dialogue with “the Other” cannot then be one of flawless perfection. It is therefore absolutely necessary to subject Arab Muslim culture today to in-depth constructive criticism and to examine the Arab and Muslim heritage judiciously and critically in order to spotlight its quintessential rationality, openness and tolerance, which could be inputs in the design of a new blueprint for civilization and in the establishment of constructive dialogue on an equal footing with the Other.

The most decisive cultural principles in contemporary and recent history have undeniably originated in modern Western Europe, the cradle of the first industrial and technological revolutions, which redounded to the benefit of the Far Eastern countries in their drive for modernization in the twentieth century. Critical and in-

depth knowledge, understanding and transcendence of Western cultural principles are the only valid means of initiating any positive and fruitful dialogue with the Western countries in Europe and the Americas.

The distinctive feature of Arabs' dialogue with the West is that it is conducted against the backdrop of a new global civilization with human dimensions forged in part by the Arabs and enriched through principles that they devised themselves or derived from the millennia-old traditions of Greek, Persian, Chinese and Indian civilizations. Arab intellectuals must therefore again study and review their heritage from a critical standpoint, in the light of modern science, using new tools to rediscover the Arab Muslim heritage that has made major contributions to the development of modern Western culture and its remarkable scientific advances. They must also revisit the glorious accomplishments of our Arab culture which stand as reminders that we are an integral and indivisible part of modern, contemporary human civilization from which the peoples of the world have benefited far more than the Arabs themselves. Arab intellectuals must return to the rational scientific spirit of their culture if they are to engage on an equal footing in a useful dialogue with the contemporary universal culture.

2. Thorough, critical knowledge of the culture of others must be based on original sources. In the dialogue, all aspects of the Other's present, past and heritage must be understood rationally and in depth, and a structural framework and references established in the light of meetings attended by Arabs in the last few years. Due account must be taken of those meetings, their findings, and related documents published by regional and international cultural and political organizations whose founding principles and references have been defined in part by Arabs.

3. In regard to freedom from any inferiority complex, feeling of guilt or penitence or of being constantly on the defensive, a balanced dialogue, imbued with intellectual and moral honesty, strengthens common bases and leads to the identification of shared values conducive to constructive interaction. A more human form of globalization that respects cultural characteristics and diversity will thus be achieved. One of the principles of dialogue that participants should follow is that of focusing on their shared humanity, acceptance of difference, respect for plurality, commitment to human freedom and resistance to the desire to impose values or principles by force.

4. Dialogue must be based on a scientific rationale and the quest for objectiveness in order to achieve genuine knowledge of, and interact positively with, the Other in order to join forces to build a better future by improving curricula and scientific and university research programmes, while developing cultural exchanges among peoples.

### **Levels of dialogue**

To be effective and positive, the dialogue must address all political, economic and cultural issues and include, without exclusion, all Arab elites with an interest in the matters discussed, in particular:



1. political leaders, policy-makers and representatives of political parties and groupings;
2. religious figures, theologians, researchers into religious faiths, research centres and university institutes specializing in religious affairs;
3. cultural elites, intellectuals, writers, artists and representatives of civil society.

A distinction must be drawn between religious dialogue and cultural dialogue to ensure that the former is conducted in specific meetings for debate among specialists in religious affairs and that religion is not used for political ends. It will thus be possible to keep politics and religion separate.

It will be necessary to form specialist teams, with recognized skills and experience, to lead the dialogues between the Arabs and the States of the European Union, the United States of America, China, Japan, India, the Russian Federation, and the countries of Latin America and Africa. The teams will include specialist Arab elites who have the necessary skills and experience, are capable of initiating sustainable and interactive dialogue with partners from among other peoples and possess in-depth knowledge of the Other's cultural past and present, and economic, political and social development.

Media and cultural institutions should disseminate the principles, methods and goals of the dialogue, highlight its importance and embed dialogue within the national consciousness.

### **The goals of dialogue with “the Other” in the age of globalization**

From the Arabs' standpoint, the primary goals of dialogue with “the Other” at the current stage of globalization must be to:

1. strengthen the foundations of world peace, security and justice; promote civilization and achieve prosperity for all peoples; implement a development policy to deal with all forms of religious extremism, racial discrimination and political hegemony;
2. combat all forms of racism and emphasize human aspects shared with the Other;
3. advance towards detente and a climate of stability for all peoples; reject conflicts that end in bloodshed and all forms of violence; respect local cultures and the right of peoples to develop their culture, safeguard its distinctive features and preserve the heritage;
4. build sound foundations for constantly renewed dialogue while respecting the Other and difference; strengthen the culture of openness, tolerance

and peace founded on justice; establish new international organizations to serve humanity and increase human prosperity; develop existing organizations in order to settle long-lasting disputes by diplomatic means and guarantee the rights of peoples in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law;

5. work to establish new and sustainable forms of fruitful cooperation among the forces of the new international order in accordance with the principles and values identified through the dialogue among civilizations and cultures; reject recourse to force, hegemony, occupation and tyranny by the major powers against weaker peoples and States; denounce unlawful political or military interventionism;
6. involve Arab peoples in a new international alliance to establish a multipolar rather than a unipolar world;
7. establish purely academic Arab institutions for the advancement of constructive dialogue, bringing together Arab specialists in politics, economics, history, sociology, religious sciences, philosophy and the other humanities to promote dialogue among peoples and cultures;
8. launch an ongoing information campaign, through the various media, involving the most eminent Arab journalists and researchers, to publicize best practices in the conduct of a balanced and fruitful dialogue on equal terms with others;
9. show the Arabs in their true light and convey the genuinely glorious picture of Arab Muslim civilization; condemn the erroneous stance adopted by certain extremist groups and the unacceptable acts which they commit in the name of Islam and which are subsequently ascribed to all Arabs and Muslims.

### **The method and ethics of dialogue**

As a condition for successful Arab dialogue with “the Other”, topics of shared human import must be chosen and issues critical of the Other’s sentiment, culture or values must be avoided. If the Arabs respect the Other’s culture, accept the Other’s difference and appreciate the Other’s special qualities, they will be in a position to require “the Other”, in the context of the dialogue, to do the same in respect of their culture and beliefs. It will therefore be necessary to observe the following ethical principles:

1. respect for the cultural diversity of all peoples, for they are all different in terms of colour, ethnicity and culture; acknowledgement of human diversity as a source of enrichment of human existence and culture;
2. avoidance of preconceived ideas while endeavouring to know others as they see themselves; emphasis on unifying factors and rejection of divisive factors; acceptance of the Other’s special qualities;

3. rationality as the overriding principle of dialogue; adoption of an objective approach rather than an approach dictated by emotion or passion; the practice of self-criticism;
4. proper understanding of the context and objective conditions of the dialogue; adoption of feasible recommendations and avoidance of unrealistic projects;
5. primacy and highlighting of the positive aspects of cultures; development of the spirit of self-criticism in order to eliminate the inherited and unfortunate tendency to overrate oneself and look down on the Other; development of an image of the self and of the Other that reflects in-depth mutual understanding; strengthening of the common will to defend human values that ensure positive and creative interaction among peoples and cultures;
6. establishment of dialogue that is level-headed and free from aggression and fanaticism; respect for intellectual honesty; avoidance of bias in favour of the self at the expense of the Other; rejection of the selective application of international rules and treaties; respect for human rights; rejection of double standards; avoidance of statements “for internal consumption” that differ in import from those used in the dialogue with the Other; eschewal of dialogue in pursuit of immediate ends, short-sighted regional or international policies, temporary international balances or the subjection of weaker peoples;
7. reconsideration of the concepts of development and underdevelopment and categorical rejection of any thought of linking them to a particular religion or culture; rejection of stereotypes; methodical and documented scientific analysis of the Arabs’ and the Other’s political, economic and social circumstances without reference to their religious heritage;
8. rejection of the so-called immutable criteria held by one party to determine the development or underdevelopment of the Other’s culture and civilization; acknowledgement that modern Western achievements do not necessarily provide a model to be followed to achieve civilizational progress at the present time, as demonstrated by the experience gained from the modernization of many Asian countries, which should be a source of inspiration for us.

### **Recommendations and conclusions**

Arab Muslim culture is and has always been open to dialogue with other cultures. It has repeatedly throughout history demonstrated its capacity for positive interaction, especially during its golden age. Arabs today are more than willing to strengthen constructive dialogue with other peoples and cultures. If the Arab dialogue with “the Other” is to achieve desirable and effective results in the age of globalization, optimum

use must be made of the recommendations adopted at previous symposia and meetings on the subject so that each symposium will build on earlier achievements.

Furthermore, the current phase is so complicated, on account of globalization, that new methods must be found to ensure success in the dialogue with “the Other”. The starting point must therefore be contemporary Arab culture, drawing on other contemporary cultures and guided concomitantly by the wisdom of its heritage and all that Arab Muslim civilization achieved when it was at its zenith. The causes of its decline must also be understood in order to begin anew under the best possible auspices.

Contemporary culture is so diverse and its fields of knowledge are so interconnected that it constitutes an inseparable whole. Cultural dialogue must therefore cover all political, economic and social aspects and associate, without exclusion, elites in those fields and in the media, representatives of civil society, political parties, women’s and youth associations, research centres and other bodies. The dialogue will thus be broad-based, covering a wealth of subjects, conducted at several levels and capable of addressing matters of crucial importance to the present and the future of Arab and Muslim peoples, such as Arab and Muslim human rights and fundamental freedoms, the mainstays of peaceful democratization in the Arab and Muslim worlds, the recovery of the private sector, optimum use of resources to strengthen the role played by the Arabs and Muslims regionally and internationally, positive dialogue among social stakeholders in the Arab world and greater dialogue between Muslims and Christians and among various Muslim and Christian denominations.

Many Arab elites are well versed in the art of dialogue, highly qualified and equipped with first-hand knowledge of the Other’s culture, gained from its sources. They are perfectly capable of conducting a high-quality dialogue addressing political, economic and social issues of concern to Arabs, Muslims and other peoples in the age of globalization. These Arab and Muslim elites could contribute to making globalization more humane than it is at present. They can, without any doubt, launch political, economic and social initiatives to strengthen dialogue among peoples, thus furthering common interests, preserving world peace and rejecting all forms of political and cultural hegemony and military and economic domination. To ensure that the goals of the dialogue are achieved, it is recommended that:

1. Arab initiatives with emphasis on human beings should be launched in order to reduce the inherent risks of globalization;
2. the Arabs establish basic criteria to distinguish between resistance and terrorism and thus reduce unbridled foreign interventionism;
3. the Arabs effectively participate in the reform of the United Nations and its agencies to strengthen their role in maintaining world peace based on justice, in protecting the independence of small States and in preventing military intervention and hegemony by the major powers;

4. all contribute to the adoption and ratification of international legislation prohibiting racist acts against ethnic and religious minorities in all countries worldwide;
5. rational limits be placed on the principle of international free trade, for it causes untold damage to poor developing countries;
6. all participate effectively in the international cultural movement against globalization in its current form;
7. the Arab endeavour to contribute to the advent and establishment of a more humane form of globalization be encouraged; close cooperation among noble-minded democratic intellectuals be promoted worldwide to halt the increasingly frenetic arms race and action that could trigger new conflicts, especially in the Middle East;
8. the rising generations and associated youth movements be made aware of the need for dialogue; large-scale campaigns be launched to disseminate original and translated books capable of raising awareness among Arab youth of the importance of dialogue with other peoples and of the need to participate in building a safe, weapons-free world open to all forms of interaction among young people whatever their origin.

**Hundred and seventy-fourth session**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Report by the director-general on the follow-up of decisions  
and resolutions adopted by the executive board and the  
general conference at their previous sessions**

**ADDENDUM 2**

**Plan of Action for the Promotion of the Dialogue among Peoples  
and UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism**

**SUMMARY**

The present report is presented as a combined document in response to 171 EX/Decision 52 "Report by the Director-General on the promotion of the dialogue among peoples", and 172 EX/Decision 53 "Status report on UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism through education, the sciences, culture and communication and information".

Decision proposed: paragraph 37.

## I. Introduction

1. By paragraph 3 of 171 EX/Decision 52 on the Report by the Director-General on the promotion of the dialogue among peoples, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to improve, by drawing up a plan of action, the coordination between the activities of the various sectors of UNESCO aimed at promoting the dialogue among peoples through a better reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, and to promote peace and understanding among peoples. The decision also invited the Director-General, to that end, to consult with other partners and organizations, as appropriate.

2. The present report responds to this mandate as well as to 172 EX/Decision 53 regarding a status report on UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism through education, the sciences, culture and communication and information. This decision recognized the link between activities in support of the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, and efforts to discourage and dissuade extremism and fanaticism. It also underlined the importance of implementing concrete and sustained action in the various domains of UNESCO aimed at fostering the dialogue among peoples and countering extremism and fanaticism, and it requested the Director-General to include concrete activities towards that end in the work plans for the Programme and Budget for 2006-2007, once approved by the General Conference, and to report thereon to the Executive Board at its 174th session. To be sure, the challenge is vast - and UNESCO's contribution to that end can but be modest in a longer-term and global perspective. In any case, it is clear that the Organization's contribution aims primarily at the creation of an "enabling environment". The aim is to re-establish dialogue among peoples, relying on the dynamic character of cultures and civilizations and denouncing all forms of radicalization that fix them in a static vision that can be exploited for partisan ends.

3. The General Conference at its 33rd session also adopted resolution 4 "Combating fanaticism, extremism and terrorism", which recognized the link between activities in support of the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, and efforts to discourage and dissuade extremism and fanaticism. The resolution also requested the Director-General to prepare for draft document 34 C/5 an intersectional programme, involving all sectors, to continue and strengthen initiatives in the development of curriculum frameworks and materials for education for shared values for intercultural and interfaith understanding. The General Conference also adopted resolution 38 "Promotion of dialogue among peoples" (follow-up to 32 C/Resolution 30), inviting the Director-General to further the objectives expressed by the General Conference in 32 C/Resolution 30 by pursuing his efforts aimed at the promotion of dialogue among peoples. The resolution also invited the Director-General to attach particular importance to improving the system of humanitarian, including philosophical, education, enabling the development of universal global consciousness, free from racial, ethnic and social prejudices, as fostering such knowledge should become one of the priority tasks of UNESCO.

4. The present report outlines the conceptual, strategic and programmatic complementarities between UNESCO's activities in support of a dialogue among

civilizations, cultures and peoples and those, which contribute to the overall fight against terrorism. It also builds on other major decisions, which have shaped the Organization's profile of action over the past few years. Among these are:

The proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of the year 2001 as the "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations" (resolution 53/22);

The adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 56/6 (November 2001) on the "Global agenda for dialogue among civilizations", underlining the desire to make a concrete and tangible impact, in the medium and long term, through dialogue-based efforts and initiatives and assigning a lead role to UNESCO in the implementation of this resolution;

31 C/Resolution 39 "Call for international cooperation to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism" by the General Conference (October 2001), which outlined UNESCO's potential contribution to the fight against terrorism and affirmed that dialogue "constitutes a fundamental challenge based on the unity of humankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization and each culture";

32 C/Resolution 47 by the General Conference on "New perspectives in UNESCO's activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures", which defined a new framework for orientation and action by UNESCO (October 2003);

31 C/Resolution 25 "UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity" by the General Conference (November 2001);

33 C/Resolution 41 "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" by the General Conference (October 2005);

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (September 2005), the world leaders agreed to "strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security" (para. 81) and welcomed "the Secretary-General's identification of elements of a counter-terrorism strategy"; they further underscored that "these elements should be developed by the General Assembly without delay with a view to adopting and implementing a strategy to promote comprehensive, coordinated and consistent responses, at the national, regional and international levels, to counter terrorism, which also takes into account the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. In this context, we commend the various initiatives to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilizations" (para. 82);



The World Summit Outcome document (in paras. 144 and 145) further reaffirmed the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace as well as the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly and the value of different initiatives on dialogue among cultures and civilizations, including the dialogue on interfaith cooperation. The leaders committed themselves to taking action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and international levels and requested the Secretary-General to explore implementation mechanisms and to follow up on those activities. In this regard, the leaders also welcomed the Alliance of Civilizations initiative announced by the Secretary-General on 14 July 2005. The leaders furthermore underlined that sports can foster peace and development and can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding.

## II. Principles

5. The quest for a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples is deeply entrenched in UNESCO's Constitution and the various programmes and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference since the establishment of the Organization. The promotion of dialogue in the service of peace - in order to build "peace in the minds of men" - is at the core of UNESCO's mission, and the quest for a better reciprocal knowledge of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity forms an important and abiding part of this endeavour. The emergence of new contemporary challenges, threats to humankind, new forms of ignorance and widening gaps in mutual understanding and respect make the need for dialogue among peoples ever more topical, if not compelling. We witness at present a sense of shared vulnerability, an occasional lack of direction and a corresponding commonly felt responsibility to act in the quest for preserving peace and resolving conflicts, especially those caused by lack of mutual knowledge, appreciation and respect. Associated with greater recognition of the place of culture in development and in interactions among peoples, dialogue has become unavoidable today in a globalized world marked by a rise in tensions which some have described as "intercivilizational".

6. UNESCO, which has been assigned in its Constitution the task of promoting the "fruitful diversity of cultures", has always endeavoured to remove the ambiguity between the notions of "culture" and "civilization", even though these terms are used alternatively. At the MONDIACULT Conference (Mexico City 1982), the notion of culture was given its full anthropological meaning, removed from the limited scope of literature and the fine arts, and subsequently defined as "ways of living together" in the report "Our Creative Diversity" (1996). The Organization has always defended the equal dignity of all cultures and has shown that their existence was determined by their capacity to interact with other cultures, such interaction being an implicit form of dialogue. Today the term "civilization", after being sidelined because it was used politically to justify positions of superiority and situations of domination, has made a notable comeback in the field of international relations. Care must be taken, however, not to reduce each civilization to one of its major components, such as language or religion, and to make the point that they are all elements of each culture that constantly take variable forms depending on each individual's and each group's

memory and aspirations. Hence the term *civilization* denotes a universal, plural and non-hierarchical phenomenon. Civilizations have always been enriched by each other, and have evolved through contact, exchange and dialogue with other civilizations.

7. *Dialogue - including interfaith dialogue* - is a core instrument in examining the possibility of overcoming transcultural disagreement and hence of diminishing transcultural dissent. Faced with the contemporary cultural exchange and shifting identities, genuine dialogue captures and absorbs ideas, which originate in other modes, other systems, other experiences. It is a particular willingness to expose and risk one's own ideas and positions. Dialogue is an ongoing process, rather than an "end product".

8. Genuine dialogue, as a holistic process based on openness towards others is vital to creating deeper understanding of the diverse nature of the human family. It involves not only our cognitive capacities, but also all our senses and imagination. It helps to shed misconceptions, dispel misunderstandings and stereotypes, reveal distinctions and diversity, and generate confidence and trust. Thus, dialogue is indeed a specific behaviour and practice, a dynamic process, which is one of the best tools against the threat of a *clash of ignorance* - meaning the ignorance of each other's way of life, values, language, history and heritage; the ignorance of the equal dignity of the human person in all civilizations and cultures; and the ignorance of the unity of humanity and of commonly shared values as a precondition for the maintenance of peace. It is the responsibility of States and of civil society in its entirety to create nationally and internationally a favourable environment in which conditions and procedures for such a dialogue are found together.

### III. Framework of UNESCO's orientations

9. In this vein, UNESCO has over many years initiated and undertaken a considerable number of studies, analyses and initiatives and its governing bodies have adopted several decisions/resolutions on the issue of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples. Document 171 EX/40 provided an account of the various actions by UNESCO in this regard and continues to serve as a point of reference. Following the momentum created by the resolutions cited above - and the renewed focus on the potential role and impact of dialogue and the need to enhance mutual understanding in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 - UNESCO has responded by focusing its **strategy and approaches** on:

- (a) the articulation of a set of commonly shared values (tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for the other, learning to live together, cultural diversity, human rights, democratic governance, and peaceful settlement of conflicts);
- (b) initiatives at the regional and sub regional levels;
- (c) the development of actionable proposals with specific thematic orientations drawing on all the domains of UNESCO;

- (d) multi-stakeholder involvement beyond governmental representation and deliberate engagement of youth and women as well as mobilization of all existing UNESCO networks, such as ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs and National Commissions, the International Association of Universities (IAU) and UNESCO Institutes, Centres and Clubs;
- (e) a renewed exploration of the ways in which religions can contribute to dialogue-related activities; and
- (f) a reflection of how dialogue can serve as an opportunity to advance women's rights.

10. The **modalities** initially used included studies as well as a series of international, regional and national conferences (e.g. New York, Islamabad, Tashkent, Vilnius, Paris, Kyoto, New Delhi, Ohrid, Tirana, Sana'a, Libreville, Issyk-Kul, Abuja, Hanoi, Barcelona, Varna, Rabat and Tunis) seeking to:

- (a) raise awareness among decision-makers and civil society as to the value and potential inherent in dialogue and its underlying principles;
- (b) reinforce and solidify stated commitments relative to commonly shared values in contemporary circumstances;
- (c) formulate concrete action proposals aimed at consolidating the positive side-effects of dialogue and at deepening mutual knowledge and appreciation across cultural, civilizational, geographic and political borders; and
- (d) translate such action proposals into sustained programmes and activities, involving a range of partners.

11. The latter approach and modality were particularly well captured in the **Rabat Commitment**, adopted in June 2005, which aimed at identifying concrete and practical steps in various domains of UNESCO, which the organizations participating in the Rabat Conference pledged to pursue, jointly and individually from 2006 onwards, and which is now spawning already a number of individual and joint action by the partner organizations and thereby strengthening international cooperation. For his part, the Director-General of UNESCO made it obligatory for all programme sectors to concretize in their work plans for the 33 C/5 action outlined by the Rabat Commitment. Other organizations such as ALECSO and ISESCO have done likewise.

12. Governments, decision-makers and different political leaders specifically called for effective activities to counter the cycle of extremism-fanaticism-terrorism. It was widely felt that activities had to move beyond general agreements about the value of engaging in dialogue towards the definition of programmes which would lead to concrete action and results with consequences for how people live together, interact with each other, and understand each other.

#### IV. Components of an action plan

13. The Programme and Budget for 2006-2007 (33 C/5 Approved) contains for each major programme indications - at the levels of sub programmes and main lines of action - about relevant programme action and entry points for a results-oriented dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples as well as entry points for action against terrorism. The provisions in document 33 C/5 have been deepened and broadened in the approved work plans. Sectors were required to integrate the wide-ranging recommendations of the Rabat Commitment, especially concerning education, culture and communication and information. Taken together, they represent an **action plan aimed at fostering a better reciprocal knowledge of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and at promoting peace and understanding among peoples.**

#### Education

14. First and foremost, *quality education* is a vehicle for dialogue. The school and the classroom provide a social space where children may learn that other people of different cultures and different religions and faiths, are human beings like themselves, and are entitled to the same rights and consideration for their dignity and beliefs. In this sense the school may serve to counteract negative influences arising in other areas of the child's experience, which may lead to hateful and intolerant attitudes. Thus, education is understood by UNESCO to have a capability for raising awareness and promoting understanding of fundamental human rights, respect for the "other", and skills for creating and maintaining cultures of peace.

15. UNESCO is resolved and set to continue supporting Member States in the integration of a holistic vision of quality education - as a major goal of EFA - into the development of textbooks and learning materials, especially regarding the elimination of stereotypes on gender, race, religion, and ethnic affinity and related prejudices, inaccuracies and misconceptions in different subject areas. Governments will be assisted in developing high quality learning materials that are linguistically and culturally appropriate, in collaboration with organizations, local communities and key individuals, including the private sector. Particular emphasis will be placed on the development of learning materials for mother tongue literacy (in the framework of the core EFA initiative LIFE and the intersectoral programme on languages and multilingualism). Within the framework of the DESD, Member States will also be sensitized to the need for setting up national book policies that provide sustainable methodologies for equitable access to textbooks and reading materials for both formal and non-formal learning.

16. The approach includes the setting up of databases on best practices and the development of school supervision approaches to the integration of respect for human rights, democratic citizenship, and tolerance. It also includes the exchange of experiences with regard to the design and implementation of educational and curricular policies promoting cultural diversity and fostering community participation. In this context, educational policies fostering tolerance, social cohesion, intercultural understanding, promoting peace, non-discrimination and dialogue among peoples will be highlighted and promoted.

17. In the context of higher education, the focus will be on the development of science and technology education policies, strategies with an overall aim of contributing to poverty reduction, and the promotion of inter-university solidarity for development - for example through the award of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education, the UNITWIN Programme, the Academics Across Borders (AAB) Initiative, which seek to promote inter-university capacity-building and to ensure a more balanced distribution of the benefits of internationalization for higher education between North and South.

18. UNESCO's long-term strategy in the global struggle against terrorism, from the education perspective, should be to scale up existing programmes for strengthening the capacities of educational systems so as to integrate human rights education, internationally shared values, mutual understanding, conflict prevention and critical thinking into every aspect of these systems, including the development of curriculum standards, the training of teachers and the approval of school textbooks. This also includes the elimination of stereotypes, as mentioned above. Lessons learned and best practices from completed and ongoing activities need to be captured and applied in a coordinated way at all levels and involving all sectors of society.

19. The specific objectives and framework for activities on human rights education are clearly laid out in the Plan of Action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. In addition to the need to respect human rights in the fight against terrorism, it is important to promote the separation of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and ethnicity from the use of terror as a tactic to achieve ideological or political ends. To have a meaningful impact, these elements must be integrated into all aspects of curricula, learning materials and teaching methodologies within the social and cultural context of local and national educational systems. They must also be woven into the planning and implementation of non-formal education and all types of learning media, including ICTs. The ultimate goal is to serve as a catalyst for communities to evolve in which all participants have the knowledge, skills and access to channels of communication necessary to have a meaningful voice in an enlightened dialogue and to prevent the spread of violence based on misunderstanding and intolerance.

20. Translating these objectives into concrete action will, *inter alia*, take the following form, also taking into account the recommendations of the Rabat Commitment and other conferences:

quality education integrating dialogue-oriented commonly shared values;

support to Member States in the revision of the content of textbooks, learning materials and curricula through:

- development of textbooks which reflect inclusive pedagogies and diversified content, engaging learners in the acquisition of life skills and universally shared values with a human rights perspective;

- textbook revisions which focus on the portrayal of gender stereotypes, of other cultures and other nations, and on the role of the teacher in interpreting and developing unbiased learning materials free from stereotypes;

inclusion of educational components for the promotion of dialogue as core components of in- and pre-service teacher education;

promotion of national, regional and international cooperation for enhancing peace and security (e.g. through joint teacher-training seminars);

design and implementation of educational approaches capable of influencing the values of young people, their perceptions and knowledge about other civilizations, cultures and peoples across all regions;

preparation of guidelines on intercultural education, building on the research, publications and practice already carried out, such as with respect to world heritage, sociology of religions and civilizations, and history education;

creation of a resource base of materials on good practices in intercultural education which could support teaching practice;

placing greater emphasis on the role of languages and their teaching as a means for intercultural dialogue and paying particular attention to local languages especially in mother tongue literacy, particularly in the context of the new intersectional programme on languages and multilingualism;

encouraging intercultural dialogue in schools through creative learning, art education, drama, role play, song and music - especially through the Associated Schools Project network;

promotion of intercultural dialogue at various levels of education through the conduct of practical projects and exchanges as well as mobilization of existing UNESCO networks, building on the positive results already achieved with existing initiatives such as the “Mondialogo” public-private partnership, which is now entering its second round;

fostering youth encounters, programmes and exchanges, physical education and sports as an important bridge to communication between cultures and youth in particular, and within the framework and follow-up of the 2005 International Year of Physical Education and Sports.

### **Natural sciences**

21. Intellectual cooperation and dialogue among cultures and civilizations will be fostered through specific approaches, such as in the area of water resources assessment and management through applied research, targeted at problems identified at regional levels. This includes training courses on conflict and cooperation in

transboundary river management in different regions and the preparation and sharing of best practices in this area. Furthermore, approaches will seek to promote exchanges between different traditional and local knowledge systems and knowledge holders, to engage young scientists and to focus on introducing dialogue components in science and engineering education, such as through the Mondialogo Engineering Award. The same kind of transboundary cooperation is also promoted by the MAB Programme for the management of shared ecosystems, through the Biosphere Reserve concept. Five transboundary biosphere reserves have been established in Europe and more recently two in Africa. Other transboundary biosphere reserves are in preparation in Asia and Latin America. Moreover, the powerful force of the basic sciences can provide a platform for peaceful dialogue and collaboration - as exemplified by the SESAME Project, a true “science for peace” in the Middle East. It will be developed further through the initiatives of the International Basic Sciences Programme (IBSP). Moreover, cooperation among scientists from countries in conflict will also be promoted and encouraged.

22. It should also be noted that the Science Sector, in cooperation with the *Institut du Monde Arabe*, organized between October 2005 and March 2006, an international exhibition entitled “The Golden Age of the Arabic Science”. Among the items exhibited were original scientific instruments and books that date back to the tenth century, thereby illustrating in a magnificent manner the contribution of the Arabic-Islamic civilization and demonstrating that science is indeed a common heritage and a vector for dialogue among peoples and cultures. Furthermore, the Sector, together with the Culture Sector, organized two international meetings to accompany the exhibition and to explore how lessons from the past could be used to revitalize a scientific culture.

23. Translating these objectives into concrete action will, *inter alia*, take the following form, also taking into account the recommendations of the Rabat Commitment and of other conferences:

- promotion of the establishment and functioning of transboundary biosphere reserves;
- promoting the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms, e.g. joint water management arrangements;
- promotion of scientific collaboration, networking and interaction, e.g. through the creation and strengthening of UNESCO Chairs and university twinning;
- establishment of joint scientific organizations, such as the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization (IPSO), joint research projects and publications and participation in various conferences and meetings;
- updating the UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers to include measures aimed at avoiding the use of scientific exploits for terrorist purposes (together with SHS through COMEST);

- publication of a series on the “History of Water and Civilization” with a view to systematizing knowledge of water management in diverse cultures and epochs;
- organization of itinerant exhibitions, symposia, etc., on the history of science to demonstrate that science is indeed a common heritage and a vector of dialogue among cultures and the publication of a catalogue on the history of Arabic-Islamic science and technology in several languages;
- organization of training courses on cooperation around water resources with different countries sharing a common water body (hydro-solidarity) and across different cultural and religious backgrounds;
- enhancing dialogue between traditional and local knowledge holders, scientists and resource managers and decisions-makers (the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems projects - LINKS);
- publication of the LINKS series on “Knowledge of Nature” on joint scientific and indigenous approaches to biodiversity governance and sustainable development;
- support to the World Academy of Young Scientists, networks of women scientists as well as to the World Science Forum, which deals, among other issues, with the ethics and responsibility of scientists in global, interregional and regional contexts;
- conduct of second round of Mondialogo Engineering Award, involving the development of solutions relevant for sustainable development by intercultural teams of engineering students.

### **Social and human sciences**

24. With a view to promoting philosophical dialogue, enhancing knowledge of different philosophical traditions and enhancing interaction and exchange between regions, philosophers from different regions are encouraged to reflect on the challenges facing humanity today, beyond traditional academic spheres and disciplinary borders. In response to the concern expressed by Member States on the growth of violence at local, national and international levels, UNESCO will also pursue the analysis of the sources and manifestations of contemporary forms of violence, including terrorism.

25. Translating these objectives into concrete action will, *inter alia*, take the following form, also taking into account the recommendations of the Rabat Commitment and of other conferences:

- organization of “Interregional Philosophical Dialogues” promoting philosophical reflection and dialogue with a view to strengthening mutual understanding of the world philosophical traditions and encouraging intellectual partnerships in exploring contemporary challenges to philosophical research in different



regions as well as the related consequences for social stability and peace; two interregional dialogues have already been launched, the first between philosophers of Asia and the Arab States, the second between philosophers of Africa and Latin America;

- organization of “Philosophy Day” highlighting the philosophy of dialogue in all its forms and addressing themes such as “War and reconciliation”, “Transcending cultures”, “The Arab World and the Western World”; given that the next celebration of World Philosophy Day will coincide with the celebration of the International Day of Tolerance, it is envisaged to centre the debates on tolerance and dialogue-related issues;
- follow-up of major symposia held in the past biennium, on the dialogue of cultures and civilizations, such as one co-organized with the Culture Sector on “Cultural diversity and transversal values: East-West dialogue on spiritual-secular dynamics”, held in December 2005;
- elaboration and validation of ethical, normative and educational frameworks for the promotion of human security and the prevention of conflict through various research, training and expert forums in particular in Africa, the Arab States and South-East Asia in cooperation with the African Union, the League of Arab States and ASEAN, and the follow-up, through networking and pilot projects, of the frameworks already defined for Central Asia, East Asia and Latin America;
- creation of women resource centres and building on mutual experiences, in particular in Palestine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## **Culture**

26. Within the broader frame of promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity, including a refinement of approaches to the promotion of inter-faith dialogue, UNESCO will pursue the clarification of concepts and the development of strategic approaches and methodological tools for capacity building in intercultural dialogue.

27. A twin strategy is needed in order to identify the forms and conditions of the dialogue - corollary of diversity - both within and between each culture and civilization:

- (a) to demonstrate the beneficial effects of cultural diversity through recognition of borrowed elements and the enhancement of exchanges and interactions among civilizations, the aim being to prove that cultural diversity is a source of societal enrichment by revealing a wide range of visions of the world, explanations, ideologies and sensitivities which enable each citizen to have several life projects at both the individual and collective levels;
- (b) to promote policies on “living together” without conflict of loyalty due to membership of different cultures, the aim being to show that

“living together puts citizens on an equal footing in regard to respect for differences; equality is indispensable for speaking to, understanding and working alongside each other, but differences remain absolutely necessary for stimulating and revealing each person’s distinctive features.

This twin strategy, detailed by theme and/or by region, is set within the framework of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

28. The initiatives and forms of action below illustrate the ways in which the twin strategy aimed at creating conditions for genuine intercultural commitment will be implemented, taking into account the recommendations of the Rabat Commitment and of other conferences:

- advise governments to envisage as part of their cultural policies the funding of intercultural dialogue activities as well as the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements as platforms for the promotion of intercultural dialogue;
- identify, document and analyse “best practice” approaches and action at various levels in support of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations, in cooperation with other international and regional organizations such as ISESCO, ALECSO, the African Union, ASEAN and the Council of Europe, and integrate dialogue and diversity into the policies and activities of the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development (DESD);
- promote inter-religious dialogue, involving civil and religious leaders in the consolidation of values, the furthering of tolerance, mutual knowledge and reciprocal recognition, with a view to strengthening social cohesion and civil peace (through the new flagship activity “Promotion of Interfaith Dialogue”);
- highlight the complex processes involved in the interaction of cultures, and identify commonly shared transversal values, through educational uses of the History of Humanity project, the Regional Histories and the interregional projects (Silk Roads - now Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia - Slave Route and Roads of Faith);
- preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage as a vector of reconciliation and an instrument of knowledge of the Other;
- establish interregional cooperation networks - for example under the Arabia Plan and the Caucasus Project or through the Euro-Arab Dialogue by National Commissions;
- organize dialogue events aimed at devising conceptual tools for intercultural dialogue and building intercultural competencies (on themes such as “the dialectic of universality and diversity”, “dialogue in history and memory”,

“the malaise of civilizations” and “new territories of dialogue - tourism, cities, suburbs and neighbourhoods”);

- establish a network of UNESCO Chairs for the production of educational material for young people, using arts as a means of interaction (former Roads of Faith project); promote creativity in education; and foster the ability of children to express themselves through arts and interaction without language constraints;
- support capacity building and networking of grassroots cultural organizations, especially those aimed at empowering women and youth;
- clarify the role played by culture in conflict and other threats to human security (poverty, HIV/AIDS, violation of human rights, etc.), and identify obstacles to intercultural dialogue in post-conflict zones and areas of potential tension;
- reinforce action promoting dialogue with and among indigenous peoples in the context of the Second International Decade on the World’s Indigenous People and especially through the new programme “Building Mutual Consent with Indigenous Peoples on Policies and Actions Concerning their Development”;
- promote an agenda of dialogue through cultural festivals, such as global sports events, cultural foray, designation of cultural capitals, art and book fairs, youth festivals and encounters; highlight the power of literature, fine arts, crafts and design by creating opportunities for writers and artists from various cultures to meet; and encourage museums to transform themselves into truly multicultural spaces;
- strengthen human resources in the arts through an international network promoting intercultural cooperation between artists all over the world (International Fund for the Promotion of Culture - IFPC and UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artists);
- promote diversity in the supply of creative works and strengthening of local capacity and access to world markets with a view to encouraging the recognition and protection of the rights of authors and artists;
- draw on contributions by partner organizations of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, including the Creative Cities Network and the International Network for Cultural Diversity, especially facilitating the creation of an enabling environment for artists and producers of cultural goods;
- tap the power of music and musical creativity, especially by promoting live interaction and concerts between melodies and music, instruments and artists from various cultures as an innovative approach to further the human and peaceful dimensions of dialogue;

- encourage private and public partners to undertake the translation and publication of great universal works and classics, among others by extending the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works in order to make major literary works known outside their cultural area of origin.

### **Communication and information**

29. The role of the media in creating and bolstering dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples is to enhance mutual understanding and knowledge among groups and peoples of different cultural, religious and/or social background through the use of both traditional and new media.

30. UNESCO actively seeks to enhance dialogue among civilizations and cultures and supports independent, but fair and balanced media coverage in line with ethical standards. This includes also the development of ethical approaches to reporting in areas suffering from local conflicts and local strife deriving from perceptions of ethnic, cultural or religious differences. The approach comprises training and awareness-raising of media professionals from post-conflict areas and the promotion of dialogue among media professionals in conflict and post-conflict situations, including post-disaster situations, as well as the development of independent and pluralistic media, promoting active participation of the population in peace, reconciliation and development activities.

31. In collaboration with specialized NGOs professional associations, academic institutions and public and private media, UNESCO will also provide advisory services to Member States with regard to the upgrading or introduction of regulatory frameworks for the media that meets internationally accepted standards for the freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Among others, this involves support to the transformation of government media into genuine public service institutions with editorial and management independence, which can directly service different sectors such as education, health, employment, etc.

32. Terrorism creates a culture of fear which may result in serious restrictions on media freedom and freedom of expression. Journalists are inclined to restrain their media coverage both on terrorism and States' counter-terrorism strategies, while governments in search of security may be seen to encroach on basic human and civil rights, such as privacy rights, data protection, freedom of expression and the free flow of information on the Internet and in the conventional media.

33. At the same time media coverage plays a key role in inducing essential dialogues among conflicting parties. Without global media attention, terrorist attacks fail to induce widespread fear among societies. Terrorists have successfully used the Internet as a tool for recruitment, training, organization and communication. Open and critical discussion within and among societies, facilitated by an independent media is both a prerequisite of a functioning democracy and an indispensable cornerstone of any holistic and comprehensive approach to counter terrorism. Media freedom, open dialogue and balanced public information serve as crucial tools in alleviating the societal preconditions for radicalization and in countering precisely the terrorist culture of fear.

34. Translating these objectives into concrete action will, *inter alia*, take the following form, also taking into account the recommendations of the Rabat Commitment and of other conferences:

- promotion and strengthening of freedom of expression as a vital aspect of securing other fundamental human rights, the voicing of cultural identities and cultural diversity, and of guaranteeing the right of everyone to share their opinions, experiences and ideas;
- reinforcing the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples through new and conventional media as a mechanism for the exchange of knowledge between professionals, academics and civil society;
- promoting dialogue, transparency and inclusion through support to independent, pluralistic and professional media;
- promotion of intensified media coverage of dialogue-related issues and a broader use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in dialogue, especially at the community level;
- promotion of virtual dialogues, engagement among schools and students and people-to-people exchanges;
- implementation of the project “ICTs for intercultural dialogue: developing communication capacities of indigenous peoples”, aiming at preserving indigenous peoples’ cultural resources by fostering access to ICTs and encouraging intercultural dialogue;
- launch of twinning projects, addressing ignorance, stereotypes and prejudices in the media at all levels with special focus on managerial, technical and editorial staff and reinforcing “visiting journalists” programmes;
- joint production of broadcast programmes, newspapers, magazines and websites by journalists from different cultural backgrounds;
- providing access to content through joint distribution projects, for instance through satellite broadcasting;
- support operation of networks between media and communication professionals aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect;
- promotion of journalism school collaboration, including the preparation of specialized training courses on cross-cultural journalism and multicultural reporting, as well as exchange programmes for both students and teachers;
- design of training aimed at fighting stereotypes, promoting facts-based journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting;
- training in the use of ICTs for dialogue and learning to live together, especially for and through youth, involving the INFOYOUTH activities.

35. Overall, a broad sense of commonality and agreement has been reached with respect to an overarching framework for the dialogue consisting of a set of universally shared values, which cut across all cultures and civilizations, propounding basic standards of behaviour and providing form and substance to identities. These values constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. Tolerance is a fundamental value that incorporates respect for the Other regardless of diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies, but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity. Other globally shared values are mutual understanding, respect for and the upholding of cultural diversity, commitment to peace, non-violence and peaceful practices, respect for human dignity, observance of human rights, commitment to democratic practices, sustainable development and human solidarity. Despite such purported agreement, there is a need to reflect further on the understanding and the practical meaning of these values from different perspectives thereby countering emerging forms of ignorance, especially in situations of crisis in this era of accelerating globalization. Hence, UNESCO is considering organizing during the current biennium various encounters to allow a more profound reflection of and a renewed commitment to dialogue and the range of commonly shared values. This may involve separate forums with various groups central in dialogue activities, such as youth, teachers, academicians, media and other professionals, parliamentarians, religious and faith leaders as well as scientists.

#### V. Partnerships and consultations

36. Consultations with a range of current and potential partners and organizations have been undertaken with a view to building a broad-based and inclusive approach and to identify possibilities for joint action and partnerships. This process comprised the following activities:

- (a) The adoption, by the General Conference, of the report of the **Youth Forum** (33 C/38), held in Paris from 30 September to 2 October 2005 on the theme “**Young people and the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples** - ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication”. The report - which is the fruit of dialogue among youth from all regions - recognized the initiatives that UNESCO has undertaken in relation to protecting and promoting cultural diversity among the youth, such as “Mondialogo” and the DIGIARTs programme. It stressed that education is key to cultural diversity and that the media and education complement each other and constitute the pulse of society. As such, the report emphasized that efforts must be made by all countries to deploy a media and educational strategy to combat any kind of intolerance and it proposed concrete activities in this regard. It also stressed the importance of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge as well as intergenerational, informal and non-formal education. Furthermore, it highlighted the need to practice dialogue for sustainable development, to support youth-led initiatives in this regard, and to promote dialogue for peace and reconciliation in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance with a view to producing more inclusive societies.

- (b) UNESCO and the Council of Europe have signed a declaration of intent (2005) on the setting up of a platform of inter-institutional cooperation for intercultural dialogue, focusing on programmes and activities in the areas of education, youth and sport, culture (heritage and creativity), communication and information. The objectives of the collaboration are to: (i) exchange information on the activities undertaken by the Organizations in the areas of intercultural dialogue; (ii) promote synergy between the programmes of activities of the Organizations; (iii) agree and implement programmes and activities jointly run by the Organizations; (iv) include civil society as an essential actor in the intercultural dialogue; (v) monitor the advancement of the dialogue between civilizations and cultures; and (vi) agree, where appropriate, on joint practical procedures and means in the implementation of these programmes and activities.
- (c) A long-term multi-organization initiative “**Fostering the dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustained action**” involving as partners ISESCO, ALECSO, OIC, the Council of Europe and selected international and bilateral organizations. It involved educators, journalists, artists, writers, spiritual leaders, scientists, engineers, and various technical experts - bringing together men and women and recognized youth representatives. Concrete action is being pursued in UNESCO’s domains of expertise as outlined above. A broad-based expert-level conference was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 14 to 16 June 2005, under the high patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI, resulting in the adoption of a series of conclusions and recommendations - “the Rabat Commitment” (172 EX/INF.10).
- (d) Holding of specific action-oriented regional/sub regional conferences in Africa and South-East Europe. **A regional African conference** will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, in June 2006, with a special focus on the potential of education and science for the promotion of dialogue. The fourth summit of leaders of **South-East Europe** will be organized by the President of Croatia together with the Director-General in Opatija, Croatia, on 1 and 2 June 2006.
- (e) Contributions have been made by UNESCO to the deliberations of the High-level Group established under the **Alliance of Civilizations** by providing its Chairperson, the former Director-General of UNESCO, with detailed information on UNESCO’s orientations and current activities and by a presentation to a hearing organized by the Group at its February 2006 meeting in Doha, Qatar.
- (f) The Universal Forum of Cultures, Monterrey, 2007, will also include numerous dialogue-relevant activities to which UNESCO will contribute together with other partners. In this regard, consultations have been initiated with the organizers of the **Forum of Cultures, Monterrey 2007** in order to define the nature and scope of a Youth Forum to be

held as part of the programme. In addition to this thematic Youth Forum and Dialogue, Monterrey 2007 offers the possibility for organizing a regional Youth Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean, which may serve as a preparatory event prior to the Youth Forum of the 34th session of the General Conference.

- (g) Active participation in the **United Nations Secretary-General's Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)** as a follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document with a view to strengthening the United Nations system's capacity and coordination to assist States in combating terrorism.
- (h) Cooperation with **Casa Asia** (Barcelona, Spain) on the initiative "**East-West Dialogue**" and co-organization of an annual international conference on selected dialogue-related themes like globalization, religion, arts, culture, racism and xenophobia. It is expected that the initiative will result in the creation of a permanent Forum for East-West Dialogue in Barcelona to serve as a platform for enhancing international cooperation and dialogue between Europe and Asia.
- (i) On 23 and 24 August 2006, in Yokohama, Japan, UNESCO and the **United Nations University** will jointly hold a conference on Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Science and Technology. The conference, which is the third of its kind on the globalization theme, will bring together eminent experts from different regions to discuss the ways in which globalization influences science and technology and how peace and sustainable development can be fostered worldwide, drawing on the potential of dialogue and scientific collaboration.
- (j) Supported by the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Dialogue among Civilizations, Mr Ara A. Abramian, promotional materials relative to UNESCO, such as the "**World Heritage Quiz Game**" and the "**History of UNESCO Game**" are being produced with an educational quiz game company in Russia, *Eureka*. The preparation of an innovative quiz from both a cultural heritage perspective and from a chronological/historical perspective will encourage young people to broaden their knowledge of other cultures and cultural heritage, thereby combating stereotypes and unveiling ignorance. Pilot versions were already tested during the UNESCO Youth Forum in October 2005.



**VI. Proposed draft decision**

37. The Executive Board may wish to consider adopting the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Having considered document 174 EX/5 Add.2,
2. Underlines that the main objective of UNESCO “to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication” continues to be exceedingly pertinent;
3. Welcomes the report by the Director-General;
4. Expresses its support for the broad-based action outlined in the work plans for document 33 C/5 to foster a better reciprocal knowledge of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and thus to promote peace and understanding among peoples;
5. Invites the Director-General to continue exploring opportunities for new and innovative approaches and to enlist new partners in the implementation of the various activities;
6. Agrees to keep this issue under regular review, including during the preparations for the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (34 C/4) and the Programme and Budget for 2008-2009 (34 C/5).

**Hundred and seventy-fifth session**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO  
DECISIONS  
AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS  
SESSIONS**

**UNESCO action in support of the dialogue among peoples**

**SUMMARY**

This report is intended to inform the Members of the Executive Board of progress in the follow-up to 174 EX/Decision 4, Part III - Plan of Action for the Promotion of Dialogue among Peoples and UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism.

Decision proposed: paragraph 55.

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. At the 174th session of the Executive Board, the Director-General submitted a Plan of Action for the Promotion of the Dialogue among Peoples and UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism (174 EX/5 Add. 2). The document reviewed major decisions which had shaped the Organization's profile of action pertaining to the dialogue among peoples over the past few years, and listed different principles and values underlying UNESCO's manifold dialogue-relevant activities. The report further outlined the conceptual and programmatic complementarities between UNESCO's activities in support of a dialogue among peoples and those which may contribute to the overall fight against terrorism. Finally, the report presented entry points for and components of an action plan involving all of UNESCO's five programme sectors, as contained in the Approved Programme and Budget for 2006-2007 (33 C/5 Approved) and the related approved work plans for the biennium.

2. By 174 EX/Decision 4 (II), the Executive Board then invited the Director-General to report to it at its 175th session on the links envisaged between the various activities proposed concerning the dialogue among peoples, operational procedures for intersectorality and the planned timetable. The Director-General was further invited to continue exploring opportunities for new and innovative approaches, to promote existing partnerships in this field and to enlist new partners in the implementation of the various activities, such as, as a matter of priority, the Alliance of Civilizations.

3. The present report responds to this decision by five major themes under which the sectoral action listed in 174 EX/5 Add. 2 is being grouped, which lend themselves to intersectional action from a conceptual and policy point of view and which are - or could be - implemented jointly by two or more sectors. These themes are:

- Promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity;
- Building a framework for commonly shared values;
- Strengthening quality and values education;
- Countering violence and extremism;
- Fostering dialogue for sustainable development.

## **II. MAJOR THEMES FOR INTERSECTORAL ACTION**

### **1. Promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity**

4. Genuine dialogue is a process and a specific practice based on openness towards others, which is vital to creating deeper understanding of the diverse nature of the human family. It involves not only senses and cognitive capacities, but also helps to shed misconceptions, dispel stereotypes, reveal diversity and generate confidence and trust. As a tool against the threat of a "clash of ignorance" - ignorance of other values, history, languages, heritage and religions - dialogue is a dynamic vehicle for promoting the unity of humanity.

5. Dialogue - including interfaith dialogue - is the key to examine the possibility of overcoming transcultural ignorance and disagreement and hence of reducing the potential for transcultural dissent. As the capacity of human beings to feel empathy and compassion for others goes deeper than the mere coexistence of different ethno-cultural groups, dialogue occurs when a recognition of the different “other” is through cultural, social, scientific and political discourse.

6. In this regard, it should be recalled that the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) contains a commitment to promote the “fruitful diversity of cultures” in a spirit of dialogue and openness to counter the risks of identity-based isolationism.

7. Several programme sectors and UNESCO field offices will collaborate - or continue to collaborate - on this thematic area, which will address the specific contextual requirements for intercultural dialogue in different regions (in particular in the Arab world, South-East Europe and the Great Lakes region); collect practices conducive to cultural pluralism at local, national and regional levels; promote dialogue between individuals and leaders of different religions, faith and convictions in order to eradicate stereotypes and enhance shared values and mutual understanding.

8. The Culture Sector’s flagship project on intercultural and interfaith dialogue, carried out in close cooperation with the Education, Social Sciences and Communication and Information Sectors, focuses on building shared values for respect of religious beliefs and tolerance and integrating them into school curricula and textbooks, while taking into account the cultural dimension of human rights (related to the debate on the right of conviction, belief and expression in one’s culture). Other relevant activities will concentrate on the sharing of common values pertaining to specific scientific disciplines in different cultural settings through dedicated science networks and information management systems on natural resource use; the development of methodological and statistical tools to understand better how to foster pluralism and avoid cultural exclusion and marginalization; and various pedagogical tools to promote tolerance such as the Roads initiative. Research policy networks will provide policy advice on issues of racism and discrimination, the enjoyment of cultural rights, culture and women’s rights, and the management of international migrations. A special focus is being given on interaction with youth, to be deepened at a forthcoming workshop in Cyprus. UNESCO, together with the World Conference of Religions for Peace, will also support the Inter-religious Women Association in the Horn of Africa, involving the training of women for conflict mediation and social work for sustainable development, especially with slum dwellers and displaced persons.

9. The creative use of media and information channels, including broadcast networks, can promote a better knowledge of other cultures and people and provide background and context for individuals or groups to look critically at themselves and in an open-minded spirit at others. To counter stereotypes there are three roles that the media must be capacitated to fill: to report, to provide analysis, and to defend the right to do so; to reflect on and promote the core values of tolerance and mutual understanding; and to question consistently conventional wisdom and particularly to query decision-makers.

10. Close and fruitful cooperation with a host of partners is being pursued, most notably between the Culture and Education Sectors in the framework of the newly established network of 15 UNESCO Chairs addressing intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. An agreement to establish the UNITWIN Chair on Inter-religious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding was signed at Headquarters in May 2006. A number of other cooperation and partnership platforms have been established with partner institutions such as ISESCO, ALECSO, the Alliance of Civilizations, ASEM, the Permanent Forum of Indigenous Peoples, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures, United Cities and Local Governments.

11. A new challenge of relevant intersectoral action has recently been taken up with respect to the complementarity of the principles of freedom of expression and the respect for cultural and religious symbols pursuant to the adoption by UNESCO's Executive Board of 174 EX/Decision 46 on *respect for freedom of expression and respect for sacred beliefs and values and religious and cultural symbols*. The Director-General has set up in June 2006 a dedicated Intersectoral Working Group under his chairmanship to advance work in this area through concrete action.

12. UNESCO will focus in particular on cultural diversity as a tool for dialogue and reconciliation in post-conflict affected countries as an entry-point for restoring mutual understanding and enabling dialogue and reconciliation among divided communities, through shared responsibility to protect cultural heritage in all its forms.

13. The World Heritage Education project represents a particularly important strand of action, which aims at promoting young people's awareness on world heritage preservation and promotes reciprocal knowledge and appreciation of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. The dedicated pedagogical kit for teachers has become exceedingly popular on a global scale, having already been translated into 28 languages.

14. Many manifestations of the intangible cultural heritage, such as oral traditions, performing arts, traditional knowledge and skills, rituals, festive events or traditional craftsmanship, are under threat. The 2003 Convention explicitly places its safeguarding programme within the context of sustainable development (Article 2) as due to its living and representative character, the safeguarding of the intangible heritage mainly depends on ensuring the viability of practices, expressions, knowledge and skills, rather than the protection of the cultural product itself. The future implementation of the 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage could make an important contribution to the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples by encouraging States Parties to promote the function of intangible heritage in society and to integrate it in planning programmes.

15. Relevant intersectoral collaboration includes (i) the building of dialogue between traditional and local knowledge holders and scientists and resource managers by the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) project led by the Science Sector; and (ii) the organization of "Interregional Philosophical Dialogues", led by the Social and Human Sciences Sector, as platforms for strengthening the mutual understanding

of the world philosophical traditions and encouraging intellectual partnerships. The annual “Philosophy Day” underlines the actual and potential contribution of philosophy to dialogue in all its forms.

16. In essence, dialogue is a matter of self-expression. Only when means are given to people, groups or nations to express themselves on their own conditions and perceptions does a conducive platform for dialogue exist. In that regard a successful intersectoral initiative comprises the lifelong learning course on “Religions, Media and Communication”, led by the Culture and Communication and Information Sectors. Both professional media and citizen information initiatives, including the proliferating online blogs, are influencing the ways in which people look at others. Frustration over a lack of means to expression may cause indifference vis-à-vis the democratic process, resulting in apathy or, in the extreme, giving rise to violence. Hence, the need to promote an enabling environment for free self-expression as a building block to buttress cultural and intercultural dialogue.

## **2. Building a framework for commonly shared values**

17. A framework of commonly shared values is being reflected and applied at all levels of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, including interfaith dialogue, with a view to fighting intolerance, prejudice, stereotypes, mutual suspicion and ignorance, and to developing the foundations for a lasting peace and respect for human dignity.

18. As a result of a series of international events - conferences, seminars, workshops and summits - and declarations over the past years, a broad sense of commonality is emerging with respect to such an overarching framework for the dialogue. It consists of values such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. Dialogue shall aim at spreading - in particular through education - the purposes and principles which the Millennium Declaration has reaffirmed as “timeless and universal”. These fundamental values concern basic standards of behaviour, they provide form and substance to identities and they constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. Tolerance is a fundamental value that incorporates respect for others, regardless of diversity of belief, cultural background, and language. Other globally relevant values are: respect for and the upholding of cultural diversity, commitment to peace, non-violence and peaceful practices, respect for human dignity, and observance of human rights.

19. In other contexts, a focus on transversal values - those shared by two or several cultures - may lead to mutual learning and understanding rather than a focus on universal values. Transversal values are those that are shared by two or several cultures as, for example, respect for human life, universal education and the aspiration towards the primordial “sacred”, which extends well beyond specific religious or cultural traditions. All of these values belong to the common heritage of humanity and should be promoted as such. Transversal values may serve to bridge distant cultural horizons thereby providing a possible basis for dialogue among and between societies with diverse cultural backgrounds. In that regard, consultations and cooperation are ongoing with the Council of Europe, the Alliance of Civilizations, ISESCO, ALECSO, and ASEM.

20. The challenge is to consolidate and reaffirm these values and to translate them into reality through concrete action, such as through the UNESCO Peace Education Programme that has been elaborated and implemented in cooperation with UNHCR and INEE. Intercultural dialogue, exchange and understanding among young people is also being promoted through the public-private partnership *Mondialogo* launched by UNESCO and DaimlerChrysler in 2003. It consists of the Mondialogo School Contest for students between 14 and 18 years of age, drawing on the Education Sector's ASPnet and the collaboration of National Commissions; the Mondialogo Engineering Award for young engineering students and engineers, driven by the Science Sector and World Federation of Engineering Associations; and a dedicated interactive Internet Portal as a project platform ([www.mondialogo.org](http://www.mondialogo.org)).

21. The objectives and commitments of the multi-stakeholder initiative "Fostering the Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Action", launched by UNESCO in collaboration with ISESCO, ALECSO, IOC, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD) and the Anna Lindh Foundation for Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue in 2005, are captured in the Rabat Commitment. It has generated a number of individual and joint actions by the partner organizations, and served as an intellectual, political and practical point of reference for leadership at the African Regional Conference on the Dialogue among Cultures, Civilizations and Peoples (held in June 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria), the third High-level Group meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations (held in May 2006 in Dakar, Senegal), and above all for activities envisaged in UNESCO's own work plans by all sectors for the current biennium.

22. The fourth Regional Summit Forum of South-East Europe, held in June 2006 in Opatija, Croatia, was devoted to "Communication of Heritage". It offered an opportunity to consolidate and define future scientific and cultural cooperation on a special component of cultural corridors in the region - the cultural and natural sites. The Summit explored the potential for enhanced cooperation within South-East Europe in order to promote a common European heritage. Special emphasis was placed on the consolidation of knowledge of existing activities and initiatives so as to achieve greater regional cooperation and a synergy and coordination of existing projects and initiatives - whether projects developed by UNESCO, the Council of Europe or European Union or projects specifically initiated in or for this region. The Culture and Natural Sciences Sectors will follow up with action.

23. The media can play an important role in linking together countries in regions torn by civil strife, supported by UNESCO's Communication and Information Sector. An important outcome of UNESCO's South-East Europe Strategy is the establishment of the ERNO news distribution network, linking South-East Europe public service broadcasters and ensuring a regular exchange of television programmes among all countries of the region. The ERNO network is also being used for training of television staff and joint production initiatives, among them a very well received programme on the Trafficking of Women in South-East Europe. The ERNO network can serve as a model for scaling up broadcast and webcast initiatives in other regions.

24. Finally, the intersectoral Slave Route Project works towards enhancing knowledge on the cultural interaction generated by the slave trade and slavery, and intensifying research on and documentation of this interaction in neglected geographic areas, such as the Caribbean. The project objectives call for interdisciplinary action (a) to put an end to the silence surrounding this tragedy in history; (b) to highlight its consequences and the interactions generated between the peoples and their cultures; and (c) to contribute to the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among peoples. These are being translated into the following concrete activities:

- (i) deepening scientific research on the slave trade and slavery (CLT) and increasing understanding of contemporary forms of slavery (SHS);
- (ii) developing curricula and educational material with a view to introducing the teaching of this tragedy at all levels of education (ED);
- (iii) promoting the contribution of Africa and its diaspora (CLT, AFR);
- (iv) promoting living cultures and artistic and spiritual expressions resulting from the interactions generated by the slave trade and slavery (CLT);
- (v) preserving the archives and oral traditions related to the slave trade and slavery (CLT, CI);
- (vi) Creating inventories of, and preserving, tangible cultural heritage, places and sites of memory linked to the slave trade or slavery, and promoting memory tourism based on this heritage (CLT).

### **3. Strengthening quality values education**

25. Quality education is a central vehicle to prepare and instil values for dialogue. It raises awareness and understanding of fundamental human rights and generates respect for others and conveys skills for creating and maintaining cultures of peace. The approach also draws on the objectives and framework for activities on human rights education, which are laid out in the Plan of Action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. UNESCO's action comprises support to Member States in the revision of the content of textbooks, learning materials and curricula, taking into account diverse learning styles, life experiences, and cultural and linguistic diversity. The portrayal of gender stereotypes, other cultures, nations and religions will be reviewed and rectified through dialogue and education, facilitated by the use of media and ICTs for both formal and non-formal values and peace education. Likewise, the role of the teacher in interpreting textbooks and developing learning materials that induce and prepare learners for dialogue, and teach them to think critically, will receive attention.

26. Intercultural education is an integral part of quality values education. Perspectives, ideas and strategies are set out in the "UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education", currently in print, and "Learning from the Practice of Intercultural Dialogue - An Analysis of Tools, Methods and Approaches". The intersectoral work



will draw on the new ASPnet campaign “All Equal in Diversity”, launched in March 2005 to mobilize schools against racism, discrimination and exclusion. Lessons learnt from the UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN Programme will be used to reinforce practical and effective action in promoting intercultural education. The experiences gained from the Slave Route project in terms of its scientific research on the slave trade and slavery and the preparation of relevant curricula and educational material will equally contribute to this thematic area.

27. UNESCO’S work on textbook development and revision is guided by its new “Comprehensive Strategy for Textbooks and Other Learning Materials” (in print), which outlines a rights-based approach to policy development, quality assurance and access. Its work on the reciprocal revision of history and geography textbooks is firmly grounded in this approach, with plans for regional seminars for textbook authors, publishers and planners aimed at producing plans of action, guidelines, and resource kits. Other activities will take place under the umbrella of the “Euro-Arab Dialogue”.

28. Formal and non-formal heritage education is conducive to creating an environment for nurturing tolerance and mutual respect through an enhanced knowledge of the plurality of cultural heritage, and its importance for memory and identity, in particular for younger generations. The joint CLT-ED project entitled “Heritage in Young Hands”, referred to already in paragraph 13 above, provides an effective educational and promotional tool for schools that are part of UNESCO’s global school network ASPnet. The importance of education in the fight against ignorance and prejudice as well as for bridging differences has been recognized in online preparatory discussions for the regional fora on Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue, while acknowledging gaps between different cultures due to different languages and systems of values. These discussions led to recommendations to use history as a way of showcasing different people’s coexistence and contribution to the common heritage of humanity. It also focused on the challenges and rewards of living in a multicultural society.

29. A Task Force on languages and multilingualism has been set up in January 2006 in order to implement UNESCO’s new intersectoral strategy towards the promotion of linguistic diversity as cornerstone of the world’s cultural diversity and an essential condition for sustainable development. In this framework, follow up to the recommendations of the 2006 Khartoum Summit of the African Union is a special feature. UNESCO was requested to support the African Union in the organization of events foreseen on the occasion of the celebration of the year 2006 African Year of Languages. Moreover, cooperation with the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) will strengthen national and regional institutional capacities for language preservation at African universities, national research institutes and regional institutions; promote multilingualism and the formal and non-formal teaching of mother-tongue language in school curricula; and foster the implementation of appropriate national language policies.

30. In the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), UNESCO is coordinating the activities on a global scale to promote multilingualism

in cyberspace. It is essential that the Internet provides content in a multilingual manner reflecting the rich linguistic diversity of the world and renders it possible for everybody to express their opinions, concerns and creativity in the language of their own choice.

#### **4. Countering violence and extremism**

31. Contemporary trends of violence and extremism as well as the threats of conflicts call for a better mutual knowledge of other cultures and peoples and effective support for reconciliation in countries emerging from post-conflict situations. UNESCO is therefore also focusing on activities which may contribute to countering the cycle of violence-extremism-fanaticism-terrorism. As had been pointed out above, UNESCO considers that its activities in support of a dialogue among peoples are relevant for and complementary to the efforts of tackling this nexus. Yet, such activities will have to move beyond general agreements about the value of engaging in dialogue towards action which leads to genuine results with consequences for how people live together, interact with one another, and understand one another. This includes the elaboration and validation of ethical, normative and educational frameworks for the promotion of human security and the prevention of conflict through various research, training and expert fora in different regions.

32. To that end, UNESCO also participates in, and contributes to, the development of the United Nations Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy within the framework of the inter-agency Counter-Terrorism Task Force. This task force was established following the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, in which world leaders agreed to "strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes, as it continues to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security" (para. 81). UNESCO's contribution to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global counter-terrorism strategy" (27 April 2006) focused on the dialogue among civilizations, educational strategies and the role of the media.

33. All available tools should be employed to reach out and involve a wide set of political, cultural, religious and other societal actors. The dynamic aspect of cultures has to be constantly underlined, in order to avoid their radicalization or isolation, which may cause communitarian excesses and fuel conflicts. Cultural incompatibility is often considered to be the cause of conflicts when it is in fact rather being misused for particular ends. The aim is to demonstrate that culture is by its very nature a factor for peace, engaging everyone in a voluntary and permanent dialogue.

34. In this context, innovative policies in favour of cultural pluralism, which is the political response to the reality of cultural diversity, are currently being elaborated in order to mainstream the principles and values of cultural diversity and dialogue. Actions to clarify concepts, learn lessons from good practices and develop new methodological tools are undertaken in order to sensitize the public and decision-makers to the necessity to respect the diversity of cultures, in particular regarding the usage of images, while making sure that freedom of expression and of beliefs and

basic human rights are being respected. To this end, platforms of consultation with a host of partners - the Council of Europe, the Alliance of Civilizations, ISESCO, ALECSO, ASEM - are being developed and refined.

35. Moreover, action will be taken to enhance the understanding of multifaceted roots of violence, fanaticism and terrorism, including:

- research activities: the newly created UNESCO Chair at Monash University (Australia) is undertaking a regional mapping of potential conflicts in the Pacific region, with a view to analysing, among others, how misunderstandings, combined with feelings of communitarian exclusion, can fuel terrorist inclinations;
- intercultural education for young people and the development of pedagogical material and extracurricular textbooks for children and youth living in sensitive areas;
- training courses aimed at the media and social workers in contact with immigrants (University of Geneva, Switzerland), in order to enhance intercultural understanding and engagement in dialogue;
- addressing urban issues, cultural diversity and local policies, and environmental sustainability in cities;
- researching issues relating to violence and developing regional responses to incidents in youth violence.

36. Special efforts will be made to highlight the relationship between the assistance to free, independent and pluralistic media - both traditional and new - and their fundamental role in preventing violent conflict and promoting mutual understanding and knowledge among groups and people of different cultural, religious and/or social backgrounds. To that end, UNESCO will support media productions, the creation of cross-cultural journalist networks and the development of ethical approaches to reporting as well as training and awareness-raising of media professionals - especially in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. In the fight against terrorism it is important to promote the separation of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and ethnicity from the use of terror as a tactic to achieve ideological or political ends. The approach therefore also draws on the objectives and framework for activities on human rights education which are laid out in the Plan of Action for the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

37. Culture must also be placed at the heart of the debates on conflict prevention and human security so as to better understand its role in conflicts and in other threats to human security (such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking) with a view to providing decision-makers and communities with culturally appropriate tools to counter violence and extremism. Identifying obstacles to intercultural dialogue in different regions, in particular in post-conflict and post-disaster countries (Middle East, Great Lakes region, South-East Europe, post-tsunami area) will also be part of the effort.

38. UNESCO will equally pursue its contribution to the prevention of conflicts and the reinforcement of human security in various countries of Africa, led by SHS. It will also seek to identify obstacles to intercultural dialogue in different regions (Arab region, Africa, Asia), in particular in post-conflict and post-disaster areas (Great Lakes, Balkans, post-tsunami area) and develop tools and approaches for intercultural competency and training relevant stakeholders (traditional leaders, indigenous people artists, NGOs, cultural patricians). Rebuilding free and independent media forms part of this initiative because of the crucial need to ensure unbiased information in post-conflict situations and to engage the local and regional media actively in social reconciliation processes.

### **5. Fostering dialogue for sustainable development**

39. Today, a multi-level and multi-pronged dialogue must be initiated and fostered both among and within civilizations with a view to developing the foundations for a peaceful and prosperous life of future generations. Peaceful cooperation and synergies can be advanced by focusing on water, sustainable development and human security at large. Water with its transcultural, symbolic significance not only has the power to unite, but also to cause tensions and conflict. Sustainable and peaceful development is therefore only possible through open and continuous cooperation and dialogue among actors of States, civil society and different faiths.

40. One important entry point for concrete activities is the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), for which UNESCO has been designated lead agency of the United Nations system in the wake of the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. While there is overall agreement on the concept of ESD, there will be nuanced differences according to local contexts, priorities and approaches. This requires dialogue, addressing the complexity and interconnectedness of problems such as poverty, wasteful consumption, environmental degradation, urban decay, population growth, health, conflict and the violation of human rights. This vision emphasizes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to developing the awareness, knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future as well as changes in values, behaviours, production and consumption patterns, and lifestyles.

41. Sustainable development is based on a vision of human beings in harmony with local cultural aspirations. Cultural diversity therefore promotes sustainability. Culture in general, and cultural diversity in particular, face three new challenges, which UNESCO seeks to reflect in its approach to sustainable development: (a) globalization has brought about new forms of inequality which tend to foster cultural divergence and conflict rather than cultural pluralism; (b) States are increasingly challenged to respond to cross-border flows of ideas, images and resources which affect cultural development; and (c) the danger of cultural and other types of exclusion as a result of the growing digital divide and disparities in literacy.

42. This requires education to be in the service of culturally sensitive development based on respect for cultural diversity and the practice of dialogue. To this end, education for learning to live together for a common future must take into account

cultural aspirations, identities, different ways of living, value systems, traditions and beliefs. It has to nurture creative capacities and cultural expressions of human beings, in their multiple tangible and intangible forms. Education - from a cultural diversity perspective - must recognize that learning happens in all spheres of life and encompasses multiple “traditional” and new learning spaces in today’s societies.

43. The role of science is important for mutual cooperation and exchange among people from different cultures, traditions and religions, especially with respect to strengthening sustainable development. Science as common heritage of humanity has always been a vector of dialogue and understanding among scientists of different cultural and religious backgrounds. This is further being demonstrated through action that led to the establishment of the World Association of Young Scientists (WAYS), the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization or the SESAME project.

44. UNESCO is also collaborating with Casa Asia, Barcelona (Spain) to strengthen policy dialogues among decision-makers and civil society stakeholders with a view to promoting the principles of dialogue, multi-stakeholder involvement and dialogue as a vehicle for advancing women’s rights. A round table on *Women’s rights and empowerment* will be organized in the context of Casa Asia’s East-West dialogue scheduled to be held in Barcelona in October 2006. This round table will focus on differences and commonalities in women’s quest for empowerment and gender equality. Women panellists from East and West and different age groups will question commonly held beliefs and assumptions that may distort the perception of Eastern and Western societies as well as the contribution of gender equality to sustainable development and world peace.

45. Youth is a particular target group for dialogue efforts in general and in particular with respect to sustainable development. Within the framework of DESD, UNESCO and UNEP collaborate to foster “youthXchange”, which is an educational project focusing on sustainable consumption for young people. Cross-cutting themes include educational issues and World Heritage, promoting intercultural dialogue among youth through ICTs. The intersectoral project “Great Volga River Route” induces dialogue among ASPnet secondary school students from 16 countries situated along the Volga River. The report adopted in October 2005 by the fourth UNESCO Youth Forum “Young People and the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples - ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication” stressed the need for the organization of regional, national and local fora in order to empower young people from all walks of life and in all regions of the world. Youth delegates focused especially on the need to elaborate themes and related recommendations for action by and for young people on intercultural and interfaith dialogue so as to promote peace as well as education for sustainable development. The first of several regional youth fora took place in the context of the First Pacific Youth Festival in July 2006 and the second will be held in Cyprus in November 2006.

46. UNESCO also works actively on education for sustainable development in the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) within the framework of the follow-up of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of

the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the implementation of the commitments of the Youth Forum held at the Mauritius SIDS meeting. The Culture Sector contributes to DESD in SIDS through “Understanding the role of cultural diversity for the sustainable development of SIDS”. Dialogue-relevant activities are equally made through support to creative industries (music, cinema and audiovisual production and multimedia) with a view to increasing the appreciation of cultural wealth in LDCs. Furthermore, during its 29th session, the World Heritage Committee adopted the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS to coordinate and develop World Heritage-related activities in the islands of the Caribbean, Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Ocean.

47. UNESCO also contributes to building ICT-based communication capacities of indigenous communities through participatory elaboration and production of local content. Intersectoral collaboration is undertaken in the framework of the LINKS Project, documenting and promoting the transmission of indigenous knowledge systems and establishing intercultural dialogue on new ways to ensure that indigenous knowledge systems are recognized and respected in their contribution for sustainable development. The exploration of gender relations in indigenous communities is also undertaken on an intersectoral basis with a view to enhancing the understanding of the implications for human rights and cultural diversity. Collaboration with the United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues forms an integral part of the intersectoral effort, which includes cultural mapping with indigenous communities through interdisciplinary approaches and electronic platforms for local content production. This can be broadened by including interfaith dialogue with indigenous communities and the learning/teaching of histories of indigenous communities.

48. In line with the recommendations of the Asia Media Summit, held from 9 to 11 May 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and the Rabat Conference on “Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations Through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives”, held from 14 to 16 June 2005 in Rabat, Morocco, a number of focused and concrete information and communication activities are now an integrated part of UNESCO’s biennial work programme for 2006-2007. These include:

- increasing the diversity of contents to include marginalized populations, groups and communities in the communication and information process; promoting the use of broadcast network systems; engaging public and private organizations to promote community use of ICTs;
- facilitating the creation/production and uploading/transmission of local content; ensuring women’s full and equal access to decision-making about the use of media and ICTs; providing access to content through joint distribution systems and empowering local minority communities to use media, including ICTs, for obtaining and disseminating information aimed at learning how to live together;
- reinforcing dialogue through both new and traditional media and building the requisite capacity of journalists; offering courses in ethics and professional

standards in journalism schools with special regard to intercultural and interfaith communication; promoting intensified media coverage of dialogue-related issues and a broader use of ICTs in dialogue and training of youth populations in the use of media and ICTs for dialogue.

### **III. Intersectoral linkages and engagements with partners**

49. Throughout the text of the present document, numerous references have already been made to intersectoral linkages and engagements with partners in the implementation of various intersectoral programme activities. In accordance with the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and in cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO will continue to explore innovative inter-agency engagements and initiatives with partners at local, national, regional and international levels, including actions related to reinforcing interfaith dialogue.

50. At the policy level, particular efforts have been made to enhance UNESCO's cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations. UNESCO was represented at the last two meetings of the High-Level Group established by the Alliance. The Director-General addressed the Group at its Dakar meeting in May 2006, sharing UNESCO's approach and experience in the area of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples (see <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001461/146137e.pdf>).

51. Further specific cooperation is envisaged for the Universal Forum of Cultures, scheduled to be held in 2007 in Monterrey, Mexico. This Forum envisages a host of activities around dialogue themes, especially involving artists and youth (see also document 174 EX/5 Add. 2).

52. In future, UNESCO will strive to respond proactively to the growing need to sensitize young people to intercultural dialogue. This will build on the set of recommendations contained in the Youth Forum of the 33rd session of the General Conference devoted to the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, which was approved by 33 C/Resolution 38. The implementation of concrete opportunities for engagement could include the elaboration of a cross-sectoral programme for the production of new and innovative pedagogical materials adapted to all continents. Involving a broad range of national and civil society partners, the initiative could be based on "good practices", such as the worldwide Mondialogo School Contest and the ASPnet school-based activities.

53. UNESCO will also place emphasis on further enhancing the knowledge of the relationship between cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the context of globalization. To this end, a combination of thematic and geographic approaches (Arabia Plan, the Great Lakes region, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Middle East, South-East Europe) are currently being pursued, guided by the overarching objective of "learning to live together" particularly relevant for post-conflict areas and sensitive zones. Efforts in this regard will be informed by a new intersectoral research project "Learning from the Practice of Intercultural Dialogue - An Analysis of Tools, Methods and Approaches".

#### **IV. Timetable**

54. The timetable for the implementation of the above intersectoral activities and action together with various partners will stretch over the entirety of the remaining 2006-2007 biennium (33 C/5). Progress will be reported to the Executive Board in the six-monthly results-based reports by the Director-General on the implementation of the Programme approved by the General Conference (EX/4 and C/3 documents at the end of the biennium). As the Director-General has suggested in his preliminary proposals for the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 (see document 175/EX 22 Part II.A) the designation of "Fostering mutual understanding, reconciliation and peace" as one of six overarching objectives for the Organization, with two related strategic programme objectives (a) promoting dialogue within and among civilizations; and (b) support to countries in post-conflict situations, it may be expected that - subject to the approval by the General Conference at its 34th session - the activities and orientations outlined in the present document will be continued, deepened and refined over the next six-year medium-term period and concretized in three subsequent C/5 documents.

#### **V. PROPOSED Draft decision**

55. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 174 EX/Decision 4 (II),
2. Having examined 175 EX/5 Add.,
3. Welcomes the information provided about the links and approaches envisaged among the various sectoral activities in support of the dialogue among peoples;
4. Endorses the themes proposed for future intersectoral action by the Organization;
5. Expresses its satisfaction with the broad-based partnerships envisaged in the implementation of the activities at the various levels and in particular through joint efforts with the Alliance of Civilizations;
6. Requests the Director-General to report on the activities undertaken and results obtained in the context of his report at each session on the implementation of the programme adopted by the General Conference (EX/4 document).



## **ISLAMIC DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

*(Adopted by the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers)*

Organization of the Islamic Conference

Algiers - December 2004

### **Introduction:**

1. At the threshold of the third millennium, our present-day world is witnessing sweeping changes and attendant dangers that are growing at an ever accelerating pace which rebounds on the stability of human societies and mortgages the world's peace and security, owing in the main to the adverse effects of the creeping phenomenon of globalization that hews out the world's cultures, civilizations and peoples on domineering standardized cultural and political patterns while taking no account of their specificities and particularities, in total disagreement with the basis of joint interaction. The United Nations and such international organizations as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- are exerting efforts to press forth inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue, as a unique alternative of the prevailing culture of violence and exclusion of the other, while globalization is triggering conflicts that jeopardize the culture of dialogue and mutual understanding, in utter breach of the very spirit of the international law and the international conventions that acknowledge the cultural and civilizational specificities of a nation and a people and guarantee the right of individuals and groups alike to preserve their cultures and civilizations.

2. The urge to gear dialogue among peoples and cultures towards serving the universal objectives of the humanity as a whole is strongly felt today more than any other time in the past. It is all the more a pressing need since it is not easy to see why constructive cooperation and actual inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue have any significance in an ever changing world without the principle of cultural diversity being confirmed as a recognizable fact. In order to build up a common future in which peace, solidarity and coexistence prevail, there is no other alternative but to ground people in dialogue along with the respect and preservation of cultural diversity.

3. It is the universal virtues of brotherhood, justice and tolerance, which all civilizations share that should be sublimated and established in the minds and behaviours, as a common heritage of humanity on which the drive towards a true inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue should build. Such a dialogue cannot be improvised. It must be built on the basis of an accurate identification of its preconditions; achieving the objectives targeted, as well as consolidating its principles and determining the methodology to be adopted with pinpoint accuracy, and the actors involved in giving it substance as a main groundwork and fundamental principle of international policy, and an effective means for enduring world peace and security.

4. Today, humanity is aspiring towards disentangling itself from the concatenation of debilitating conflicts and the maze of struggles that force the international community into accepting a particular world state of affairs degenerating into the worst of all

possibilities that mortgage the present-time human civilization, galvanizing into activity the hostile policy of extremist fanatics against peace, justice and the peoples of the world. In fact, it is all the more an incessant urge to promote inter-civilizational dialogue, since it has been retaining interest as a universal issue that is not limited to any specific historical context; and since dialogue has become a strategic choice that opens up wider horizons for humanity as a whole for building a new world wherein the immense breadth of the civilizational achievements which constitute, indeed, a common heritage for the whole humanity is accessible to all.

5. Despite its positives and possibilities, globalization constitutes a formidable challenge to the common heritage of humanity, which makes it indispensable to consolidate solidarity among peoples and promote their cultural diversity, through adopting a methodology that is based on dialogue as a means conducive to raising awareness about the values shared among the peoples of the world, within the framework of a human concept that seeks consolidation and dissemination of these principles. This method should seek, likewise, mobilization of the Islamic world's actors such as governments, in addition to non governmental organizations and bodies, the aim being to turn to good account their achievements and to benefit similarly from the principles and objectives such regional or international organizations as ISESCO are working towards elaborating. This should be achieved:

- In accordance with the resolutions issued by the United Nations on intercivilizational dialogue and cultural diversity, along with the relevant international covenants, declarations and conventions, on top of which is the International Declaration on Cultural Diversity which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2001, and wherein the governments, together with the UN and the concerned NGOs are called for planning and implementing appropriate cultural, instructional and social programmes geared to consolidating the concept of inter-civilizational dialogue;
- In consistence with the principles of the Tehran Declaration issued in December 1997, by the 8th Islamic Summit Conference which stressed that the chief support of the Islamic civilization, throughout history, has been peaceful coexistence, joint cooperation, mutual understanding among civilizations, as well as fruitful and constructive inter-religious dialogue that is receptive to other ideas; and placed emphasis on the need to establish mutual understanding and interaction between the various cultures, in keeping with the Islamic precepts of tolerance, justice and peace;
- Drawing on the resolution issued by the 9th Islamic Summit Conference which was held in Doha, in 2000; with due reference to the deep consideration expressed therein for the invaluable initiative taken by His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of the 8th Islamic Summit Conference, to establish intercivilizational dialogue as part of fulfillment of the aspirations of the Islamic Ummah, in perfect keeping with its deep-rooted traditions of tolerance and receptiveness;
- In response to the calls, communiqués and declarations issued by the symposia and conferences convened by ISESCO within the framework of its several action plans, in collaboration with the regional and international organizations, on inter-

cultural, inter-civilizational and inter-religious dialogue and the awareness it is likely to raise about the common values shared by all peoples and about the need to promote mutual understanding:

- Pursuant to the objectives of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, which was adopted by the 6th Islamic Summit Conference, Dakar, 1991, and by the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, in its amended version, in Algiers 2004; and based on its contents which lay emphasis on respecting cultural diversity and strengthening means of inter-civilizational and intercultural dialogue founded on the principles of tolerance, coexistence, justice, peace, joint cooperation, and the mutual respect of the world's civilizations, cultures and peoples.

**Accordingly,**

The Member States taking part in the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers endorse the principles and objectives enunciated in the present Declaration on cultural diversity, as part of expression of the conjoined will of the Islamic world and the concern the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference expressed to join efforts with the international community and support the efforts directed towards laying down solid bases for inter-civilizational dialogue and establishing its principles, through practical and methodological conceptions of inter-civilizational dialogue. The OIC Member States seek also to contribute to grounding this inter-civilizational dialogue on humanistic ideals and principles culled from the spirit of Islam and its clement fundamentals.

**The principles and objectives:**

**Article 1: Characteristics of cultural diversity and inter-civilizational dialogue.**

Today more than any time in the past, the world's religions and cultures are called upon to sustain joint efforts directed towards furthering dialogue and strengthening coexistence in such a way that may benefit one another; while casting away the causes of discord and disdain, on the basis of the universal values and principles of love, brotherhood, tolerance, mutual respect, solidarity and justice. It is these universal virtues and principles, which all religions share, that should be sublimated and instilled in the minds and behaviours, as a common heritage of humanity, through a true dialogue among cultures and religions. In fact, constructive cooperation and actual dialogue among civilizations and cultures should not be conceived of without the principle of cultural diversity being firmly established. Moreover, the clash of civilizations is not a fated fact, because violence and the ignorance of realities as well as the fear of the other are not a predestined fatality. They rather spring up and develop through education and culture, which pattern the behaviour and reactions of individuals. Therefore, there is no alternative but dialogue for the preservation of cultural diversity and cultural plurality, and human beings all have to determine on living together with a free will, regardless of their different beliefs.

Therefore, we ought to clinch to and stand up for our cultural and civilizational identity, while interacting with the other civilizations and cultures. We are, likewise,

called upon to review our perception of the other and cast away the stereotype views of a people, their culture and civilization. In fact, equal dialogue among nations and peoples entails that we honestly judge ourselves without in any way cutting loose from our religious and cultural identity, because without sticking to our values it will not be easy for us to understand fully the values of the other and fathom his culture. In fact, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue cannot abide unless it draws on tolerance and mutual respect and if it is not receptive to the plural cultural convictions and beliefs. As Islam is a divine path and embodies a human way of life, Muslims are confident that since culture is the expression of the genius of a people, there is no justification for conceiving of a culture as being either sublime or mean and lowly. Each culture has its own genius, and is distinctly prolific and enlightened. Therefore, the following should be emphasized:

- Cultural and civilizational diversity is a grace bestowed from God; and as Muslims, we are taking on a humanistic mission towards laying down the bases of international peace, and we ought to lend support to the universal civilizations for the benefit of the whole humanity.
- Each culture has its own value and enjoys a special status. And none can deny the contribution of each culture to the enrichment of the universal cultural heritage. In fact, each culture has to be concerned with striving to bridge the gap of misapprehension among civilizations, so as to ward off the hostile tendencies and smear campaigns that are distorting the image of Islam and Muslims and charging the clement religion of Islam with false accusations.
- There is no justification for believing that there is such a thing as an enemy culture or nation; and the preconceived ideas of the other cultures and civilizations, in addition to the stereotype images of nations and peoples should be debunked. It is also important to give a wider hearing to the call for turning to avail the profitable possibilities of globalization, shunning its adverse effects and avoiding its looming threats.
- Cultural diversity constitutes an immense wealth that should not generate discord, tension and rejection of the other. However, it has to be a means to broaden the scope of joint cooperation, conducive to shoring up concord, rapprochement, as well as to reducing differences and defusing conflicts through peaceful means.
- The outcome of the material and non-material cultural heritage which observes cultural diversity in all its aspects is what constitutes the common heritage the whole humanity draws on to strengthen international concord, for an abiding international peace.

**Article 2: Cultural diversity, as a factor of comprehensive and sustainable development.**

Making cultural diversity a recognizable fact, and working towards preserving it within the framework of an international policy founded on the principles of dialogue, peace, as well as on rejection of the logic of power and hegemony, subsumes a condemnation of all forms and sources of violence and terrorism, including state terrorism. It involves also the respect of the right to life, dignity, freedom as well as the right of resistance which occupied peoples are entitled to, in order to defend their

entity and culture. Cultural diversity also integrates the need to distinguish legitimate resistance from terrorism.

Cultural diversity can be a fundamental factor of development, mutual understanding; peaceful coexistence, economic and social progress, redressing disparities and disorders existing in the present international order, respecting and protecting the environment; in addition to preserving the material and immaterial heritage of all peoples whose cultural and civilizational heritage is subjected to attempts of distortion, forgery, obliteration, destruction and confiscation, fighting against poverty, raising development standard and production rate, consolidating democracy, and extending popular participation in decision taking in all administrative, cultural, economic and social sectors.

At this present-time juncture which is characterized by the increasing dependence of cultural industries on new information and communication technologies that strongly direct artistic creativity today, pressure on poor countries should be relieved as regards their debt so that they could allocate additional resources to support local cultural production, restore balance to their markets flooded with the inundating influx of cultural products of rich countries, and bridge the digital divide between them and the developed countries; the aim being to make them productive of culture and contributors to the edification and enrichment of universal civilization.

**In this respect, emphasis may be laid on what follows:**

- Encouraging cultural tourism as a form of cultural and civilizational dialogue among peoples, and holding symposia and conferences to develop cultural communication, in an endeavour to learn directly about the culture of the others, respect the diversity and plurality of creative means, contents and expressions, introduce Islamic culture and secure presence in the global space of communication.
- Cooperating closely with economic and financial international organizations to lay down a long-term programme aimed at reducing the widening gap between the rich and the poor countries which threatens cultural diversity, diminishes the efficiency of the use of new information and communication technologies in the service of development and hinders the serious and effective participation of poor countries in the administration of a fair global economic order.
- Elaborating an executive conception of the action plan issued by the World Summit of Information Society, with its first and second phases, in such a way that enhances digital solidarity between all peoples.
- Using the moral values of the different cultures in drawing up and working out a global system of ethics, and recognizing the diverse sources of knowledge and cultural diversity as basic characteristics of human society and as an asset indispensable to the progress of humanity.
- Economic and social disparity between peoples requires taking fair measures and working out appropriate developmental strategies and establishing an environment that allows construction of balanced human relations and constitutes an efficient framework for dialogue among civilizations, away from all forms of violence and extremism.

- Cooperation at the international and Islamic levels through implementing cultural activities in order to face the challenges of urban development, globalization and current technological changes, encourage the establishment of research and information networks in the field of cultural policies for development, including studying the setting up of an observatory of cultural policies and cultural diversity and reconsidering cultural policies with a view to modifying priorities, programmes and working methods and making of the cultural dimension a basic constituent of development.

### **Article 3: Cultural diversity, civilizational interaction and globalization**

The crucial events we have inherited from the early nineties of the past century and which changed the economic and social infrastructures of many a people, in the context of unipolarity, globalization and the concatenation of the amazing changes that pervaded the world in the beginning of the present century, constitute on the whole a contemporary map full of political, economic and social contradictions on the one hand, and of cultural challenges facing all nations on the other, especially nations with deep-rooted, diversified and rich history and cultural and civilizational heritage, including the Islamic Ummah. Moreover, the development of communication means and of computer technologies, the shortening of distances and the rapprochement between peoples have contributed to precipitating globalization and providing unprecedented material and technological resources that have, in their turn, contributed to the emergence of a unique dominating model in all areas in such a way that eliminates the cultural particularities of societies and might obliterate the basic elements of their identity and civilization.

One of the adverse effects of globalization is the endeavour to standardize culture at the universal level. However, globalization does not consist only of negative aspects. It also offers new opportunities of communication, interaction and rapprochement. In fact, the Islamic Ummah should make use of such opportunities and possibilities to introduce its culture and civilization, forge ahead with progress, enhance the concept of cultural diversity and assert the concept of cultural identity and the complementarities of the constituents of Islamic culture and their interaction among themselves as well as with the other nations.

With a view to avoiding the negative impacts of globalization, cooperation relations should be strengthened for a correct understanding of the mission of the Islamic culture as well as for enhancing the belonging thereto and pride thereof. Likewise, creativity, diversity and effective participation in the contemporary cultural production should be carried on, by means of promoting the active role of the different elements working in the cultural fields, at every level and in every sector. The aim is to enable the Islamic Ummah to protect its culture, understand the other's culture and wield new communication and information technologies that are considered today as prerequisites to blazon forth the voice of the Islamic world, to transfer its culture to the other and to engage with the latter in a constructive dialogue.

**Therefore, we assert:**

- That the process of globalization requires considering cultural diversity and civilizational plurality as a stimulus of globalization, not as an obstacle thereto; it would be interesting to respect and take account of the cultural and civilizational particularities in a world that has become a global village, thanks to the information and communication technology, and tends towards homogeneity.
- That the values of plurality and cultural diversity are not a justification to exclude the other; on the contrary, the opportunities and possibilities offered by globalization should be exploited to further solidarity, exchange and coexistence between people.
- That it is important to joint efforts to build a world that is characterized by communication, information and mutual understanding and wherein the diversity of cultural values, moral perceptions and behaviours encourages the emergence of a true culture of peace.
- That it is equally significant to support international efforts to elaborate a world convention on the respect of the creative human diversity, with a view to warding off any attempt aimed at exterminating a language, culture or race, which will be bound for reference use to developmental strategies in the future.

**Article 4: The contribution of Islamic culture and civilization to enriching cultural diversity**

The Islamic culture, as history attests, is a culture of progress, creativity, knowledge and action that has always respected and dealt with diversity. The diversity of cultures and civilizations and their coexistence within the large Islamic world, despite its different languages, cultures and civilizations, is the best historical evidence of the culture of dialogue and tolerance that Islam has always called for, regardless of the changing junctures.

Characteristically, Islamic culture and civilization consider “the quest for knowledge a religious duty”, despite the relating difficulties. This has contributed to enriching universal heritage in the various fields of science, arts and literature. Islam, indeed, attaches great importance to knowledge and urges the quest for it, even in distant parts of the world.

The world’s different generations are inspired by the various contributions of the Islamic Ummah and of its radiant civilization that has always endeavoured to make additions to the universal civilization and worked towards enhancing progress, peace as well as material and moral prosperity. The Islamic civilization is also the cradle of several fields of knowledge and science. Accordingly, materializing these principles requires:

- Establishing prizes and grants to be awarded to institutions and individuals who have made distinguished intellectual contributions in the field of enhancing dialogue among civilizations and introducing Islamic civilization, its lofty values, its everlasting landmarks, and its qualitative contributions to the universal civilization.

- Activating communication with the world by attaching importance to Islamic cultural centres abroad, supporting international research centres that deal objectively with Islamic issues, setting up more similar institutes and centres in the most important capitals of the world, holding joint symposia, organizing cultural caravans and fairs and stepping up cooperation with active international satellite and electronic networks.
- Encouraging great publishing houses in the world to translate Islamic masterpieces and serious studies into world languages, supporting the circulation of such works and encouraging the joint production of TV programmes, documentaries and reference works on the diversity and richness of the sources of Islamic culture and its immense contributions to enriching universal civilization, promoting mutual understanding and learning about the other.

#### **Article 5: Cultural diversity by and for all**

The growing trend of the outside world towards the use of the means of electronic communication technology in the field of culture, of fostering diversity and supporting inter-civilizational dialogue is heading progressively and surely towards the Islamic world. This compels us to prepare the young generations from now on to these sweeping changes so that the culture of Internet becomes a part of the intellectual training of these generations. The ultimate objective consists in enabling Islamic people to become producers, instead of consumers, of these technologies. Furthermore, cultural diversity can contribute to enriching cultural life by endowing it with more homogeneity, as long as it does not cause division and melting. Actually, culture develops, progresses and establishes itself firmly.

#### **In this respect, emphasis should be laid on what follows:**

- Respecting the religious rites and holy books and texts, written and oral, of a people or a nation, as they constitute foundations of the different religions and faiths, and respecting also mankind's unity and cultural differences.
- Continuing the promotion and modernization of the institutions that publicise culture in the Islamic world and carrying out integrated structural and organizational reforms in all cultural areas so that these can cater for the needs of cultural action.
- Laying down laws and legislations that forbid the abuse, looting, damaging of and illegal trafficking in heritage, and considering such practices as downright affront to cultural security.
- Enhancing the global dimension of Islamic civilization through attracting foreign investment which makes foreign markets accessible and helps benefit from the advanced expertise available in the developed countries, at the level of production and that of the diverse sources of this production.

#### **Article 6: Cultural diversity, and the Islamic perception of human rights and the culture of justice and peace**

Since the inception of Islamic culture and civilization, the Muslim peoples have



been keen on highlighting their will and emphasizing their determination to engage, together with all other peoples on an equal footing in terms of rights and obligations, in building a world that basks in the warm glow of peace, justice, equality and tolerance, and which is based on respect for human rights and the preservation of the material and moral fundamentals of human dignity. The aim is also to consider cultural diversity and the right to difference an essential component of human rights, as prescribed by Islam and enunciated in international laws.

Muslim peoples are proclaiming once again, as they have always been doing, their adherence to the culture of justice, peace and tolerance, since peace is a prerequisite to the development of peoples and coexistence between civilizations, and as it is impossible, according to this Charter, to dissociate peace from justice. Peace, in fact, implies respect for human rights, a collective and genuine will to coexist on the basis of the common values shared by humans, and respect for the peoples' rights to safeguard their respective identities, cultures and civilizations, which only enriches the cultural and civilizational heritage of humankind altogether.

Peace requires respect for others as well, along with their cultures, civilizations as well as religious and ethical systems, together with the actual will to rationalise the use of national resources and to protect the environment, while taking into account the interests of the coming generations. This calls for emphasizing what follows:

- Safeguarding and advocating cultural diversity and helping poor countries safeguard their heritage and rehabilitate their civilizations are the key to establishing the culture of peace as they are an essential and mandatory component in settling disputes and fighting all forms of terrorism and extremism, be they originating from individuals, groups or states.
- Working towards forming stronger bonds between Islamic culture and other cultures than they used to be in the past, and towards enhancing interaction between them, in a bid to achieve security and peace without all the more jeopardizing cultural diversity and innovation amidst these peoples.
- Considering the right to cultural diversity and plurality, as well as mutual respect for the civilizational and cultural components as a prerequisite to a balanced dialogue and peaceful coexistence, as well as supporting the system of the cultural rights of peoples.

### **Article 7: Cultural Diversity and Creativity**

The preservation of cultural diversity requires unstinting endeavours, including the appropriate orientation of cultural policies and support of their projects and initiatives as well as the promotion and development of cultural industries, the extension of support to cultural actors and innovators, the preservation of cultural properties and services, let alone the adherence to all forms of cultural heritage, be they tangible or intangible, and the enhancement of the ability to innovate and communicate at the international, national and regional levels, especially through partnerships between the private and public sectors and civil society, through an approach based on tradition and openness.

Mastering the new information and communication technologies (NICT) should contribute to enriching the Arabic language and the languages of Muslim peoples so as to promote them, with a view to keeping abreast of the latest scientific developments worldwide.

In the same vein, translation should contribute to promoting cultural interaction and exchange and the transfer of modern sciences and techniques, especially those pertaining to computer sciences and the upgrade of cultural heritage.

**In this respect, we should call for what follows:**

- Energizing the creative powers available to Muslim peoples, through a vigilant cultural policy which takes stock of cultural production in the Islamic world, analyzes its constituents and ensures its documentation and upgrading into an industry that confers extra quality on it, further enriches it and gives it an added value.
- Providing the appropriate conditions to help innovators assert themselves as self-sufficient and liberal producers in society who are qualified to invest in new fields likely to provide them with self-generated resources.
- Promoting cultural exchange and interaction between innovators in Islamic countries and their counterparts from other countries, giving impetus to creativity, and ensuring the effective and balanced participation of innovators in the various cultural activities.
- Sponsoring promising talents among the youth in various Islamic countries and taking care of the cultural material designed for children and teenagers in terms of content and the cultural media used, in such a way as to ensure their qualification, provide them with various tools of self-immunization, and facilitate their integration into the knowledge-based society as well as their training in deploying and capitalizing on intelligence.

**The role of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO):**

As ISESCO is the main instrument of publicizing this Declaration, following up its implementation and assessing the status of such implementation, it is called upon to:

- Work towards disseminating the principles enunciated in this Declaration, publicize them and see to it that they are observed and complied with by governmental and local community bodies, and urge the states of the Islamic world to integrate them into their cultural and developmental policies and to take them into account in their relations at the inter-Islamic and international levels.
- Redouble efforts directed towards promoting cultural interaction and intercivilizational dialogue, and encouraging cultural diversity inside and outside the Islamic world.
- Develop cooperation and partnership with the national, regional and international cultural institutions and bodies, so as to further coordinate views and stances and unify goals and objectives, with a view to promoting culture, consecrating such

principles as justice and peace, and sensitizing the public opinion and international community to the adverse effects of globalization.

**The role of the Member States:**

- To feature the issue of cultural diversity and dialogue among civilizations as an axis in the programmes on the celebration of the capitals of Islamic culture.
- To energize the role of universities in publishing this Declaration and achieving its objectives, through conducting researches and studies, concluding partnership and twinning agreements, designing the appropriate curricula and programmes, and creating chairs specialized in this field.
- To mobilize universities, intellectuals, writers, artists, film makers, youth, women and third-age movements, local community organizations and associations, the private sector, journalists and media figures, with a view to enhancing the culture of justice, peace and dialogue among cultures and religions, as well as peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding, through mechanisms, means and methods that suit all parties.
- To discharge an effective role aimed at highlighting such values as dialogue, coexistence and tolerance in Islam, and advocating the principles of cultural diversity, through cooperation with the specialized organizations and bodies in the Islamic world, while abiding by the conventions and laws in force in their respective countries.

## **The Danish Center for Culture and Development's relations to the Arab and Muslim world**

DCCD works for a culturally diverse world based on respect for human rights and tolerance.

DCCD's mandate is to support the inclusion of the cultural dimension in international development co-operation and specifically to support cultural exchange with the developing countries in order to achieve greater understanding and dialogue. DCCD collaborates with partners in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, as well as in Denmark and the Western world.

DCCD collaborated in 2000 - 2002 with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to formulate a strategy for inclusion of the cultural dimension in the Danish international development co-operation. This strategy is entitled "Culture and Development" and since 2004 DCCD has assisted in the implementation of the strategy.

The Board of Directors of DCCD in 2004 decided to prioritise the establishment of cultural dialogue with the wider Middle East through a number of separate initiatives over a three-year period. DCCD thus made a special effort to include the wider Middle East when implementing DCCD's policies and programmes.

### Programmes and events mainly taking place in Denmark

#### **Bilateral cultural exchanges**

The Center has supported cultural exchange and the dialogue between Denmark and the Islamic world. More than 40 projects have been supported in 2005, 2006 and 2007 with an equal number of different recipient organisations. They cover music, theatre, dance, visual art, film, sports, craft and design, inter-disciplinary projects and other projects. A number of the projects benefits from synergies with the Danish Cultural Institute in Damascus, Syria and the Danish-Egyptian Dialogue Institute in Cairo, Egypt, with whom DCCD have close collaborations.

#### **Festival - Images of the Middle East**

The festival aimed at increasing cultural understanding, foster dialogue and co-operation with the Middle East. It focused on the theme "identity in the process of change" in the wider region from Morocco to Iran. The festival took place in August-September 2006. It included programmes with more than 400 artists from the region covering music, theatre, dance, literature, film, visual art, photography. In addition the festival organised a comprehensive educational program including e.g. educational materials and guest teacher programmes for schools; media programs for journalists, editors and media-institutions including exchanges and co-productions; as well as dialogue programs with meetings, conferences and workshops.

The program took place in Copenhagen and eight other Danish cities and one Swedish city. It was agreed with the Danish National Public Service Broadcasting that contemporary cultures of the wider Middle East was featured in the National Broadcasting TV and Radio resulting in several hundred hours of broadcasting. Almost 1000 articles were published in the Danish media and around 50 key media across the Middle East provided coverage of the festival. The festival was opened by its patron His Royal Highness Prince Joachim of Denmark, the Minister of Development Cooperation Ms. Ulla Tørnæs and the President of the UNESCO General Conference Ambassador Dr. Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan. The external evaluation of the festival showed that more than 27 pct. of the adult Danish population heard about the festival indicating a national impact.

#### **Event - Islam Expo:**

Another significant, but separate program taking place 19-21 June, 2006, was “Islam Expo”. An intensive three-day programme in Copenhagen aimed at presenting cultural aspects of Islam to Danes by Muslims themselves. Islam Expo was opened officially by the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Per Stig Møller, the Head of Cabinet of ISESCO, Dr. Ahmed Saïd Ould Bah and Dr. Al Dubayan, Director General, Islamic Cultural Centre in London. The program included exhibitions, music, dance, film, sports, conferences, visits to mosques in Copenhagen and other events. The programme was organised by DCCD in co-operation with a wide range of muslim organisations in Denmark, Danish cultural institutions, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ISESCO.

#### *Dialogue - Co-existence of Civilisations:*

DCCD since 2006 was a partner in the Danish dialogue initiative “Co-Existence of Civilisations” co-ordinated by the Danish media house “Monday Morning”. Co-existence of Civilisations aimed at dialogue following the Cartoon Crisis. The initial conferences involved academia, media, business, youth and culture & arts. DCCD organised the conference on culture & arts. One of the initiatives at the event was a collaboration between actors from Syria and Denmark, who worked together on a production presenting how Syrians viewed Danes and vice versa post the “Cartoon Crisis”. Co-Existence of Civilisations summarised its reflections in a “lab” in Copenhagen and in late 2006 and in 2007 the reflections were shared internationally. His Royal Highness Prince Hassan of Jordan acted as international patron of “Co-existence of Civilisations”.

#### Regional and bilateral programmes mainly taking place in the Arab and Muslim world

DCCD has initiated a couple of long-term regional programmes.

#### *Regional cultural programme:*

The regional cultural programme is developed in co-operation with partners in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. The project comprises the areas of music, dance, theatre, film, and other art forms. The purpose is to promote pluralism and civil society development in the arts field in the Middle East as well as dialogue, tolerance and

respect for cultural diversity between countries in the Middle East and Denmark. This will take place through contemporary cultural productions addressing core social and human issues, capacity building of innovative arts organisations as well as public debate and meetings in the Middle East about the role and importance of contemporary arts in relation to social transformation and development of identity.

*Regional media programme*

Furthermore DCCD has collaborated with the Danish NGO International Media Support regarding development of a regional programme in various aspects of media development. This amongst others included a Danish-Arab Media Twinning Programme, which created the framework for co-operation and twinning between journalists, editors and media institutions in Denmark and the Arab world.

*Information on Danish regional co-operation with the wider Middle East*

DCCD has since 2007 co-ordinated the production of a regular newsletter about Danish collaboration programmes with the wider Middle East. The newsletter gathers information about development co-operation with civil society, science, media, education, culture, youth, women, human rights, local authorities etc.

**Cultural strategy for the bilateral development co-operation**

***DCCD has worked with Danish Embassies in Bangladesh and other countries with Muslim societies to formulate cultural strategies and activities as part of the bilateral development co-operation with Denmark.***

Multilateral co-operation

Thirdly, DCCD has in co-operation with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborated with multilateral organisations to improve the international framework conditions for the cultural understanding and dialogue between Danish / Western and Muslim societies.

*United Nations initiatives for dialogue between cultures:*

\* *Dialogue between cultures and civilisations:* DCCD has contributed to the global agenda of dialogue among cultures and civilisations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 and implemented by UNESCO through concrete support to the conferences focusing on dialogue between western and Muslim societies. This includes the conference in Sana'a, Yemen in February 2004 and most importantly the conference in Rabat, June 2005, where the so-called "Rabat Commitment" was adopted.

\* *Alliance of Civilisations:* In 2005 the United Nations Secretary General appointed a high level group to study and propose actions to further strengthen dialogue in an initiative called "Alliance of Civilisations". DCCD in May 2006 organised a workshop on education and media with specialists from western and Muslim background in order to contribute concretely to the work of "Alliance of Civilisations". The workshop was organised under the auspices of the Alliance "co-chair", Prof. Federico Mayor from Spain and the report was presented to the High Level Group at its meeting by the end of May, 2006.

**Co-operation with specific international organisations:**

\* *UNESCO*: DCCD co-operates with UNESCO in various fields. In particular DCCD has played an active role vis à vis the adoption and implementation of the Convention of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, e.g. through concrete co-operation with the UNESCO based Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity on an African South-South program for artists and cultural producers.

\* *ISESCO*: DCCD in 2005 signed a co-operation agreement with ISESCO covering various areas of co-operation. DCCD and ISESCO had extensive mutual consultations during the so-called “Cartoon Crisis”, which facilitated communication, intercultural dialogue and understanding.

\* *Anna Lindh Foundation for the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue between Cultures (ALF)*: DCCD has since 2006 been the national contact point for ALF

\* *Other organisations*: DCCD has had close contact with the *Arab League / ALECSO* and has contributed to the *World Culture Forum* at the Dead Sea in Jordan, December 2005.

**Conclusions by the Ad hoc High Level Experts Group on “Overcoming Major Misconceptions in Intercultural and Inter-religious Dialogue”, convened by the Anna Lindh Foundation in cooperation with the League of Arab States**

- (1) The dichotomy “**Islam and the West**” is among the major misconceptions. It has roots in the historical European construct of “Orient” vs. “Occident”. It needs to be replaced, in relation to the context, either by geographical terms or by references to inter-religious or intercultural relations or to political groupings. Since, however, the dichotomy is widely used, it misguides both perceptions and actions. Remedial action should include appreciation of: Islam as part of Europe’s history and identity, as well as of religious and cultural diversity within the Arab world; highlighting the principles of equality, partnership, good neighbourhood and living together in cultural and religious pluralism agreed upon in the Barcelona Declaration.
- (2) The misconception of a “**clash of civilisations**” cannot be overcome by denying or merely replacing negative with positive terms such as “alliance” or “dialogue between cultures”. The underlying concept of cultural determinism itself needs to be addressed by better understanding of cultures and civilisations as both heritage and space of freedom for citizens enjoying their civic, cultural, economic and political rights agreed upon by the international community. Since, however, the misconception of a “clash” seems to have taken root and can, therefore, easily be misused for fuelling conflicts, warnings against societies falling back into culturalism or even religious wars must be taken seriously. Cultural and religious factors of conflicts need to be identified.
- (3) New measures of **prevention and early intervention** are necessary in order to avoid that critical situations (such as the cartoon issue) get out of control. Critical moments should be addressed by appropriate intergovernmental bodies at the earliest stage (e.g. EuroMed Committee/Senior Officials). Civil society actors are also called upon raising their voice in public against expression of conflicts in cultural or religious terms and in favour of respect of diversity and pluralism.
- (4) **Dialogue must be open for all groups in society.** Creating space of dialogue for so-called fundamentalists is a challenge that should no longer be neglected, without, however, imposing qualifications such as “moderate” or “fundamentalist” from outside.
- (5) The term “**dialogue between cultures**” itself is subject of profound misconceptions such as: an instrument for imposing opinions or values on others; participants “representing” cultures or civilisations; series of monologue statements. It is essential to conceive dialogues as open-ended events, based on principles of reciprocity and giving room to the expression of multiple, overlapping and dynamic cultural identities of participants (in line with the Universal Declaration and the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity).
- (6) **Intercultural or inter-religious dialogue** can contribute to a possible settlement of conflicts to the extent that it fully takes into account the historical, political and



economic context and that it clarifies misuse of cultural and religious differences for fuelling conflicts. Above all, such dialogue should be conceived **as a learning opportunity** for filling gaps in mutual knowledge and interest and preparing ground for mutual respect and acceptance.

- (7) The distinction between **“common values”** and **“cultural or religious differences”** is a misconception to the extent that it insinuates an artificial dichotomy. As much as it is essential for a meaningful dialogue to include both dimensions, it is important to take into account the diversity of putting universally shared values into practice, as well as the social and cultural reality representing many ways of similarities between individuals and groups perceived as “different”.
- (8) “Ensuring respect of cultural and religious pluralism”, one of the key objectives of the Barcelona Declaration, is compromised by a **“clash of ignorance”**. Providing knowledge about all major cultures and religions existing in the Euro-Mediterranean region to all citizens is an **educational challenge** calling for action by both Governments and civil society. Such knowledge should be made available through the regular school curriculum, in addition to specific religious instruction, which usually, and by its very nature, focuses on one religion. The **municipality** should be the space of learning to live together in diversity. Examples of good practice in school and out-of-school education should be collected, innovative projects such as festivals of sacred music or guided visits of places of worship be further encouraged.
- (9) Since **the media** are the most important factor outside family and school for shaping mentalities, respect of cultural and religious diversity should be subject of major efforts to reach out to citizens through the media. Such efforts should include further development of a common **language and terminology facilitating understanding of cultural and religious diversity** beyond stereotypes or self-referential in-group communication. Good practices and new ideas to be further developed with media associations, professional organisations and research institutes include codes of information ethics, codes of conduct, specific media awards, media exchange programmes, incentives for movies featuring living together, and a multilingual dictionary of culture-sensitive vocabulary. Good practice established in recent decades for gender relations (such as guidelines for non-sexist language) should be applied to intercultural relations.
- (10) Intercultural exchange and training programmes**, as a cornerstone of all efforts aiming at overcoming misconceptions and stereotypes, need to be significantly increased. Priority should be given to modalities which have the most significant effect on mentalities and confidence-building, such as encounters with multi-faith initiatives, workshops aiming at sustainable results, training courses, combination of scholarships with exchange programmes, or cultural youth festivals.
- (11) Many of these conclusions build on recommendations made by the High-Level

Group of Experts, convened by the former President of the European Commission Romano Prodi in 2003, without, however, exhausting them. A **new reading of the Report delivered by the “Prodi Groupe de Sages”** in December 2003 is, therefore, recommended

**FOSTERING DIALOGUE AMONG CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS  
THROUGH CONCRETE AND SUSTAINED INITIATIVES**

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco

14 - 16 June 2005

**PROGRAMME**

**TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2005**

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- 09.00-09.45                      *Participants' welcome*
- 10.00-11.00                      Opening of the Conference and First Plenary Session**
- 15.00-16.30                      Workshop 1**
- **Education:** university and school curriculum reform; textbook revision in certain key disciplines; drafting of teachers' guides and programme prototypes; teaching of human rights education and multiculturalism, the ethics and responsibility of sciences and technology
- 17.00-18.30                      Workshop Follow up**
- Evening                              Dialogue among Melodies: a unique concert with traditional instruments from different cultures.**

**WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2005**

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- 9.00-10.30                      Workshop 2**
- **Culture:** national museums (multicultural sections or departments); artistic festivals; youth meetings; shared cultural heritage; introduction of cultural elements and shared values in training programmes for cultural guides and members of the clergy; promotion of mutual understanding, democracy, human rights and human security
- 11.00-12.30                      Working group Follow up**

*15.00-16.30*

**Workshop 3**

- **Communication:** awareness building and training of journalists; struggle against stereotypes and biased opinions (texts and images) within the context of contemporary culture.

*17.00-18.30*

**Drafting of Workshop Reports**

**THURSDAY 16 JUNE 2005**

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*11.00-13.00*

**Plenary Session**

Deliberations of the Reports and Recommendations of  
the Workshops

Adoption of the Final Document

Closing speeches

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The Rabat Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 14 to 16 June 2005 under the patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI. Convened by six co-sponsoring organisations: UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures and with the participation of the Council of Europe as observer, the Conference was a shining example of constructive multi-stakeholder partnership and cooperation. Its major aim was to move away from the declarative approach to dialogue among cultures, towards a more proactive definition of concrete, results-oriented actions, to be implemented within a given time frame in the areas of education, the sciences, culture and communication.

"The state of today's world compels us all, each from his position, to mobilize our energies and capacities in order to promote the culture of dialogue, peaceful coexistence among people and the respect for cultural and civilizational specificities and cultural diversity."

**Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**

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

"...the impetus for this dialogue (...) stems from the need to help alleviate the prevailing tension in international relations, to put an end to the conspicuous inequality between geo-cultural spaces, and to break down the barrier of ignorance or indifference between cultures..."

**Mongi Bousnina**

*Director-General of The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, ALECSO*

"No civilization can assume sole responsibility for all humanity; neither can a single civilization claim exclusive rights to provide an ultimate and universally valid vision of how to be a human being in the complex and multifaceted world of today - and tomorrow."

**Hans d'Orville**

*Director, Bureau of Strategic Planning, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO*

"... political or cultural dialogue was never meant to be undertaken for its own sake as an ultimate objective. It is rather an instrument among many others, used to promote understanding and mutual recognition and rapprochement..."

**Ekmelleddin Ihsanoglu**

*Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, OIC*

"Taking the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations from the philosophical level, to the level of concrete and sustained action is not only an exercise in creating intercultural understanding. It is also a serious attempt to create solutions based on dialogue instead of violence and conflict."

**Olaf Gerlach Hansen**

*Director of the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, DCCD*

"Dialogue, conceived as a dialogue between human beings, must provide room for the expression of plural, overlapping and dynamic cultural identities. Such dialogue is an instrument to put human rights into practice."

**Traugott Schoefthaler**

*Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Alexandria, Egypt*

"...particular effort has been made in the field of intercultural dialogue and intercultural education for a better understanding of cultural and religious diversity, as our privileged tools."

**Gabriele Mazza**

*Director of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Council of Europe*