

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF UNESCO CHAIRS
IN HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND TOLERANCE,
STADTSCHLAINING, AUSTRIA, 24 – 27 APRIL 2002**



Final Report

Agenda

- Item 1 : Experience of UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance, accumulated since the Second Meeting of Chairholders (May 2000)
- Item 2: The role of UNESCO Chairs in the elaboration and implementation of UNESCO's research agenda in the field of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, as a constituent part of UNESCO's strategy in the field of human rights
- Item 3: Priority fields of action of UNESCO Chairs in the years to come
- Item 4: Strengthening the network of UNESCO Chairs and increasing their contribution to the implementation of relevant UNESCO programmes
- Item 5: Discussion and approval of the final documents of the meeting

Bureau of the Meeting

President: Dr Gerald Mader

Co-President: Professor Vishwanath D. Karad

Vice Presidents

Professor Andreas Eshete, Professor El Arbi Mrabet, Professor Antonio Papisca, Dr Gloria Ramirez Hernandez, Professor N. S. Rembe, Professor Rumen Valchev

Rapporteur

Professor Andreas Eshete

Drafting Committee

Professor Rumen Valchev (President), Dr Ali al-Shra'Ah, Dr Mariana Blengio Valdes, Professor Andreas Eshete, Dr Werner Koehler, Mr Vladimir Volodin

1. Following the delivery of welcoming addresses by representatives of the Austrian Federal Government, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Mader, Professor V. Karad and the representative of UNESCO, the Bureau and the Drafting Committee of the Meeting were elected at the opening session. In addition, the agenda and timetable were adopted.

Item 1 : Experience of UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance, accumulated since the Second Meeting of Chairholders (May 2000)

2. UNESCO Chairs presented progress reports highlighting accomplishments as well as shortcomings and challenges in their efforts to promote peace, human rights, tolerance and democracy since the Second Meeting.

3. Many UNESCO Chairs have established interdisciplinary undergraduate and post-graduate programmes of study in human rights and democracy, as well as peace studies. Various UNESCO Chairs have also undertaken publication of textbooks and scientific studies on human rights, democracy and peace. A number of UNESCO Chairs have also extended education in human rights and the culture of peace to groups outside the academy, including NGOs, journalists, teachers, parliamentarians, law enforcement officers and the military. Some UNESCO Chairs have devoted special attention to the education of particular groups: the handicapped (Uruguay); indigenous people (Namibia); refugees (Czech Republic); traditional leaders (Namibia) as well as to women's rights and gender issues (Morocco).

4. In their attempts to extend their reach, UNESCO Chairs have made use of varied vehicles such as the media, lecture series, and summer schools. Conferences have proved to be successful for reaching large segments of the public. A notable case is the conference on "The Role of Teachers in Creating a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence" convened by the UNESCO Chair at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Several Chairs organized conferences to promote interregional dialogue and cooperation: for example, the Chair at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education held three joint conferences between India and Kuwait, India and China, India and the USA.

5. Besides their intrinsic value, national and interregional conferences helped the Chairs implement their activities in conditions of scarce material and human resources.

Another way of meeting the problem of limited resources is the development of sub-regional and regional networking. Effective networks now exist in the Caucasian Region, the Black Sea Region, the Asia-Pacific Region, the Mediterranean Region, Latin America, Central America, English-Speaking Africa and French-Speaking Africa.

6. Looking ahead, a number of Chairs drew attention to issues that require consideration in their future work. One concern was that education and research by the Chairs should be tailored to the specific conditions of their countries without compromising general principles such as the universality and indivisibility of human rights. Other concerns had to do with more substantive matters: how to promote human rights in conditions of extreme poverty and amid widening international inequality; how to integrate effectively into programmes of research and education new important developments such as the Durban Programme of Action; how to address the challenges and promises of globalization in the ethical quest for globalization with a human face.

Item 2: The role of UNESCO Chairs in the elaboration and implementation of UNESCO's research agenda in the field of human rights, in particular economic, social and cultural rights, as a constituent part of UNESCO's strategy in the field of human rights

7. Mr Pierre Sané, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, delivered a keynote address on UNESCO's current reform process. His address was supplemented by two presentations: first, on UNESCO's human rights strategy by Ms Louise Haxthausen, Programme Specialist, Division of Human Rights, UNESCO; second on the protection of cultural rights by Mr Sané.

8. In his intervention, Mr Sané offered a comprehensive review of UNESCO's programme of reform, spelling out its motivation and background as well as its consequences for UNESCO's mission, management, priorities, and institutional links. UNESCO's programme of reform, initiated under the new Director-General, aims to devise a unified, coherent strategy whereby the advancement of human rights becomes an integral part of the broad range of UNESCO's work. UNESCO's reform is in keeping with recent changes in the UN system. In 1997, the United Nations Secretary-General called for reform and invited to accord high priority to human rights and to further their integration in all the activities of the Organization. The Millennium Declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly special session in 2000 expressed the international community's renewed resolve to uphold human rights. Accordingly, the missions of all specialized agencies of the UN are increasingly focusing on the promotion and protection of human rights. It is only fitting that UNESCO, which has an explicit human rights mandate, is pursuing a course of reform underway in all UN agencies. In order to carry out this reform, UNESCO has now a new senior management drawn from the academic and NGO community. The reform would enable UNESCO to concentrate on issues where it would make a genuine difference. UNESCO's priorities would be education for all, bioethics, management of water resources, bridging the gap in access to new information technology, cultural diversity, and the fight against poverty. In human rights, the focus would be on economic, social and cultural rights, gender equality, and the elimination of racism.

9. The UNESCO strategy on human rights will build upon the Organization's human rights mandate and its considerable work on areas such as the right to education, human rights education, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and cultural rights. The strategy will also draw on UNESCO's work on the ethical and human rights implications of globalization, the rapid development of technology, in particular of new information technologies, and genetic research. The aim of humanizing globalization provides the overall framework of UNESCO's human rights strategy. The strategy seeks greater coherence and fit among existing UNESCO human rights programmes while forging firmer ties with other human rights agents. The new strategy concentrates on areas of human rights relevant to UNESCO's mandate. Thus, the strategy calls for greater attention to the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.

10. A new impetus to UNESCO's work on human rights necessitates attention to the protection as well as the promotion of human rights. UNESCO's focus on implementation, monitoring and protection under the new strategy requires new measures, among them: to revitalize UNESCO's human rights instruments, including detailed definitions of cultural rights; to improve mechanisms for monitoring and implementing human rights; to extend policy and legal support to Member States in order to secure the compliance of domestic law and practice with human rights standards; to encourage the participation of civic associations, professional organizations and NGOs in monitoring implementation of UNESCO's instruments; to promote greater coordination with other UN agencies; to foster close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International

Labour Organisation (ILO); to cultivate closer coordination and cooperation with treaty monitoring bodies.

11. The address and the presentations provoked an extensive exchange of views. Although many found UNESCO's programme of reform highly visionary, some speakers expressed the worry that it might be overly ambitious. One source of scepticism was whether in the effort to integrate human rights into all UNESCO undertakings, UNESCO would spread itself too thin. In other words, could UNESCO achieve more by aiming at less? Some asked how UNESCO hopes to secure effective State cooperation in the revitalization of UNESCO's instruments and their enforcement. Similarly, others expressed puzzlement about how private sector and financial institutions can be persuaded to abide by ethical standards - a key to globalization with a human face. Another persistent worry was how UNESCO's new priorities in human rights and cultural diversity would allow room to varied demands in these areas arising in different places and times. A few suggested that rights accorded high priority by UNESCO - for instance, cultural rights - may have no urgency in conditions of extreme deprivation. In respect to UNESCO's new mission of protecting human rights, a few speakers expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness, or even meaningfulness, of the enforcement of UNESCO's instruments. In particular, it seemed unclear to some participants how UNESCO Chairs, primarily engaged in human rights education and research, could venture into enforcement. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press, as well as info-rights and info-ethics were mentioned in connection with relevant research and with a view to the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003).

12. In his reply, Mr Sané attempted to allay some of the doubts manifested in the discussion. For instance, he pointed out that UNESCO had no intention to impose its priorities without due regard to salient differences among conditions in different countries and the mandates of the Chairs. To the contrary, in practice, UNESCO aims to tailor the ordering of priorities so as to suit circumstances in particular regions. He also drew attention to points of consensus that emerged in the course of the discussion: the legitimacy of UNESCO's role in the protection as well as the promotion of human rights; greater co-ordination with other agencies of the United Nations; greater co-ordination with NGOs; exploration of a possibility to elaborate a declaration on cultural rights; sustained and substantive contributions by UNESCO to treaty monitoring bodies.

13. The concluding part of this discussion addressed the question of how to undertake sustained human rights research which would serve to shape policy and standard-setting concerning human rights within UNESCO's field of competence. The discussion aimed to cover three areas: the nature of the research agenda; optimal utilization of research results; and the role of the Chairs in the research agenda. Mr Sané opened the discussion with a lucid proposal on a research agenda for economic, social and cultural rights. He prefaced his remarks by drawing attention to parallel UNESCO research undertakings, which the research agenda for economic, social and cultural rights should complement. Areas of parallel research programme include: international migration and multiculturalism; governance and democracy; racism and discrimination; women's rights; ethics of the economy.

14. Mr Sané outlined the elements of a research agenda for economic, social and cultural rights:
- a) How to contextualize human rights principles such as non-discrimination;
 - b) How to fix the content of human rights (jurisprudence is a major source for the definition of the content of rights; research too can contribute to the determination of the content of these rights, thereby promoting their implementation);
 - c) The beneficiaries of these rights;
 - d) The treatment of these rights in unusual or non-ideal circumstances, e.g., during transition periods;

- e) Exploration of the justiciability of these rights and effective remedies;
- f) Obstacles, e.g., scarce resources;
- g) Indicators to take a measure of how these rights are being progressively implemented;
- h) Identifying actors beyond the State with responsibility to uphold these rights;
- i) Technical assistance, including quality and impact of support provided by agencies such as OHCHR;
- j) How to fix criteria to be used in ranking rights in order of priority;
- k) How to monitor or oversee research;
- l) How to secure long-term – say, five years – support for research.

15. Mr Sané also underlined that quality research is not enough. Optimal utilization of research is essential: findings must be widely disseminated; they must reach policymakers, NGOs and other human rights actors. Finally, he called for the reactions by the Chairs to his proposals and their suggestions about how best they can contribute to UNESCO's research agenda.

16. The discussion on the proposed research agenda yielded important observations and valuable contributions. Many suggested that the Chairs are well-placed to advance the research agenda and its aims. For instance, the Chairs are a bridge between civil society and the State as well as between academics and practitioners. Moreover, the Chairs are drawn from a great variety of disciplines and are therefore in a favourable position to conduct multi-disciplinary research. The speakers also offered numerous suggestions and recommendations. Attention to schemes at regional integration attempting to adopt shared standards – including human rights standards – was prescribed. There was a call to encourage work in the area by women engaged in research. The need to operationalize economic, social and cultural rights – for example, by setting thresholds for violation – was stressed. Establishment of a permanent database in the area was urged. The regular publication of occasional papers and a journal on economic, social and cultural rights was another recommendation. The representative of the Association of University Presidents welcomed the invitation to practice-driven research and indicated that success depends on engagement of practitioners from the start.

17. There were also various questions on the nature and conduct of the research agenda. One question had to do with methodology: should research be micro-culture-centred or macro-centred on the national community. Another question, raised by Dr Koehler and others, concerned the apparent exclusion or marginalization of the culture of peace in the new research agenda.

18. In his reply, Mr Sané welcomed the suggestions and recommendations. More specifically, he said that the research agenda should include research on methodology as well as on human rights actors such as NGOs, parliamentarians and the media. He also endorsed inter-regional cooperation, following a state of the art survey on research already undertaken by the Chairs. A similar state of the art survey would be needed on the themes of research. Mr Sané also agreed to the development of a database on the areas covered in the research agenda. In response to the exclusion of the culture of peace from the research agenda, Mr Sané confessed to a dilemma: earlier it was said that UNESCO is too ambitious; now it is being said that UNESCO is not ambitious enough. He pointed out UNESCO's new human rights research agenda neither intends to marginalize other issues nor to discourage the Chairs from engaging in them. The object is to focus on economic, social and cultural rights in the interest of results with quality and depth. Mr Sané concluded by inviting written comments from the Chairs on the protection of cultural rights, the new research agenda, and human rights education. Twenty participants volunteered to submit comments by 10 May 2002.

Item 3: Priority fields of action of UNESCO Chairs in the years to come

19. Discussion on the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism (Durban, South Africa, 31 August – 8 September 2001) was initiated by Professor Rembe and Mr Volodin. After explaining the background and preparatory work for the World Conference, Professor Rembe characterized the intense debates leading to the adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action. He then outlined the ways in which the Chairs can contribute to the follow-up work on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Chairs can make significant contributions through: research; professional training for public officials; conferences on good practices; introduction and reinforcement of anti-discrimination into curricula; monitoring of State compliance. Mr Volodin also indicated tasks for the Chairs. A central task is research and enhancement of information and education on racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including restitution of the history of slave trade. He also urged advocacy for the universal ratification of human rights instruments, underlining that the prohibition of discrimination is integral to all human rights instruments. Moreover, the Chairs' efforts should be directed against double discrimination suffered by women, children and other vulnerable groups. He called for more active work with the media with the view to sensitizing the public opinion and mobilizing the general public for the Durban documents and human rights instruments. Finally, Mr Volodin stressed the need for greater attention to the training of professionals with special responsibilities in human rights and non-discrimination. Mr Volodin pointed out that the success at Durban, won after many years of struggle, must not be dissipated.

20. A number of other speakers reiterated the importance of follow-up to Durban and the close ties between its Programme of Action and various UN Decades. They also proposed steps to be taken by the Chairs by way of follow-up. For instance, Dr Koehler suggested to raise awareness of the Declaration and Programme of Action; including translation of the Durban documents into local languages; training programmes in line with key suggestions of the Durban documents; elimination of racist stereotypes from teaching materials, research on new forms of racism and discrimination, and how to overcome them. One speaker drew the attention of the participants to a questionnaire concerning the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, sent to UN Member States by OHCHR, and invited the Chairholders to contribute by 1 May 2002. The discussion concluded with a request by Mr Volodin for written contributions by the Chairs on their steps in order to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

21. An address by Professor Papadopoulou opened the discussion on the contribution of UNESCO Chairs to the implementation of programmes of the United Nations Decades. Among other things, Professor Papadopoulou offered a comprehensive survey of significant contributions by the Chairs to UN Decades: UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004); the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004); and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). She pointed out that the celebration of and contributions to UN Decades by the Chairs assumed various forms. The International Decade for the Culture of Peace was celebrated through the establishment of postgraduate programmes. (The Chairs at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the National University of Kyiv, the University of Kinshasa). Advancement of the values of a culture of peace were witnessed in welfare service to the poor provided by the Chair at the World Peace Center in Pune (India), and the rally for the rights of the disabled organized by the Oliver Tambo Chair in South Africa. In-service training for teachers was provided by the Chairs at Bourgas Free University, the University of Padua, the University of Thessaloniki. Education and mobilization of youth was undertaken by the Chairs in Pune and Bourgas, as well as those at the Kabardino-Balkarian State University and Luis Carlos Galán Institute in Bogotá. Networks for a culture of peace and human rights

education were created by the Chairs at Kyiv, Ukraine, and Fort Hare, South Africa, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations and the Law University of Lithuania. Deploying art in the service of the culture of peace was a strategy adopted by various Chairs. An outstanding example is that of the European University Centre for Peace Studies. This Chair held an exhibition on “War or Peace – From the Culture of Violence to the Culture of Peace”. The exhibition inaugurated the establishment of a European Museum for Peace.

22. A wide-ranging discussion of contributions of the Chairs to the three UN Decades followed Professor Papadopoulou’s remarks. A few speakers joined an intense exchange on the merits of education in comparative religion as a means of promoting tolerance. Others urged that follow-up to Durban can serve as a framework for contributions to the Decade on Human Rights Education. Convening conferences on relevant areas was also recommended as a contribution by the Chairs to the UN Decades. Speakers also addressed specific concerns. One had to do with the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the youngest of the three UN Decades. The representative of the UN University of Peace sought to find out what the lead agencies – UNESCO and UNICEF – were doing to promote this UN Decade. He and others asked if inattention to this UN Decade signals a shift away from a culture of peace. Another concern was about the fate of the draft of “NGO Recommendations for a Resolution on Human Rights Education”. The document includes innovative measures in respect to human rights education, including appointment of a special rapporteur for human rights education and the creation of a voluntary fund for human rights education. Though the original recommendations did not win acceptance, they will be considered again next year – close to the end of the Decade on Human Rights Education. UNESCO Chairs were asked to endorse the draft resolution as well as to solicit support for it within their constituencies.

Item 4: Strengthening the network of UNESCO Chairs and increasing their contribution to the implementation of relevant UNESCO programmes

23. Dr Ramirez opened the discussion with an impressive oral and visual representation on the Mexican and Latin American network. Dr Ramirez introduced her presentation with remarks on the various purposes that networks can serve. They can be organized by subject or region; they can be used in the service of action (for example, by groups working for the International Criminal Court) or research. Networking optimizes the impact of activities in research, teaching, training; it also enhances partnerships with NGOs, human rights actors, research institutions and international agencies. Dr Ramirez also underlined that Internet greatly facilitates empirical research and enhances the interlink between training and research. The Chairs’ Internet service provides a catalogue of activities, schedules of events, information on conferences, list of publications, a site for exchange programmes. A striking instance is the ready accessibility of the documents of the regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean on human rights education. Dr Blengio Valdés also briefly illustrated ways in which the Chair in Uruguay has deployed Internet.

24. After expressing the appreciation for Dr Ramirez’s innovative work, a number of speakers raised questions about how her achievements can be emulated and extended. For instance, Dr Topanou indicated how better networking would benefit cooperation and collaboration in his region, which covers seven countries. Mr Volodin informed the Chairs that UNESCO Internet Forum of Chairholders, established two years ago, is not actively used and for technical reasons is not fully operative. He then asked for volunteers to improve and assist in managing the Internet Forum of Chairholders. A number of institutions volunteered: Dr Doebller said that the American University in Cairo can furnish the staff to

operate the Forum in English, French and Arabic; Professor Nalapat volunteered technical support; offers of help were made by Professor Omara-Otunnu, Professor Brenes and Dr Ramirez.

25. Mr Volodin drew attention to the need to appoint regional coordinators as a critical part of the efforts to strengthen the network of UNESCO Chairs. As a result of consultations, an agreement was reached concerning regional coordinators:

- a. Latin America – Dr Gloria Ramirez Hernandez (Mexico)
- b. English-speaking Africa – Professor Nasila Rembe (South Africa)
- c. French-speaking Africa – Professor T. Holo (Bénin)
- d. Arab States – Professor El Arbi Mrabet (Morocco)
- e. Asia – Professor Vishwanath Karad (India)
- f. Eastern and Central Europe – Professor Rumen Valchev (Bulgaria) with the support of Professor Yuri Svatko (Ukraine)
- g. Western Europe and the US – Professor Karl-Peter Fritzsche (Germany), Professor Dimitra Papadopoulou (Greece) and Professor Omara-Otunnu (US)

The Chair at Schlaining will continue with overall co-ordination.

26. Proposals concerning representation of Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance to the UNESCO Chairs World Forum (UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 13-15 November 2002) were advanced. In particular, it was suggested that the regional coordinators participate in the event as well as that additional representatives be appointed for Latin America and the Arab States. Designation of a second representative for the Arab States was made difficult by limited attendance from the region, in part, because of political circumstances. For example, it is regrettable that the Chair from the Palestinian Authority was unable to participate in the meeting.

27. Professor Karad, for the second time, kindly offered to host the meeting of Chairholders at the World Peace Center, Pune. Many speakers expressed their gratitude for Professor Karad's generous offer. While welcoming the invitation, a few speakers indicated obstacles to the proposal. The most important problems concern high airfare and lengthy air travel. Another worry was that Schlaining provided not just the venue but also the permanent secretariat for the meetings. An alternative proposal was to convene regional meetings elsewhere in between the meetings at Schlaining. Professor Omara-Otunnu conveyed a message from the President of the University of Connecticut that the university would be honoured to host a meeting of the Chairholders. The Chair at the University of the Republic, Uruguay, extended also an invitation to hold such a meeting in Montevideo.

Item 5: Discussion and approval of the final documents of the meeting

28. Professor Valchev circulated drafts of the final documents on behalf of the Drafting Committee:

- a. Declaration on the Contribution of UNESCO Chairs to the Promotion of Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance
- b. Agreement on Modalities of Co-operation between UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance

29. Professor Valchev also read written amendments to be incorporated into the draft Agreement prior to discussion. Participants were then invited to comment and to suggest changes. Amendments to the Agreement proposed by a number of speakers were accepted.

30. The rapporteur presented a draft report on the meeting, which was accepted subject to final changes to be made by the Secretariat. The final documents – the Declaration and the Agreement – were adopted as amended. The Chairholders signed the Agreement and asked the Secretariat to send it for signature to those who were absent.

31. During the closing ceremony, a number of speakers took the floor. The representative of UNESCO observed that the last session is not the end of the work; the success of the meeting depends on its effective follow-up. He asked those who had volunteered to forward written comments on the research agenda and on the follow-up to Durban. The proceedings will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin, which the representative expected to include study papers on human rights and UNESCO's new research agenda, as well as on the culture of peace and democracy. Submissions should be forwarded by **30 June 2002** so that the Bulletin can be circulated at the World Forum in November. He also expressed the hope that, with the support of those who offered assistance, the Internet Forum of Chairholders will be in operation by the time the World Forum is held. He expressed his gratitude to the co-presidents of the meeting, Dr Gerald Mader and Professor Karad. He also expressed his deep appreciation to Dr Werner Koehler for his outstanding contribution to the Third Meeting of Chairholders and thanked those whose diligence made the meeting successful, among them Ms Heidi Pock from EPU, Ms Faith Mensah of UNESCO and the interpreters. In concluding, the UNESCO representative found the Third Meeting an important step to the consolidation of a global network of Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance.

Professor Werdmolder remarked that the meeting was a source of satisfaction for a freshman. It was a good opportunity to meet new colleagues and friends for the new Chair in Utrecht.

Professor Kadar extended a welcome to new Chairholders. He extended his gratitude to Dr Mader and Dr Koehler and their fine institution for making the Third Meeting possible. Professor Karad also expressed appreciation for the rich contributions of the representatives of UNESCO. He also underlined his satisfaction with the Declaration and the Agreement. Professor Karad declared the meeting a decent, dignified family reunion. Noting the twentieth anniversary of the EPU, Professor Karad, joined by Professor Rao, paid tribute to Dr Mader's laudable contributions to the cause of peace.

Dr Mader extended his thanks to Mr. P. Sané, Mr Volodin and Ms Haxthausen. He also expressed his thanks and good wishes to all the participants.

Professor Rembe, Chairman of this session, concluded by expressing his gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the Third Meeting.