

newsletter

Social transformations in an era of globalization

Imagine a world without borders, where people would have the right to move freely from one country to another, to settle down, live and work where they wish. Today, with all States strictly controlling their frontiers, this sounds like utopia.

But just imagine such a world. We have invited a few thinkers to reflect on this scenario, a scenario we have called Migration without Borders...

Nigel Harris, from University College London, recalls that there have been long periods of world history when those who wanted to migrate could do so. He believes that free movement would be economically beneficial, today and in the future. Poor countries could send their workers abroad and benefit from the money and skills they send back. Western countries need immigrants not only to counterbalance ageing populations but also to perform the tasks their nationals avoid. Mr Harris invites us to enlarge our understanding of globalization: is it not puzzling that goods, information and capital circulate freely while human beings do not?

This argument is enriched by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, from Sciences-Po in Paris, who develops a human rights perspective and concludes that the moral grounds to restrict people's mobility are thin. Relying on the Universal 

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→ Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (article 13-2), she highlights the disturbing paradox that sees people being deprived of their right to emigrate by the absence of immigration possibilities. Moreover, migration controls generate major human costs, from the deaths of undocumented migrants to the social vulnerability of those living clandestinely in receiving countries, and heavily policed borders may ultimately threaten the democratic foundations of Western countries. She therefore envisages a right to mobility: in a world of flows, mobility becomes a resource to which everyone should have access.

The economic and moral arguments supporting the Migration without Borders scenario have important social implications. Han Entzinger, from Erasmus University in Rotterdam, proposes ways in which a greater degree of human mobility could be managed, in terms of welfare, citizenship and democratic institutions. Migrants are frequently blamed for threatening social cohesion and we urgently need to think of creative ways in which people’s right to mobility could be made compatible with societies’ need for cohesion. Free migration would then not jeopardise receiving societies but foster intercultural contacts, thus leading to societies based on openness and tolerance.

These thinkers, and the many others who participated in UNESCO’s Migration without Borders project, bring a breath of fresh air to contemporary debates. Is it not time to listen to them and rethink migration?

Imagination, but through reason, turns utopia into an option.

Pierre Sané
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for Social
and Human Sciences



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Young Women's Parliament

On International Women's Day – 8 March 2005 – an extremely successful awareness-raising activity generated considerable public debate on the issue of women's political participation through radio phone-ins, letters to the editor and newspaper articles, television and open discussions. The activity was coordinated by the Inailau Women's Leadership Network (ILWN) in partnership with the Samoan Ministry of Education and UNESCO.

MPs for a day

One female student from each of the 49 constituencies which make up the Samoa Parliament, was selected by their school to be MPs for a day and prepare to debate a private members' bill that "Samoa's Electoral Act be amended to ensure 30% female representation".

Information packages about the issue of women's political participation and Samoan women's participation were prepared and distributed to all schools to assist students and teachers to prepare their arguments. Teachers were also invited to attend, so as to ensure that students receive an informed support system following the Young Women's Parliament activities. The invitation was also extended to college students.

One of the young MPs for a day being interviewed by Samoan national news.



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On the day, students and teachers met at the Samoan Fono (parliament) in the early morning and were shown around the Fono by the Registrar, the only female Cabinet Minister (Fiame Naomi, the Minister of Education, who served on UNESCO's Executive Board for some years) and a group of former and current female MPs. Members of the public, including parents and friends of the girls and prominent women's NGO personalities also attended.

An eye-opening debate

Following the tour and a question time, the girls took up their constituency seats for the debate. This was a real eye-opener for those attending and for the thousands who watched the event on the national news that night. There was no hesitancy or holding back. The girls had prepared their arguments very seriously and proved quite convincingly that Samoa has a group of strong young women leaders who think deeply about development issues, have a viewpoint, and have the skills to argue their views forthrightly.

The undoubted success of this first young women's parliament could be seen in the students' fine preparations for the debate and their presentations; the huge support by NGOs, the private sector and the Government; the amount of newspaper coverage over a two-week period; television coverage (3 nights on prime news) and the ensuing public debate about the pros and cons of women's political participation. What is more, at the National University of Samoa's Graduation Ceremony on 31 March 2005, a large part of the Prime Minister's speech to the graduates focused on the viability of having 30% female MPs – thus highlighting the message once again.

With others, these young women have formed a network which will be nurtured and mentored by women's NGOs. There will be follow-up activities to support teachers as they begin mainstreaming gender issues into the school curriculum. There have also been requests from other Pacific countries for SHS to support national and regional Young Women's Parliaments. ¶

Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop, p.dunlop@unesco.org

➔ Women in Parliament

At the end of April 2005 the Inter-Parliamentary Union published statistics on the current average of women in national parliaments. Of the 43,076 members of parliament worldwide, 6,724 (i.e. 15.9%) are women. ¶

For more information see: www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm

Countdown to the vote count

Launched at the end of 2004, the project “Support for fair, safe and professional media election coverage: Election reporting guide and advocacy campaigns” ended in April 2005.*

Addressing human rights – and in particular freedom of expression for journalists in Iraq – the project sought to strengthen the capacities of Iraqi journalists covering the elections. By enhancing safe and professional election reporting, and making available information about election procedures and election reporting, the project aimed to promote full, fair and efficient disclosure of information among journalists covering the elections in Iraq.

➔ UNESCO, freedom of expression and press freedom

UNESCO is the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom. Article 1 of its Constitution requires the Organization to “further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”. The Organization is therefore required to “collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image...”¶

The specific objectives were to:

- promote transparency and accountability through advocacy campaigns;
- raise awareness among civil society and officials on issues relating to the elections, such as safety of journalists and democratic principles;
- enhance professional election reporting through training and the production and distribution of an election guide for Iraq.
- address safety issues for journalists and media workers in particular through an awareness-raising campaign to enable journalists – who are often targeted – to take the necessary precautions during the election period.

Over the four months from January to April 2005, these objectives were met through activities carried out in a context fraught with security issues and time constraints but organized in a way to provide the best possible safety for participants and trainers alike.

January

- Two training seminars on the safety of journalists and media workers were held in Iraq. This was also an opportunity to distribute election material, information and general journalism handbooks in Arabic to Iraqi media workers.
- Election reporting guidelines and briefing notes were published on the Internet on issues relating to international law and elections, human rights, freedom of expression, broadcast principles, journalistic principles, etc. in times of election.

February

- Election reporting handbooks were translated into Arabic and distributed to participants at training sessions.

March

- Information was disseminated mainly through three training workshops and a seminar to raise the level of debate and dialogue on the media’s role, rights and obligations at elections and to promote access to public information. Training addressed both journalists and senior editors of written and broadcast press.
- Guidelines on principles of professional reporting during elections, journalists’ rights, election processes, contacts, reference materials, background documentation and safety information, were published in Arabic, English and Kurdish and disseminated at the training sessions.
 - The Guidelines were also made available through a project website, which will be updated to include information and material about the constitutional work ahead. This information will be continuously distributed through the website and partners undergoing training.

April

- Translation into Arabic of “Freedom of Information” and “Human Rights Questions and Answers”.
- Publication in Arabic of “How to File Human Rights Complaints”.
- An event was organized on World Press Freedom Day in Iraq.
- Final external evaluation of the project took place.

* See SHS Newsletter 08.

UNESCO marks World Press Freedom Day in Baghdad

The project proved a relevant and useful contribution to the reconstruction efforts taking place in Iraq. Despite various challenges to project implementation, the objectives were met and, most important, participants confirmed the need for full, fair and efficient access to information for Iraqi journalists covering the elections.

A programme proposal on Media and Human Rights has now been submitted to the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund with a request for funding. The proposal builds directly upon the “elections project” addressing both the constitutional process and the referendum foreseen in Iraq later this year. ¶

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www.unesco.org/webworld/infocus/iraqvotes



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UNESCO, the only United Nations agency with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press, held a day-long seminar in Baghdad, Iraq, to mark World Press Freedom Day (3 May).

Two speakers at the World Press Freedom Day in Baghdad: left, Mr Ayad al-Si'aidi, Radio Dijlah; right, Dr Nazhat al-Dulaimi, College of Information.



Brochure presenting UNESCO's new strategy for the promotion of democracy.

The seminar, which was organized in cooperation with the Iraqi Journalists Union, the College of Information and the Civil Society Organizations, was attended by approximately 40 participants: professors from the College of Information, senior members of the Iraqi National Communication and Media Commission (INCMC) and representatives of the Iraqi Journalists Union, journalists from the local press and broadcast media, as well as civil society organizations.

A variety of issues were discussed and more questions were posed than answers found.

The main concern was the protection of journalists in Iraq and the role UNESCO and Civil Society Organizations can have in order to ensure a free and independent press in Iraq, especially amid the mounting violence and growing threats to the free word, be it expressed by an Iraqi or a foreign reporter. The audience

responded by participating in a lively debate on common concerns and presenting their views of possible solutions to these issues. Following the discussions, the Information Coordinator of Civil Society Organizations in Iraq briefed the participants on a future programme in support of Iraqi media.

Independent, free and pluralistic media have a crucial role to play in the good governance of democratic societies, by ensuring transparency and accountability, promoting participation and the rule of law, and contributing to the fight against poverty. ¶

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Daniel Filmus, Minister and social scientist

Daniel Filmus, sociologist, is Argentina's Minister of Education, Science and Technology. On his recent visit to UNESCO, we interviewed him on the role of the social sciences in shaping public policy, and on the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus which is to take place simultaneously in Argentina and Uruguay from 5 to 9 September next.

In your capacity as both politician and sociologist, you are living proof that the social sciences can serve society. How do you think your training helps you to face the challenges you come up against in your work as Minister?

To head a Ministry such as Education, Science and Technology, on the one hand one needs to have a good grasp of the issues, and on the other one needs public management skills. The fact that I have both carried out research and taught in the fields of sociology of education and economy of education, helps me enormously, particularly with regard to understanding education issues. This is of the utmost importance, especially in Latin America, where it is essential for legality to go hand in hand with legitimacy. A Minister can be legally designated, but in order for him to have authority and to be legitimately accepted as such – particularly by academics, scientists and teachers – he also has to fully understand the issues. In the case of Education, authority comes from that understanding. In that sense, when defining policy, it is of great help to me that almost all those in the teaching profession have read my books, that I was a researcher for many years and that I am aware of the current research situation, and that I am a University professor. It is of great help to me when making decisions not merely because I know the problems but because I have some authority with those who apply the policies.

How do you see the contribution of the social sciences with regard to policy formulation?

In Latin America, the 1990s was a decade when we frequently listened to the views of economists, but little to those of sociologists. Those who implemented the policies were above all concerned with accounting and macro-economics. During that decade, the Argentine GDP increased by 5.5%. But at the end of that same decade, the people were poorer than they had been at the beginning. That's where our saying comes from: "Macro is all right for Argentina, but the people take the *micro*".* At that time, it was thought that if the economy was creating marginalization, exclusion, unemployment and the unequal sharing of resources, "the social services" would compensate for all that.

Interview



© UNESCO / J. Blom

The contribution of the social sciences is very important on two counts: first, in emergency situations, to help formulate social policies that can reduce poverty, marginalization and exclusion; and second, in the medium-term, to take part in the construction of a social model combining growth with equality. It is this latter aspect that presents the most difficult challenge.

Social policies are often regarded as the poor relation that has to compensate for the effects of decisions taken at macro-economic level. How can the two be better integrated?

In the case of the Ministry I head, this is very clear. There is no other way of producing growth without exclusion, or for creating growth with equality, than through education. In our view, education is the foundation of democracy. Without education, we would still be in feudal times: every person's origins would condemn him to reach a certain point but no further. Education should allow every child to succeed according to his or her ability. I am not talking about a utopian egalitarianism but about the possibility for every person to take up the challenge of upward social mobility thanks to education and according to his or her

* In Argentina, the expression *viajar en micro* means to travel by bus.

“I applaud the social scientist’s political commitment”

ability. When there is dysfunction in education – which is the case in Argentina and in Latin America in general – and when education is very unequal, the poorest section of the population receives the worst education and the wealthiest the best.

We are in fact in the process of returning to feudalism. We are reproducing a society divided into social classes where people’s origins dictate their fate. So it is clear that even with economic growth, even with job opportunities, those who have not had access to education will inevitably become marginalized. They will always exist according to social policy and will never be able to integrate the increasingly complex world of work.

The other aspect concerns the University, science and technology. For developing countries like Argentina to have the opportunity of being sovereign and autonomous in their decision-making, they must use knowledge. As soon as there is globalization, development has to mean integration into the rest of the world, and one has to know how to go about it. In Argentina in the 1990s, integration depended on three elements: the decline of working conditions with exploitation of the workforce and its low cost; the use of natural resources, without any added value; and short-term financial speculation. We call that spurious competition. Today we want to move to genuine competition. And in order to do that, without these three elements, we need to be able to rely on scientific and technological innovation capacities as well as on the quality of the workforce which can add value to the traditional, natural products. Therefore to create a chain of values in our country, we need trained people. We need innovation and scientific and technological growth in order to gravitate to autonomous growth and not depend on patents, royalties and knowledge produced in other countries.

The way globalization is happening today has to a large extent come about as a result of decisions taken by governments in the past. Some developments are positive while others have a devastating effect on societies and on people’s lives. Do you think that a better dialogue between researchers and decision-makers could have helped avoid the negative effects?

Yes, without doubt. But I do not believe in the utopian view that the social sciences alone can find solutions to problems that even politicians cannot manage to resolve. It is a matter of political will regarding the choice of the kind of globalization. If humanity does not alter the

current form of globalization, the social sciences alone will not suffice to help societies manage. To date, globalization has created a deep divide between the rich and the poor countries. It has even increased the inequality within countries, particularly in Latin America. I think that at the very heart of the issue is politics: do leaders accept this situation or are they going to ask the social sciences to help change the model?

For example, who defends interculturality with regard to the new information and communication technologies? We all readily agree that these technologies are fantastic, that they open up previously unattainable possibilities in education and the communication of information. And yet what we see is an ever-growing monopoly of certain languages and certain cultures on the Internet. If there is no political decision made in defence of interculturality we are going to see a monopoly of some cultures over all the others. What we call globalization or universalization, means in fact the appropriation of these new technologies by just a few cultures to the detriment of the majority.

Do you think one can say there is currently a depreciation of the social sciences?

I think the strength of the social sciences generally lies far more in their critical rather than propositional ability. We often turn to the social sciences, either to criticize the established order or, as I mentioned earlier, within the framework of targeted policies aiming to compensate for the obvious inequalities that generate a model of inequitable globalization. It is as though the gentle democratizing breeze of the social sciences were up against the inegalitarian hurricane brought about by a far more powerful economy. It is very difficult to resist these fundamentally inegalitarian models. But we social scientists, either we just stay with criticism or we work inside the faults and gaps left by the dominant policies, and try to produce more equality. It is a very noble task.

Since the 1990s, the general crisis of the neoliberal model has been challenging the social sciences to develop strategies that go beyond plain criticism and show their ability to build a new model. In the 1970s, Latin America, along with some parts of Africa, was the cradle of the dependence theory and the need for freedom. In much the same way, the social sciences in Latin America can be expected to take the lead in making new positive proposals particularly today when a whole group of governments – Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina – is far more focused on equality and social issues.

But in order to be efficient, the social sciences need independence. By strengthening their interaction with the world of politics, do they not run the risk of losing their independence?

No, not in the slightest. For us social scientists who often work, discuss and take action within the political sphere, the dialogue with policy makers and with social reality is extremely rewarding. I do not think the social sciences are any the poorer or are becoming more dependent, as long as they maintain their point of view. One cannot practise a social science for a world that does not exist. The image of the sociologist far removed from politics, from the public and social problems, but nevertheless reflecting on society, does not belong to this century; what we need are committed social scientists.

What is the essence of the social sciences? It is the link between micro and macro, between structure and superstructure, and between individual and collective behaviour. For the specialist, that falls between the economy, politics and social issues. *That* is the contribution the social sciences can make and, in that vein I applaud the social scientist's political commitment – not a remote scientist looking down from above, but one who is involved in daily conflict resolution, according to each person's ideological position.

Argentina will be playing host to the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus. Why did your Government decide to support this initiative?

But that's exactly why, because we believe it is both unavoidable and necessary for there to be a dialogue between policy makers and representatives of the social sciences. Because we think that Latin America, for the reasons outlined earlier, provides an arena favourable to improving this dialogue. Because this Forum will make it possible not only to talk of theories, but also to compare many countries' actual experiences. And also because we want to turn over the page of the 1990s and even bring social prospects into political projects, and into current social models. I want to emphasize this point – it is not a question of calling afterwards on social scientists or policy makers dealing with social issues, to heal the wounds and tend the sick who have been left behind by a model that neglects equality; we need to build an egalitarian model.

If we are expecting anything to come out of the Buenos Aires Forum, it is strong interaction, an in-depth, critical, non-formal discussion, which will help us map out new, non-traditional ways of building more egalitarian societies.

The Forum aims in particular to strengthen international and interregional cooperation in the social sciences. Why is this so important?

It is, of course, very important to discuss certain universal problems, but it is just as important to discuss problems common to a region. A Latin American social science exists and it is time we recovered it! Today's social sciences simply cannot be stamped by a radial relationship. Let's imagine, just as in politics, a multipolar world of networks, rather than a single centre that radiates out. At the moment, for Latin America, relations are radial with the United States and Europe: social scientists have more contact with their North American and European counterparts than with their Uruguayan, Chilean, Brazilian, Colombian or Venezuelan counterparts.

So if there is a strong contingent of social scientists from the region attending the Forum, this would also help us examine many of the issues we have in common, and put us in touch with our University communities. In the case of Argentina, for example, we are currently doing our utmost so that not all our young doctorate students leave the region to study elsewhere. We are striving to create mechanisms for evaluating postgraduate degrees in order to give our credentials a kind of label or guarantee of excellence in the MERCOSUR region, so that our students may pursue their studies in the region, first and foremost focusing on regional issues.

“What is the essence of the social sciences? It is the link between micro and macro, between structure and superstructure, and between individual and collective behaviour.”

International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus

How is it that some well-intentioned political reforms fail? What are the possible effects on societies of governments' proposed action and policies? What should decision-makers do in order best to hit the socially desired targets?

These questions will be central to the discussions of the International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus which is to take place from 5 to 9 September 2005 in Argentina and Uruguay. The Forum aims to strengthen the link between social science research and policy, by inviting social scientists and decision-makers to reflect together on the four key themes:

- Social policies
- Decentralization and urban policies
- Global issues and dynamics
- Regional integration.

For more information consult the Forum website:

www.unesco.org/shs/ifsp

What about South-South cooperation?

South-South cooperation is another aspect we have to work on. We undertake almost no studies at all with our African, Middle Eastern or Asian counterparts! There are virtually no Asian social scientists in our University libraries. We generally limit ourselves to what is translated into Spanish and, let me say again, in a totally radial relationship with the United States and Europe... It is extremely difficult. One of the characteristics of the 1970s was the emergence of authors such as Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Elbio Yaguaribe and Juan Carlos Portantiero. All of them began to have some impact on the Third World. When their countries became independent, many African social scientists had an impact on Latin America. But today it is very rare for authors from developing countries to have any influence on the university training of our social scientists.

Would you say the social sciences have a unique characteristic in Latin America?

First of all, there is something very important that we have not yet touched on: the role played by the dictators and military governments in destroying Latin American social thought. Thirty years ago, almost all Latin American countries (with the exception of Costa Rica and Venezuela) were under a dictatorship. When a continent grows up like that, without democracy, the sector most affected is the social sciences. For example, I was studying sociology in my country and, well, the courses in sociology and anthropology, etc. were simply withdrawn from the curriculum. The development process of the social sciences in Latin America was not just broken, it was smashed – smashed through the expulsion, disappearance or exile of most of our social scientists.

Another characteristic we have in common is that Latin American social scientists have learned in the wake of dictatorships to appreciate democracy as we never did before. Freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, political parties, the whole democratic game, have become like prized possessions, so highly regarded that at first it seemed that democracy was enough on its own. Two decades on from the return to democracy, we began to see what was missing. Latin American social scientists will certainly not renounce democracy, but we cannot be content with a formal democracy. What is characteristic of us in Latin America is, I believe, the way we are striving to complete our democracy with economic and social policies, to create conditions that will not begin to disappoint the region again.

The surveys carried out recently in Latin America on people's confidence in democracy show that this confidence has a strong tendency to decrease when faced with a lack of response on the part of democracy to health, education, work and housing problems. These are problems that most people encounter. Now that is a specific challenge for Latin American social scientists; it is bound to differ from the problems posed in Europe, from the Asian growth model or the North American model.

What are your hopes for the September Forum?

My main wish is for the Forum to gather the best of positive experiences with regard to the link between policies and the social sciences, and I hope there will be specific commitments to help strengthen this link for the good of society. There should be a debate on the theoretical structure, with a high-level conceptual content, and also a solid debate for policy makers and social scientists to find joint ways of tackling our societies' most pressing issues that can no longer be postponed.¶

Interview by **Jeanette Blom**, with **Ana Krichmar**, j.blom@unesco.org

Youth meet city professionals

In March of this year, young people and city professionals from eight different cities in Europe, Africa and Latin America gathered in Dakar (Senegal) for the first international meeting of the *Quartiers du Monde: histoires urbaines* (“Districts of the world: urban affairs”) network,* an initiative aimed at constructing more inclusive, participatory processes of urban governance in cities North and South.

Launched in cooperation with the MOST Programme, this comparative action-research project seeks to analyse and encourage young people’s participation in local development in order to contribute to new mechanisms of governance which integrate youth as a valuable resource in policy development and as equal partners in the development of their district.

The week-long meeting (20 to 26 March) analysed the findings of the first year of project activities of the participating neighbourhoods. Following a common research methodology comprising tools such as social cartography and gender analysis, local teams worked on three main axes of reflection and intervention in their districts: “power and participation”, “young identities” and “social self-regulation”.

During the meeting’s interactive working sessions and field visits, project teams exchanged experiences on what it means to be young in their respective neighbourhoods, discussed and compared the dynamics generated by their activities and highlighted the many difficulties and opportunities involved in constructing meaningful youth participation in local development and decision-making. Despite the diversity of sociocultural contexts and strategies on the ground reflected in the project, young people of disadvantaged neigh-

bourhoods face similar discrimination and social exclusion challenges or, as one young participant from El Alto (Bolivia) put it: “Through the project, we have learnt how to understand our reality, and how to participate on the basis of that reality. Despite our cultural diversity, we all share the same social conscience”.

Constructing strategies for effective participation and partnership will be the main challenge for the next phase of the project: the consolidation of projects and the strengthening of dialogue with local authorities and inhabitants in order to change adults’ perceptions of young people from a negative to a positive recognition of their potential. ¶

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Dakar meeting discussion on the role of gender relations in local neighbourhoods.

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CITY PROFESSIONALS

The 5th International Seminar of the “City Professionals” Latin American network took place in Brazil, followed by a seminar of public workshops on urban studies and architecture (7-11 March 2005). The two events were organized by Salvador de Bahia University (UNIFACS/Brazil) and the decentralized coordination of the MOST network.

Taking part in these two complementary meetings were professors from six countries, Brazilian local government urban policy officers, representatives of local construction firms, NGOs and other civil society associations connected with the country’s local urban development.

The meetings helped focus the network’s action and discussions on the links between professional training and the implementation of urban policy. The main subjects discussed were the social role of the university and the implementation of Brazil’s “City Statute” law.

Two new publications, a video and an educational game were presented at the meetings:

- *La ciudad y sus profesionales*, COEYJTAL-ITESO-UNESCO, 2004, 251 pp.
- *6a Escuela Urbana 2003: Voces ciudadanas*, TIAU, Buenos Aires, 2005, 242 pp.

* See *SHS Newsletter* 08.



© Débora Nunes

Map of
Salvador de Bahia,
Brazil.

- A video on the experience of local urban development in Salvador de Bahia
- The “City Game” – an educational card game to teach the public about the workings of urban management and its actors.

As a final outcome of the meeting, the *Carta de Salvador* was signed by the participants. This charter proposes modalities for the establishment of offices open to the public, offering technical assistance to solve urban problems.

Among the several decisions taken should be mentioned: four books to be published by the end of 2005 on new participatory and democratic urban practices; two local housing projects to be developed to counteract urban social segregation; and workshops on urban policy to be organized for the Buenos Aires International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus. ¶

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“Urban Policies and the Right to the City”

On 18 March 2005, UNESCO’s Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura and Ms Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Memorandum commits the two agencies to develop common approaches on the role of cities in the reduction of urban poverty, and provides a framework for the elaboration of new instruments and strategies in the field of urban development and social and environmental sustainability.

The fields of mutual interest outlined in the Memorandum include the social function of built environment as cultural heritage, observatories on the concept of “The Right to the City” and the strengthening of the urban governance dimension of the World Heritage Cities initiative.

Referring to the existing joint initiatives, the Director-General expressed his satisfaction about the signing of this new agreement, which he hoped would give new impetus to the cooperation between the two agencies. He added that the Memorandum would reinforce the effectiveness and pertinence of UNESCO’s activities in the field of cities and urban issues, as well as facilitate its cooperation with the world association “United Cities and Local Governments”.

Public debate

During her visit to UNESCO, Ms Tibaijuka also participated in the public debate on “Urban Policies and the Right to the City” co-organized by UNESCO, UN-HABITAT and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) in order to identify elements and partners for joint research projects between UN-HABITAT and UNESCO and to exchange best practices. During the debate, presentations were made by Mayors and other city officials on public policies with respect to social cohesion and integration, as well as by members of NGOs and academic institutions from various parts of the world on urban policy research. ¶

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**Ms Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
and Mr Koïchiro Matsuura,
18 March 2005.**

Copenhagen

4 + 10

The 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development marked the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995). It was held at the United Nations in New York from 9 to 18 February 2005.

The session focused on the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the 24th special session of the General Assembly.

A mixed record

In his opening speech, Mr José Antonio Ocampo, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), stated “Overall, a ten-year review of Copenhagen reveals a mixed record. There are some positive developments, including the fact that the Summit did succeed in raising awareness and emphasizing the importance of addressing social development issues and implementing social development policies, culminating in the inclusion of several social development objectives in the

Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, many hopes and expectations have been left unfulfilled”. He added that what is required is a “normative and policy approach that places human beings at the center of development, and views economic growth as a means and not as an end in itself”.

Prior to the conference, UNDESA had requested UN Agencies and Commissions to send reports on their actions and future commitments. The major elements are presented in UNDESA’s *Compilation of contributions from UN agencies and regional commissions*. This report, along with UNESCO’s contribution (“Review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly” prepared by SHS), are posted on UNDESA’s web page (see address below).

Reports and a new declaration

With its focus on the social science research and policy linkages, SHS obviously has an important role to play in this field and was very present during the 10-day meeting. In particular, it organized a side event on “On-line knowledge management and meta-networking for decision-making in social policies” (9 February). Dr Nazli

Choucri, President of the Scientific Advisory Committee of MOST, and Professor of Political Science (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), made a presentation focusing in particular on the new MOST online policy research service.

The *Declaration on the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development* was adopted by consensus on 11 February. It reaffirms that “the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session constitute the basic framework for the promotion of social development for all at the national and international levels”.

The Declaration is of high importance to UNESCO as it renews its commitment to “promoting social integration by fostering societies that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people”. It reaffirms “the importance of promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education”. ¶

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TWO NEW FORUMS OF MINISTERS IN PREPARATION

Ministers of social development from several countries met informally with SHS representatives on 8 February 2005 at UN Headquarters in New York. They discussed how the successful experience of the Latin American Forum of Ministers of Social Development could be replicated in other regions of the world. The Latin American Forum

was launched in 2001 with the support of UNESCO. Those attending included the Minister of Social Development and Solidarity of Mali, the Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity of Mauritius, the Minister of Women’s Affairs and Social Development of Peru, the Minister of Social Development of South Africa and the

Secretary of the Planning and Development Division, Pakistan.

In 2005, a first meeting for the Ministers of Social Development from the ECOWAS countries is foreseen in Mali, and another in Pakistan for Ministers of the Asia region. ¶
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Human Security in the Arab States

An International Conference on “Human Security in the Arab States” was held in Amman, Jordan, on 14 and 15 March 2005. It was jointly organized by the Regional Human Security Centre at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy and UNESCO, under the patronage of the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Experts from the Arab States region and international experts presented various papers and discussed the issue of Human Security. Government representatives from Canada, Chile, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Switzerland and Yemen as well as representatives of UN agencies, programmes and funds, also participated in the conference.

During the first Session of the conference, Mr Bechir Chourou (Tunisia) presented, at the request of UNESCO, a consolidated

study on “Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks for the Promotion of Human Security in the Arab States”.

An ethical enterprise

In this study he underlined that: *“Any reforms (...) Arabs may deem necessary must spring from a conviction that the search for human security is an ethical enterprise – and not just a political palliative. They further need to stem from the free will of Arab societies and be initiated and overseen by them. If reforms are adopted as a result of external pressure, or if they are defined by outside actors, or if their follow-up is entrusted to third parties, then they are not likely to be sustainable. On the other hand, outside calls for reforms should not be used as an excuse for rejecting such reforms. After all, we are dealing with human security and as such, it is*

the concern of all humanity”.

This concept paper will be published in 2005 within the series entitled *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks* in the different regions/subregions of the world.

The second session of the conference was devoted to the discussion of three case studies: Palestine, Sudan, Yemen.

The following two sessions dealt with perspectives of regional cooperation and possible strategies to improve human security in the Arab States.

A set of recommendations was discussed and adopted. Furthermore it was decided that in-depth discussion should be continued during a second UNESCO conference, organized in cooperation with the League of Arab States. ¶

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Compositions for peace

In March 2005, the Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) embarked on a new project: *Sowing Seeds of Peace in the Mekong River Basin*. This project aims at paving the way for a more peaceful future by promoting tolerance and understanding among young people of the six Mekong River Basin countries: Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Through a range of activities designed to appeal to young people – concerts (photo of ad, right), debates, exhibitions on art, poetry, essays and song-writing – the project offers an opportunity for students from secondary to tertiary level from these different countries to share

histories, views and hopes for the future.

The idea behind the project is to foster peace leadership through education and the sharing of information among young people. It thereby contributes to the mission of UNESCO in the field of social and human sciences, which is to facilitate social transformations conducive to the values of justice, freedom and human dignity.

Sowing Seeds of Peace is just one of the several activities carried out by RUSHSAP with the aim of fostering positive social change. Other projects include a Vocational Training Centre for families affected by HIV/AIDS and the establishment of Prison Learning Centres. ¶

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Ad for a concert which was attended by 7000 people.

The 2004 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn has been awarded the 2004 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education for his outstanding contribution to the creation of a universal culture of human rights. UNESCO's Director-General gave him an honorary diploma, the prize trophy and a cheque for us \$10,000 during the Award Ceremony which took place in Bangkok, capital of the country of the laureate, on 23 March 2005.

In his statement the Director-General stressed that Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn combined the “qualities of a scholar, a researcher, an educator, a policy-making adviser and a grass-roots human rights activist who upholds the universal values of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education of Thailand, Dr Kasama Varavarn, made a statement on behalf of Thailand's National Commission for UNESCO. She underlined that “...the work of Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn ... has shed light on the issue of child sexual exploitation, an issue that had, for a long time, been swept under the carpet. Through his courageous attempt to bring the issue into the open, many effective measures are now in place to prevent and cope with this problem”. Dr K. Varavarn pointed out that Vitit Muntarbhorn's research work, publications and crusade against human rights violations inspired young professionals to follow his example.

Human rights at the heart of our lives

In his acceptance speech, Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn recalled that his career as a human rights activist started with his involvement in voluntary work in rural communities and in the organization of legal training programmes for agricultural youth. This experience taught him about human dignity and the kindness of villagers, “even when their daily lives were faced with rampant poverty”. As a young University lecturer, he carried out research on vulnerable groups, in particular children and women. His book on refugees entailed long journeys to various refugee camps in Asia. “The testimonies of refugees”, recalled Vitit Muntarbhorn, “are harrowing tales of why they left their country of origin – often due to oppression, persecution, warfare and hunger intermixed with the fear of discrimination. These experiences always remind why human rights are at the heart of our lives – to assist and protect people often in precarious, life-and-death situations”.

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn noted that 2005 marked the launching of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, adopted by the United Nations as the follow-up to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1994-2005), and of its Plan of Action for the first phase (2005-2007), relating to human rights education at primary and secondary school levels. In his view, the implementation of the Plan of Action faces five major challenges: the creation of a human rights-friendly learning environment, teacher capacity-building, democratic school governance, stimulating content and methodology of human rights education and bridging the cultural divide.



From left to right:

Dag Nygård, Pablo Zavala Sarrio, Vitit Muntarbhorn (prizewinner), David Jan McQuoid-Mason and Anatoly Azarov.

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At the end of his speech, Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn announced he would give the entire amount of the Prize to help children affected by HIV/AIDS in his country. This decision was wholeheartedly applauded by the audience.

Honourable mentions

The Director General also awarded Honorary Diplomas and, for the first time since the Prize was established, small bronze trophies to the four Honourable Mentions of the 2004 UNESCO Prize. All four came to Bangkok especially for the occasion: Professor David Jan McQuoid-Mason, Professor of Law at the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa; Dr Anatoly Azarov, Founder and Director of the Moscow School of Human Rights, Russian Federation; The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief, an international network of representatives from faith communities, NGOs and academia based in Norway, represented by Mr Dag Nygård, its Chairperson; and the Peruvian Institute for Education in Human Rights and Peace, represented by its Director, Dr Pablo Zavala Sarrio.

The Ceremony was organized by SHS and the UNESCO Bangkok Office in close cooperation with Thailand's National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Education. It was attended by representatives of the Government, the diplomatic corps, the human rights community and academic circles and was widely covered by the mass media.

UNESCO launches a Palestine Women's Resource Center

© UNESCO / G. Whitcomb



Trophy specially created for the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education. Donated by the Japanese artist, Toshi.

Fourteenth award

The Bangkok ceremony was the fourteenth time the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education was awarded since its creation in 1978 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Professor Abdelfattah Amor, Chairperson of the Jury of the Prize and of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, underlined in his speech that “this Prize aims to encourage and to support educators, trainers and researchers, as well as organizations and institutions which strive every day to ensure that human rights are understood and adhered to by the largest possible number of people and to make human rights education an ongoing struggle so that people’s minds are protected against the sinister impact of prejudice, hatred, intolerance and discrimination”.

The Prize will next be awarded in 2006. ¶

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UNESCO and the Palestine Ministry of Women's Affairs have signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the establishment of a Palestine Women's Resource Center (PWRC). The signing ceremony took place during the visit of Ms Zahira Kamal, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Palestinian National Authority, to UNESCO on Friday 13 May 2005.

Located in Ramallah, the Center will serve as an observatory and clearinghouse on information related to women's issues in the Palestinian National Authority. In addition to its function as a resource and documentation centre, it will carry out networking, advocacy and policy-oriented research for gender equality and the human rights of Palestinian women. Research priorities will be legislation for women's rights, causes and consequences of women's poverty, violence against women, and women's political participation.

The Center is the first of its kind to be established in an Arab country outside the Maghreb region. Through online databases, reference materials, research projects, policy briefs and internships, it will contribute to building human and institutional capacities in governmental and non-governmental women's organizations, and facilitate communication flows and networking as well as advocacy of gender-sensitive issues within Palestinian society. It will also promote awareness-raising campaigns, particularly in regard to the enforcement of existing laws that protect the rights of women.



© UNESCO / J. Blom

UNESCO will allocate a budget of \$200,000 to the establishment of the PWRC and an additional \$150,000 to cover staff and operational costs and research activities for the period 2006-2007. The Ministry of Women's Affairs will provide office space for the Center. UNESCO will seek extra-budgetary funding for the Center for the hiring of additional experts and researchers.

The official inauguration of the Center is foreseen to take place in November 2005. ¶

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Microfinance activities in South-East Asia

One of the priorities for UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences is linked to the UN's Millennium Development Goal n°1: the eradication of poverty.

Using alternative forms of education, endogenous management of cultural sites and natural resources, development and marketing of local handicrafts, micro-financing and social support services, UNESCO's Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia-Pacific (RUSHSAP) initiated three poverty alleviation projects in Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand. The goal was to increase the earning capacity of women, which is still a major area of neglect in present poverty alleviation activities.



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Making weaving a business

RUSHSAP has been working together with the Lao Women's Union (LWU) on the projects for the past five years. The first two projects identified ways to help women in rural areas find sources of income for their families. This led to information-sharing on the role of women in development and their status in society. Once women learned the basic skills in business and weaving, RUSHSAP helped participants set up a revolving fund to buy materials and equipment for weaving. After selling their products, the women repaid their "loans". The money is managed by the women themselves and is used either to help new participants

and/or expand the activities of those already involved in the project.

The first project started in 1999 in Hongsa district, Xayabouly province (Northern Lao PDR) with participants from 36 families. By 2003, more than 150 families had received training and were using the revolving funds. In June 2004, the LWU was able to report that the project had reduced the number of poor people in Hongsa by more than 70%. RUSHSAP agreed to the LWU's request for the project to be extended to Kaleum and Darkcheung districts in Sekong province where there are close to 8,200 poor families.

The second project was started in 2001 in Samakhixay district, Attapeu province (Southern Lao PDR) with 43 participants. After one year, the governor of Attapeu province contributed 10,000,000 kip to the project for distributing resources to poor families. There are now more than 130 families receiving the revolving fund. These projects have been very successful and the funds continue to help women in the communities where the projects were implemented.

Vocational training workshops for young migrant women

The third project, which began in 2003 and was completed in 2004, concentrated on the urban areas of Vientiane, Lao PDR. Like the first two, this project sought to identify ways to eradicate poverty through participation. The only difference was that it targeted young people, particularly girls and young women migrants in urban areas. As part of the project "Urban Poverty Alleviation among Young and Female Migrants in China, Laos PDR, Cambodia and Mongolia",* it focused on four areas: reduction of rural-to-urban migration through income generation opportunities in villages; awareness-raising of dangers encountered in the city, and sharing

information on life skills and social activities; vocational training and employment opportunities in the city; and awareness of socio-economic consequences of migration at the national level and strengthening the Government's capacity to respond to these issues.

In cooperation with the President of the LWU of Vientiane, RUSHSAP organized vocational training workshops on tailoring, hairdressing, noodle/food processing and agriculture/livestock for young migrants in 9 districts in Vientiane. The objective was to provide young migrants with some basic skills to help them find jobs to enable them to live in their new urban environment. In the vocational training workshops, training activities were organized on microfinance – this included marketing, small businesses, managing funds, etc. RUSHSAP also organized radio broadcasting programmes to teach urban youth the basic life skills, civic rights, labour law and the realities of city life, in particular for girls and young women. The project was successfully implemented and, altogether, more than 300 young migrants have attended the training workshops with the opportunity of receiving the revolving funds.



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Handicrafts to generate income

In 2001, RUSHSAP successfully initiated another project: setting up handicraft groups as small businesses in villages to generate additional income. It was implemented with the assistance of the Tribal Research Institute in Chiang Mai. Women in 3 villages were involved. Seventy-nine participants attended the training workshop and study tours to the main markets in Chiang Mai and had the opportunity to receive the revolving funds.

Project workers discovered that the timing of training sessions had to be flexible to enable villagers to participate after they had finished working in the fields. After the participants attended the vocational training and small business activities workshops, the community set up their own committees to manage the revolving funds and business activities. UNESCO input ended in 2001 but the project is still going strong. ¶

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The use of crack is affecting more and more street children in Guatemala. This life-destroying drug has become easily accessible and costs next to nothing.

CASA MOJOCA – A SOCIAL REHABILITATION CENTRE

In Guatemala, UNESCO's Children in Need programme supports projects that aim to improve the living conditions of many children and adolescents who live within the confines of poverty and social problems. These are the aftermath of a long civil war, still very apparent years after the conflict ended.

A recent study of the projects showed that Casa Mojoca was a success. This reception centre helps a particularly vulnerable group: street children.

The Centre is just one of several activities managed by Mojoca – Movement for Street Children – and is based on principles of self-management, participation and individual as well as joint responsibility. In order to help the young people regain their place in society, the Centre offers training courses and education programmes. Mojoca currently has around 250 children and adolescents. ¶

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IS POVERTY A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE?

On the occasion of the second meeting of the UNESCO International Advisory Committee on Poverty and Human Rights (Nairobi, 9-11 May 2005), UNESCO invited Kenyan NGOs and other civil society groups involved in the struggle against poverty to participate in a public debate. Discussions focused particularly on whether poverty is a human rights issue and on efforts to build national capacities for research and policy analysis on poverty eradication. The panel was composed of the representative of the Kenyan Minister of Planning, the President of the Portuguese Social and Economic Council, the President of the Human Rights Commission and the Assistant Director-General for SHS.

The two following days were devoted to the evaluation of the proposals submitted for the Small Grants Programme on Poverty Eradication. Of the 370 proposals received, 42 were accepted: 10 from South Asia, 11 from Eastern and Southern Africa, 6 from Western and Central Africa, 12 from Latin America and one additional grant was awarded for Africa, Latin America and Asia in order to establish a state-of-the-art on the issue. This last research will be conducted by the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) network. ¶

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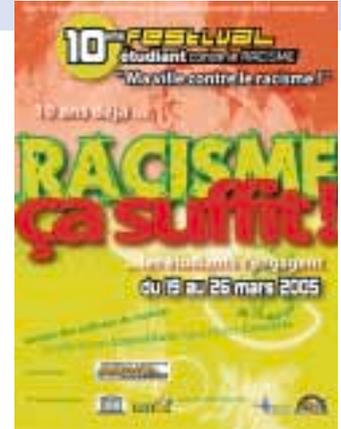
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The year 2005 is both a year for commemoration and for celebration. We are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the liberation of the concentration camps – which makes us remember the tragedy of discrimination, a discrimination still present today. And we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and UNESCO. This in turn reminds us that the collective commitment made in 1945 has lost nothing of its topicality.

To mark the date of 21 March – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – SHS organized some day-long events at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

Taking its cue from UNESCO's "International Coalition of Cities Against Racism" initiative, this year the Organization joined the 10th Student Festival against

Racism. A series of awareness-raising and mobilization activities were organized at Headquarters on 19 and 21 March, in cooperation with the French National Commission for UNESCO and in partnership with France's National Students' Union. Students from all over France joined round tables to discuss the Ten-Point Plan of Action (see *SHS Newsletter 08*) of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism and to develop on the basis of that document an appeal to French town councillors (see below). The results of the round tables were further discussed at an informal debate in the presence of councillors of university towns and cities and personalities from the entertainment world. On the speakers' panel were former French Prime Minister Laurent Fabius and writer Edouard Glissant with whom participants discussed the problem of contemporary racism in French society.



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Anti-Exclusion Films

In the same context of celebrating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the 6th International Anti-Exclusion Pro-Tolerance Film Festival took place at UNESCO Headquarters from 17 to 23 March 2005. Around twenty films showed different aspects of racism and discrimination, and on 21 March, in the presence of the film's director and the Ambassador of South Africa, there was a preview of the South African film on post-apartheid traumatism: *Zulu Love Letter*. ¶

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➔ Appeal to university students and mayors of French and European cities

1. Considering that the fight against racism must not be limited to emotional or sporadic reactions and that it can no longer be restricted to declarations of principle or intent and that it must henceforward be translated into concrete, permanent action
 2. Considering that the European structure has as its vocation to defend and promote values as basic as equality, the rejection of racism and the fight against discrimination
 3. Considering that the "city" is the nearest and most natural place for citizenship, i.e. the connection between a person and his/her community, and that the city more than any other institution has the most pertinent means of taking concrete action in everyday life
 4. Considering that the university arena, symbol of knowledge and universality, must by nature and vocation be a place of commitment and combat against all forms of discrimination
 5. Considering that young people have the right to demand that the community be accountable for their future which the community maps out and that in the community, it is above all students who have a duty to become involved
- Students invite all young people and the university community to meet every

year for the Student Festival against Racism in order to express their total rejection of racism and of all forms of discrimination, to question society and to assess its action

- The French National Students' Union asks all university towns and cities to adhere to the Nuremberg Declaration of 10 December 2004 (Fourth European Conference of Cities for Human Rights) and to join the "Coalition of European Cities Against Racism". ¶

Presented by Yassir Fichtali, President of the French National Students' Union (UNEF) at UNESCO Headquarters 21 March 2005.

Constructing international consensus: the Precautionary Principle

➡ The precautionary principle: a working definition

When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm.

- *Morally unacceptable harm* refers to harm to humans or the environment that is:
 - threatening to human life or health, or
 - serious and effectively irreversible, or
 - inequitable to present or future generations, or
 - imposed without adequate consideration of the human rights of those affected.
- The judgement of *plausibility* should be grounded in scientific analysis. Analysis should be ongoing so that chosen actions are subject to review.
- *Uncertainty* may apply to, but need not be limited to, causality or the bounds of the possible harm.
- *Actions* are interventions that are undertaken before harm occurs that seek to avoid or diminish the harm. Actions should be chosen that are proportional to the seriousness of the potential harm, with consideration of their positive and negative consequences, and with an assessment of the moral implications of both action and inaction. The choice of action should be the result of a participatory process.¶

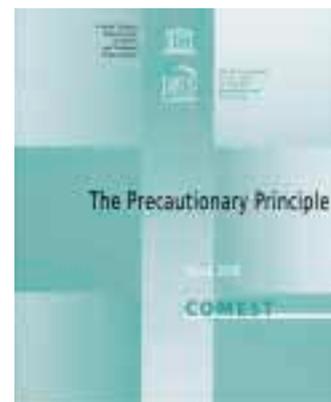
The Precautionary Principle, COMEST, 2005.

COMEST, UNESCO's advisory committee on the ethics of science and technology, has published a report on the Precautionary Principle. This is a significant step towards the construction of an international consensus, which is the *raison d'être* of multilateral organizations such as UNESCO.

Over the past decades, protecting the environment has become a crucial goal for humanity, and understanding the relevance of this protection a necessity for all countries. The idea that economic and social development may be examined independently from a concern for maintaining biological diversity is increasingly unacceptable. Today's world priorities must include the search for sustainable development and for a fair balance between economic activity, social well-being and preserving nature on a global level.

In terms of both local and international normative frameworks, these concerns have been integrated in regulations and principles that seek to ensure environmental preservation to benefit human health and quality of life for present and future generations. Normative and regulatory instruments created under this proposal have implicitly or explicitly incorporated the precautionary principle – an ethical principle broadly invoked with regard to the adoption of environmental protection vis-à-vis the eventual impact of a new technology.

Thorough investigations of this principle demonstrate that issues of epistemological importance are raised along with ethical and legal implications of current definitions and practices. In fact, a number of interpretations and applications, sometimes in conflict with each other, are based on different assumptions concerning the perception of the very nature of



the scientific knowledge and technological developments as well as the risk analysis stages in which the principle is applied. Therefore, a pragmatic approach to address the needs of the target audience of policy makers was deemed necessary. This would be a comprehensive and impartial discussion of the precautionary principle covering ethical and legal aspects as well as possible application of the principle.

Report of an expert group

For these reasons, an expert group was brought together by UNESCO and COMEST in order to clarify the meaning, scope and possible application of the precautionary principle. After holding three meetings in 2004 the group drafted a report addressing these issues.

Geared towards making the principle operational in a rational manner, the report also discusses the implications of the precautionary principle for society, culture, science, policy and governance, industry and trade. It includes explanations of the various decision-making and risk assessment tools already available in order to identify the types of problems that can benefit from the application of the principle. Two case studies illustrate



Eight years of COMEST: learning lessons and going ahead

→ how the principle can be applied. The report also includes a historical overview of different wordings of the principle and a comprehensive and self-explanatory working definition (see page 27).

This definition encompasses, in a rational way, all relevant elements associated with the precautionary principle. However, its main virtue lies, first, in the emphasis on a rational assessment of the plausibility of the harm, based in scientific evidence; and, second, in the fact the choice of the actions to avoid or diminish the harm must take into account not only its positive and negative implications, but also the implications of action or inaction.

The report was examined and unanimously approved by the members of COMEST at its 4th Ordinary Session, from 23 to 25 March 2005, in Bangkok, Thailand. It is available both in print and online (see address below). ¶

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For the first time, COMEST held its biennial meeting in the Asia-Pacific region. This Fourth Ordinary Session took place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21 to 29 March 2005 and attracted over 500 representatives not only from the region but also from many other UNESCO Member States worldwide.

It brought together researchers, scientists, government officials and many others interested in exchanging ideas related to ethics in the field of science and technology. It was also the occasion for a day-long Youth Forum on the Ethics of Science and Technology and for the signing of the Bangkok Declaration on Ethics in Science and Technology.

Entering a new phase

COMEST is now eight years old and entering into maturity. As emphasized by the Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura, in his opening address to the Fourth Ordinary Session, an aspect of this maturity is the regional approach that the Commission has embraced since its last session in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in December 2003. By meeting in the different regions of the world, COMEST demonstrates not only that it disseminates the debate on ethical issues related to science and technology, but that it is receptive to distinct regional concerns. The Fourth Session in Bangkok was once again an opportunity to have a fruitful exchange of views with local experts, to strengthen networks and to set up a platform for future activities in the different areas of the world.

On the whole, this was a successful meeting not only in terms of feedback and response from national and regional audiences and authorities, but also because it gave a new impetus to the work and activities of COMEST. The meeting

also helped to increase mutual awareness: the scientific community, policy makers and the public at large in the region learned more about COMEST and UNESCO activities; and UNESCO's staff and COMEST members became better acquainted with the priorities and challenges in the region in terms of ethics of science and technology.

The debates that took place during the meetings proved that the apparent disagreement between natural sciences and humanities can be overcome through open and truthful dialogue between all parties. Indeed, the very composition of COMEST, with members representing different areas of the world and various disciplines and schools of thought, can enhance the reconciliation of ethical reflections and the advancement of knowledge.

This, perhaps, is where UNESCO in general, and SHS in particular, has a vital role to play: encouraging in-depth debates and the conciliation of different perspectives in order to offer sound guidance to the international community. ¶

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➔ Bangkok Declaration

During a regional meeting of Ministers of Science and Technology held in parallel with the COMEST session, 10 countries expressed their commitment to promoting ethics of science and technology by signing a joint statement, *The Bangkok Declaration on Ethics in Science and Technology*. ¶
www.unescobkk.org

A meeting of minds in Thailand

In Bangkok the energy of urban growth is palpable. A city dotted with temples and snaked with lines of traffic, this Asian capital is a place where traditional values and modernity tangle. How modernity should be integrated into the existent societal fabric is a key concern to ethics of science and technology. Appropriately, therefore, the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) held its fourth session in Bangkok from 23 to 25 March 2005 at the invitation of the Thai Government.

The enormous potential of science and its applications demands attention. The challenge is to manage scientific and technological development in order to realize the benefits and avoid the possible ills. Mr Korn Thapparansi, Minister of Science and Technology of Thailand, took up this crucial issue of management as opening speaker in the debate on good governance. He described the movement of Thailand's research and development system towards greater public control over science and technology.

Mr Thapparansi also broached the issue of benefit sharing, particularly at the international level, exploring another facet of ethics of science and technology. He argued that the current intellectual property regime prevents the fair distribution of benefits and knowledge from scientific and technological advances. The pros and cons of intellectual property rights were the subject of discussion on several occasions throughout the COMEST session.

The right to information

The right to information was also brought up. During the Youth Forum on Ethics of Science and Technology held in conjunction with the session, Professor Ravi Silva, 2003 winner of the Javed Husain Prize for Young Scientists, also questioned the ethics of restricting access to information. Borrowing from Sir Isaac Newton, he said: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" to stress the importance of access to information for scientific advancement.

An interesting feature of the conference was the Buddhist philosophy that manifested itself in several presentations, notably in discussions on environmental ethics and animal ethics as well as during the opening ceremony. In his keynote address, Dr Yongyuth Yuthavong, former President of the Thai Academy of Science and Technology, drew connections between Buddhism, the national religion, and ethics of science and technology. He ventured that the Buddhist core principle of purifying the mind, which encompasses freedom from delusion, might be understood as the "need to reflect on the basic reason and the ultimate consequence and implications of our action, including the benefit-risk



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Above: H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, of the Kingdom of Thailand, greets Mr Koichiro Matsuura at the Opening ceremony of the Fourth Ordinary Session of COMEST.

consideration of the effect on the future". This interpretation resonates with the precautionary principle as defined in a report adopted by COMEST during this session (see page 19).

Apart from good governance, benefit sharing and international cooperation, other topics discussed were environmental ethics, ethics education, animals and ethics, human rights and ethics, the ethical use of genetically modified organisms, ethics and emerging technologies, and benefit sharing and international cooperation in research. ¶

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Ethics and bioethics in CIS and Baltic States

In all scientific fields, ethical reflection and debate are intensifying on the issues raised by scientific progress and technological development.

Identification, analysis and solution-seeking for these issues require the application of universal ethical principles and norms based on shared values. In practice this process involves taking steps to identify emerging challenges in science and technology, the involvement of decision-makers and the realization of educational and awareness-raising programmes. Hence there is a need for regional cooperation and exchange of experience, methodologies and research results.

With these challenges in mind, a meeting of experts was held in Minsk (Belarus) in March 2005, organized by the UNESCO Moscow Office for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation, the Belarus National Commission for

UNESCO, the Forum of Ethics Committees of the Commonwealth of Independent States (FECCIS), the Institute of Genetics and Cytology of Belarus National Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

- Discussions concentrated on the following: cooperation and creation of a common
- information area in ethics and bioethics; improving the work of ethics boards in incorporating universal norms and
- human rights in biomedical research; ethical aspects in the collection and
- use of genetic data; development of education programmes in ethics of science and technology, environmental ethics and bioethics.

Recommendations

Participants unanimously recommended national governments, parliaments, relevant ministries and institutions, public organizations and trade unions to support national initiatives, in particular

those relating to the development of education programmes in ethics of science and technology and activities of ethics and bioethics committees. They stressed the need to develop education programme modules on the region's needs in differentiated ethical education and awareness-raising among various social groups such as the UNESCO Global Ethical Observatory, Information and Educational Centre for Bioethics in Vilnius, Forum of Ethics Committees of CIS States. Participants also recommended interdisciplinary initiatives in the ethics of science and technology, environmental ethics, bioethics, human rights, social responsibility, and legal and ethical aspects of the most topical issues, such as HIV/AIDS, patients' rights and reproductive health, etc. ¶

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Participants in the Minsk meeting represented six countries of the CIS and Baltic States.

Migration without Borders: towards a right to mobility?

www.unesco.org/migration

What would happen if border controls were suppressed and people granted the right to move freely throughout the world? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (article 13-2). But what is the real meaning of this right to *emigration* in the absence of *immigration* possibilities?

In a globalized world in which migratory flows increasingly seem to escape States’ attempts at regulation, the Migration without Borders scenario, according to which both emigration and immigration should represent fundamental rights, fosters a critical rethinking of current migration policies and practices. An article published in *Global Migration Perspectives* No. 27, 2005 (Global Commission on International Migration, Geneva) analyses this scenario, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, shedding light on its human rights implications and investigating the economic, social and practical issues raised by the free movement of people. It summarizes the findings of a UNESCO project, which brought together scholars and migration experts from the five continents to explore the issues raised by the free movement of people. ¶

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A report to combat human trafficking in Africa

www.unesco.org/shs/humantrafficking

The report entitled “Searching for Best Practices to Counter Human Trafficking in Africa – a Focus on Women and Children” by Dr T. D. Truong and M.B. Angeles (Institute of Social Studies, The Hague) is now available on UNESCO’s anti-poverty programme website (see address below).

The report discusses the concept of best practices as applied in the campaign

against human trafficking, with particular emphasis on women and children in Africa. It identifies key actors, including international organizations and bilateral agencies engaged in the struggle against human trafficking, and discusses their roles as channels of ideas and practices. It traces the main areas of relevant expertise – migration, human rights protection and crime control – and shows how beliefs about causative aspects as well as valid intervention are translated into action in the field. The report also highlights the experiences of ten NGOs in Africa engaged in the campaign against the trafficking of women and children and discusses their strengths and weaknesses.

A printed edition of the publication is planned for October 2005. ¶

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The International Social Science Journal (Issue 183 – March 2005)

Affirmative Action

Editorial advisers for the issue:

Patrick Simon & Daniel Sabbagh

Action against racism and discrimination is central to contemporary perspectives on human rights and social justice. Yet while policy makes extensive use of vocabulary and even of concepts derived from social science, considerable uncertainty remains among specialists about the basis, implications and practical effects of policy measures that have become routine. From this perspective, affirmative action is of central significance. It appears to be a matter of straightforward common sense that specific remedial measures should be targeted at the victims of discrimination. In fact, a comparative analytical perspective shows how complex are the issues at stake and how simplistic or even misleading common sense can be. As the five articles in the section on “Measuring discrimination” show, identifying victims is hugely

complex. Five further articles shed light on the rich and complex historical, legal, political and institutional construction of what, for contemporary purposes, “race” and “ethnicity” actually mean in the exemplary case of the United States, and other contributions consider France, India and Nigeria. Affirmative action schemes might be regarded as erasing historical cleavages, especially when designed to compensate for them. In fact, they tend rather to reveal the shifting, but persistent, contemporary cleavages that cluster around historical patterns of development.

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www.unesco.org/issj



La resignificación de la ética, la ciudadanía y los derechos humanos en el siglo XXI.

Marcelo R. Lobosco (Ed.), Eudeba / UNESCO, 2004.

Sapere aude – dare to be wise, to listen and think for oneself is the main thrust of this bilingual French/Spanish publication: “The resignification of ethics, citizenship and human rights in the 21st century”. With this publication the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Argentina together with the Argentine Association of Philosophy Olympiads present a compilation of papers by nine eminent philosophers seeking to make us rethink ethics, citizenship and human rights from the standpoint of the twenty-first century – after the fall of the Berlin Wall, after semantic displacement in the social and human sciences, after the paradoxes of technological modern-

ization in Latin America, and after the feudal-postmodern cocktail of pre-industrialized societies, migration, multiculturalism and defending the interests of reason in other industrialized societies. Through the discussion of these dense topics the authors push us to question ourselves and our attitudes to society. Who is the Other? What is alterity? How do we place human rights in democratic, egalitarian societies? Are we thinking in terms of a universal ethic or are we opening wide the door to multiculturalism? When we think of citizenship, is it as something already socially established or do we see citizenship like a virtual character in a video game who has to be fought and opposed before we can master it? In this publication these questions and others are debated in an effort to help us “think the paradoxical complexity of the present while thinking of the future”.



Filosofía, Educación y Sociedad Global

Manuel Bernales Alvarado and Marcelo Lobosco (Eds). Ediciones del Signo, Buenos Aires, 2005. ISBN 987-1074-21-2

Co-published by the Argentine Association of Philosophy Olympiads and UNESCO, “Philosophy, Education and Global Society” is the thirteenth in a series of publications produced by the SHS branch of the UNESCO Montevideo Office. The reader will share in pointed, diverse reflections from twelve prestigious intellectuals who show us how to look elsewhere in order to rethink global society. UNESCO, ever faithful to its tradition, promoting philosophy and the teaching

and learning of philosophy, uses key subjects for specific social groups, countries, regions and humanity as a whole. This book is essentially a regional publication. It makes us think again about the historical conscience, the cultural model and related problematic issues deeply embedded in Latin America. The different contributors attempt to metabolize the various processes global society is undergoing, and the impact such processes are having and will have on subjectivities. In an effort to humanize philosophy teaching through socio-historical processes and pointing out consequences and undesired effects, this publication shows how philosophy as a discipline of synthesis can articulate social representation, the social structure of knowledge and value-bearing attitudes. Identity reactions that plunge a community into uncertainty and fragmentation, are like a puzzle waiting to be solved by those for whom education is the key to such problematic issues.



Violence and its causes – an assessment *La Violence et ses causes: où en sommes-nous?*

UNESCO Publishing / ECONOMICA, Paris, 2005, 144 pp. ISBN UNESCO 92-3-203989-3 (An English edition is under preparation.)

More than twenty years after a first publication on violence and its causes, UNESCO surveys the current situation with a second volume of reflections of specialists from different regions of the world. A review of the publication will be published in the next issue of the *SHS Newsletter*. ¶

JUNE

7 June: Seminar on “Gender and Citizenship”. Paris, France. (v.moghadam@unesco.org)

9-16 June: “Beijing & Beijing”. Event on preservation and social sustainability of Old Beijing. Beijing, China. (g.domenachich@unesco.org)

12-14 June: Expert Meeting on the Canadian Coalition of Cities against Racism. Saskatoon, Canada. (k.mutombo@unesco.org)

14 June: “Which UNESCO for the Future?” with Robert Badinter and Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Paris, France. (m.faetanini@unesco.org)

19-22 June: II Bolivian National Congress on Bioethics. La Paz, Bolivia. (a.saada@unesco.org)

20-24 June: Second session of the intergovernmental meeting of experts aimed at finalizing a draft declaration on universal norms on bioethics. Paris, France. (h.tenhave@unesco.org)

23 June: Training Workshop for the Bioethics Network REDBIOETICA. La Paz, Bolivia. (a.saada@unesco.org)

27 June: UNESCO Prize for Landscape Architecture. Edinburgh, United Kingdom. (b.colin@unesco.org)

JULY

4 July: Meeting of the Advisory Expert Commission on the Teaching of Ethics. Paris, France. (h.tenhave@unesco.org)

4-8 July: Public debate, national consultation and dialogues on the theme “Poverty, a human rights issue”. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. (c.tekaya@unesco.org)

5-6 July: Expert group on nanotechnology and ethics. Paris, France. (h.tenhave@unesco.org)

6 July: Award of the UNESCO Prize for Architecture on the occasion of the World Congress of Architects (3-7 July). Istanbul, Turkey. (b.colin@unesco.org)

8 July: First Expert Meeting on the Development of Indicators on Racism and Discrimination in the City. Nagoya, Japan. (j.morohashi@unesco.org)

11-13 July: Bioethics Days. Dakar, Senegal. (h.tenhave@unesco.org)

16 July: 20 Years of *Criança Esperança*. São Paulo, Brazil. (b.coelho@unesco.org)

25-27 July: 7th Session of the Intergovernmental Council of the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme. Paris, France. (c.von-furstenberg@unesco.org)

AUGUST

29 August-1 September: Beijing 2005: The Tenth Anniversary Commemoration of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Beijing, China. (g.domenachich@unesco.org)

31 August-3 September: First MERCOSUR Bioethics Congress. Iguazu, Brazil. (a.saada@unesco.org)

SEPTEMBER

5-9 September: International Forum on the Social Science – Policy Nexus. Buenos Aires, Rosario and Cordoba, Argentina, and Montevideo, Uruguay. (c.hahm@unesco.org)

6-7 September: Experts Meeting on the Coalition of Cities against Racism in Latin America and Caribbean. Montevideo, Uruguay. (k.mutombo@unesco.org)

8-9 September: International Conference on “Human Security and Peace in Central Asia”. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. (peace&security@unesco.org)