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**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE PROGRAMME ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**The promotion of dialogue among peoples: the Opatija and Abuja Declarations**

**SUMMARY**

This document contains two recent declarations on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples; the first adopted during the Regional Forum of South-East European States at summit level devoted to the theme “Communication of Heritage”, held in Opatija, Croatia on 1 June 2006 and the African Regional Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples, held in Abuja, Nigeria on 20 and 21 June 2006.

The Opatija summit-level regional forum was chaired by the President of Croatia together with the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe. The Presidents of the following countries attended the Forum: Bulgaria, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. Turkey, Serbia, Romania, Greece and Slovenia were represented by ministers and senior officials. The Prime Minister of Croatia attended the opening meeting.

The African Regional Conference was jointly organized and opened by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura. Government ministers and officials, parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders, representatives of civil society, the private sector, the media and eminent experts from academia attended. The conference also benefited from a strong participation of women and young people.



**OPATIJA DECLARATION**  
**adopted at the**  
**REGIONAL SUMMIT FORUM**  
**on**  
**“COMMUNICATION OF HERITAGE”**  
**1 June 2006**

Heads of State and high officials from South-East European countries, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe gathered in Opatija, Croatia, from 31 May to 1 June 2006 at the Regional Forum of South-East European States devoted to the theme “Communication of Heritage”.

Convened by Croatia and UNESCO, the Summit was chaired by the President of the host country, Mr Stjepan Mesić, together with the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, Mr Terry Davis. The Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr Ivo Sanader, welcomed the participants. The following Presidents participated in Opatija: Mr Georgi Parvanov, Mr Alfred Moisiu, Mr Branko Crvenkovski, Mr Sulejman Tihić, and Mr Filip Vujanović. Turkey was represented by the Minister of State, Mr Mehmet Aydin; Serbia by the Minister of Culture, Mr Dragan Kojadinovic; Romania by the State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Mr Virgil Stefan Nitulescu. Greece and Slovenia were represented by Ambassadors Mr Panayotis Baizos and Mr Milan Orožen Adamič.

Besides the high officials, experts from South-East Europe and international organizations, including the European Commission, as well as representatives of the National Commissions for UNESCO of the region also attended the Opatija Summit.

At the conclusion of the summit, the participants adopted the following **Opatija Declaration**:

We welcome the intensification of the regional dialogue in South-East Europe at the highest levels, which has developed since the first Regional Forum in Ohrid (2003), and express our satisfaction that constructive cooperation and solid partnership has developed and is growing across a broad range of fields: from political and security issues, economic policy and trade coordination and joint infrastructure development to policies, strategies and programmes in culture, education and the sciences. It has created a new atmosphere of good-neighbourliness, mutual understanding and joint endeavours in different fields in the region.

We appreciate the role played by international organizations in shaping the current levels of stability and security in the region. We seek to strengthen cooperation with our international partners with a view to improving the economic and social situation. The South-East European

Cooperation Process has earned recognition as a voice of the region and should continue its important activities.

We share the vision of a united Europe as a goal and a destiny for all South-East European States. We will spare no efforts in order to make this a reality.

Cultural diversity is a defining factor for Europe. Our readiness to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue, as we have committed at the Regional Summit Forum in Tirana (2004), is a firm expression of our willingness to uphold the European standards in that respect.

The earnest commitment to cooperation through dialogue has grown steadily. Heritage has to interact with its time. Based on the principles and objectives of the preceding regional summit meetings in Ohrid (2003), Tirana (2004) and Varna (2005), we agree on the relevance of a set of international and European standard-setting instruments:

- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Rome, 1950), known as the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe);
- the European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, Paris, 1954);
- the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO, 1954) and its two protocols (1954 and 1999);
- the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Council of Europe, Granada, 1985);
- the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1970);
- the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972);
- the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Council of Europe, Valletta, 1992);
- the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1992);
- the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (1995);
- the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, Florence, 2000);
- the Declaration on Cultural Diversity (Council of Europe, 7 December 2000);
- the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001);
- the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2001);
- the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003);
- the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe, Faro, 2005);
- the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005).

Imbued by the vision and values of an integrated Europe and the prospect of enhanced cultural cooperation, as charted in Varna (2005) with respect to cultural corridors and cultural routes, we focused in Opatija on the theme of “Communication of Heritage”. Communication is essential for building a Europe without dividing lines. It promotes the exchange of knowledge about heritage in our region and in particular our shared responsibility towards its preservation and safeguarding for future generations, providing a sense of stability, continuity and cultural identity. Our future endeavours in this area shall facilitate integration and shall be guided by the following principles:

- A. Cooperation in South-East Europe must build on its rich and diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage and its history of intense cultural exchange and dialogue. Beyond contacts at the political level, such cooperation should increasingly be citizen-driven.
- B. Well-designed national policies for and effective cooperation in the areas of culture, education, science and tourism are key foundations for further developing South-East Europe as a dynamic European region.
- C. Cultural heritage lives in our region and within our people and makes people feel closer to each other. A strategy for “Communication of Heritage” needs to be anchored in national identities and recognize the role of cultural heritage in all its forms as a constituent element of cultural diversity and human creativity. The role of communities and groups who transmit, keep alive and recreate their heritage deserves particular attention.
- D. Heritage conservation and safeguarding are an integral part of sustainable development. This includes the promotion of sustainable cultural and ecological tourism and the development of appropriate cultural industries. Restoration and preservation of heritage should make use of innovative techniques drawing on scientific research and expert institutions. Above all, knowledge and awareness about heritage must be brought to citizens through education, new communications and media tools as well as publications.
- E. Given the importance of cultural heritage for identity and reconciliation in the region, all efforts should be made to return cultural goods to the country of their origin. Likewise, the adherence to and implementation of measures to interdict illicit trafficking in cultural goods should be broadened and reinforced.
- F. Cooperation within the region aimed at promoting a shared vision of the South-East European heritage should seek to broaden dialogue and mutual knowledge of other peoples and their cultures, traditions and languages. Furthermore, it should help bring about synergies among existing activities – whether under the auspices of UNESCO, the Council of Europe or the European Union or involving dedicated projects such as those established in the context of the South-East Europe Cooperation Process.
- G. Cooperation shall be intensified and extended also to cultural policies within the framework of European integration, as the region’s cultural heritage is part of European culture and adds value to the European integration process at large. Resources should be mobilized from governments, the private sector, foundations, NGOs and international organizations for cultural corridors, intercultural dialogue, including interreligious and inter-ethnic dialogue, and for sustaining existing networks. The intention of the Council of Europe to launch pilot projects is most welcome in that regard.

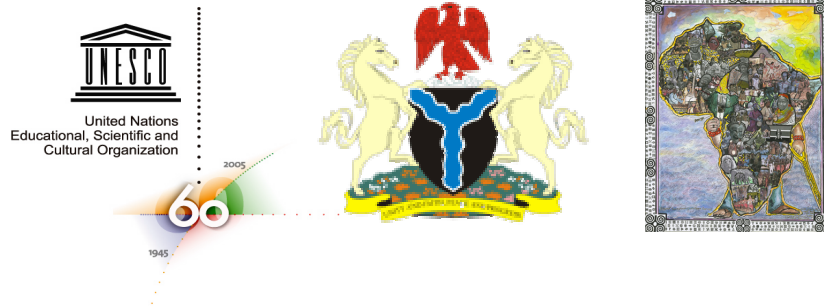
- H. Efforts shall be aimed at increasing the region's share in international exchanges of cultural goods, services and activities.
- I. The capacity of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to foster cultural heritage, exchange, networking and mutual knowledge should be used as a channel for communication, dialogue and mutual engagement across societies. Digitization opens up new avenues for preservation of cultural heritage and the dissemination of knowledge. Digitized materials, virtual multimedia fora and innovative websites allow broad public access, appealing in particular to the youth. It ensures communication of heritage linking the past with the present and the future.
- J. Cooperation fostering cultural diversity shall also involve the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. To that end, all countries of the region are invited to ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005).
- K. Countries of South-Eastern Europe are equally invited to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, which provides a basis for the sustainable use of the cultural and natural resources of the territory.

Taking into account these principles, we welcome the finalized Varna Strategy for identifying, preserving, sustainably using and promoting cultural corridors in South-East Europe and invite the governments of the region, and in particular the Ministers of Culture or other competent authorities, to adopt the Strategy and to agree upon a related Action Plan. The preparation of the Action Plan should also benefit from input by experts from the countries of the region and by regional and international organizations.

We thank President Traian Basescu for his invitation to hold the next Regional Forum in Romania and accordingly we agree to meet in Sibiu, the European Capital of Culture 2007, in the first half of 2007.

In 2008, we will convene the Regional Forum in Greece and in 2009 in Montenegro.

All participants expressed their profound appreciation to President Mesić and to the Government and people of the Republic of Croatia for their excellent arrangements made and for their generous hospitality.



### **Abuja Declaration on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples: The Pivotal Role of Education and Science**

1. At the joint invitation of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, the first African Regional Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples was held in Abuja, Nigeria on 20 and 21 June 2006. The conference was also attended by Government Ministers and officials, parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders, representatives of civil society, the private sector, the media and eminent experts from academia. The conference benefited from a strong participation of women and young people.
2. At the conclusion of the Conference, the participants adopted the

### **Abuja Declaration on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples: The Pivotal Role of Education and Science**

3. We welcome the holding of the first such event on the African continent which carries a symbolic meaning extending to the whole region, which has suffered so much as a result of wars, conflict and violence, often rooted in ignorances and prejudices, discrimination, misunderstandings and contradictions, lack of tolerance and recriminations. In all parts of the world, but particularly in Africa, developments over the past years have made the need for dialogue ever more topical, if not compelling. We experience a palpable new willingness to counter intolerance and fanaticism and to build instead on opportunities that globalization has created for intercultural exchange and understanding. We must work hard to regain and reclaim our common humanity and build a world of peace, harmony, inclusion, justice and mutual trust.
4. We concur that dialogue begins at home and is indispensable for the peaceful and prosperous development of all African countries. It sets a counterpoint against the long and painful history of forced African separation due to the legacies of colonialism, slavery and racism. Conflicts and wars only compromise and undermine opportunities for peace. Hence, we hail the new African spirit embracing fundamental and far-reaching reforms and changes moving away from a culture of conflict, instability and coups towards dialogue and a common quest for peace, unity, social harmony, mutual understanding and transboundary cultural experiences. In that regard, we subscribe to one of the most noble, emblematic tasks of UNESCO, namely “to build the defences of peace in the minds of men”.
5. We consider dialogue a holistic approach predicated on tolerance and openness towards others. It is a vital tool to create deeper understanding of the diverse nature of the human family. Dialogue necessitates an ability to listen, to project the character and spirit of a community and to value loyalty, commitment, service and faith, especially among leaders. Exchanges of thoughts and

ideas are at the heart of any mutual understanding and dialogue; they are necessary ingredients to meet the challenges of contemporary societies through an empowered citizenry.

6. Dialogue is not an abstract notion but a specific practice that must begin and be firmly rooted at home, and yet which has the power to reach out beyond national borders to the whole region and the continent. Any robust and meaningful dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples must be placed in the context not just of internal political balances, historical experiences, good governance and accountability, but also of the global division of labour, power and opportunities. A new culture of tolerance, inclusion and social justice will make an immense contribution towards that end.

7. The new African spirit created through accelerating regional integration and continent-wide programmes like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has unleashed a momentum benefiting the practice of dialogue and engagement throughout Africa - away from a fixation with negative stereotypes, development failures, conflicts and wars as well as bad leadership. Indeed, a well-functioning regional integration is unthinkable without genuine dialogue, which will also help align national policies and structures with new regional and global initiatives. Dialogue and interaction between parliamentarians from different countries will advance cross-national experiences and is bound to encourage legislative innovation, creativity and relevance.

8. The Regional Conference focused on two central issues – the potential of quality education and the promise of science and technology –, both essential in efforts to achieve and sustain effective dialogue and development in the twenty-first century. The Conference sought to articulate principles and define initiatives and practical proposals for concrete action at the community, national and regional levels.

9. Both education and science have a profound impact on the production, access and use of knowledge and information and are of particular relevance for the creation of inclusive knowledge societies in Africa under conditions of globalization. Educational policies, being the bedrock of all fields of knowledge, must integrate dialogue into school curricula at all levels. Building on our rich diversity, we are resolved to work towards a shared vision of quality education and genuine scientific engagement through scientific communities, networking and centres of excellence, drawing also on local and indigenous knowledge.

10. Dialogue in Africa is conditioned by its traditional culture, which manifests itself in all communities of the continent with its rich tangible and intangible heritage and linguistic diversity. Efforts must be made to ensure that African culture and identity, with their inherent values, are passed on from one generation to the other, including through the provisions of school curricula or education in local languages.

11. We agree on the following **set of principles** that shall guide dialogue in various walks of life in Africa, drawing on education and science:

- (a) Dialogue is an imperative at the national, the regional and at the global levels and is crucial for a peaceful and sustainable future of the continent and its successful integration processes.
- (b) Dialogue is influenced by the changing character of global competitiveness and relations, and the role of technology and information;
- (c) Productive relations between the diaspora citizens of African origin and the African countries need to be nurtured and tapped for fostering peaceful dialogue.

- (d) A genuine dialogue presupposes an ability to listen and to grasp and appreciate others' viewpoints. It must seek to dismantle stereotypes and conditions for their perpetuation, prejudices with regard to gender, race, religion and ethnicity, as well as new and old ignorances. It must also address inequalities, injustices and resultant imbalances, often historically grown and conditioned.
- (e) The mainstreaming of culture throughout all educational activities is crucial for the effective promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding.
- (f) Dialogue is rooted in communication and the sharing of knowledge and information among individuals, learners, institutions and communities of practice, be it in education or science.
- (g) Dialogue can contribute to democracy and peace at the international, regional and national levels. It encourages integration and inclusion within societies as well as the willingness of peoples and groups with different national identities to live together in harmony.
- (h) Education and science play a pivotal role in the sharing of knowledge, which has come to represent a global public good and a crucial parameter for individual success and socio-economic development and prosperity in Africa.
- (i) Quality education is the most powerful vehicle for dialogue. It seeks to promote respect for human rights, democratic citizenship and tolerance, including the promotion of peaceful cohabitation and to teach students and learners throughout life to enjoy a peaceful existence in an environment of diversity. Effective national policies, based on the pursuit of the six Dakar goals of Education for All (EFA) should therefore respond to this quest.
- (j) Imparting a culturally sensitive view of education is most relevant for Africa, with its thriving, dynamic cultural identity rooted in its own values. Quality education in Africa must therefore be committed to the development of educational policies and the production of curricula, textbooks and other learning materials integrating commonly shared values, especially those derived from African human rights instruments and conventions, such as those relating to the rights of women, children, refugees, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and minorities. Quality education can then contribute to fostering social cohesion, eliminating cultural stereotypes and prejudices, and building an understanding of other cultures, religions and beliefs.
- (k) Curriculum reform must be combined with national book policies that provide equitable access to reading materials for both formal and non-formal learning. Efforts need to be made to orchestrate a bilateral and multilateral revision of these materials.
- (l) The development of learning materials for mother tongue literacy must be an important feature of such policies as will be the promotion of multilingualism, which will help to stimulate intercultural dialogue and enable learners to insert themselves into today's global society.
- (m) Higher education must contribute also to the development of education policies for science and technology, which in turn need to be linked to the broader goals of poverty reduction and the promotion of inter-university solidarity for development.



- (n) The effective use of science and technology will be essential for success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other related international development objectives. The application of science to basic areas of human need, from water and energy to food security and health opens up tremendous opportunities for sustainable development and living.
- (o) Beyond, science and technology can effectively deal with the common heritage of humankind and serve as an innovative vector for dialogue among peoples and cultures. Scientific cooperation, networking and interaction, both within and beyond the African region, is a driver of intercultural exchange and dialogue.
- (p) Knowledge in all its forms is the defining feature of modern societies, requiring specific capacities to ensure full participation and benefits. Bridging the knowledge divide will be a critical challenge. The quest for inclusive knowledge societies and scientific communities is predicated on dialogue and various forms of sharing and exchange, both within and among the African scientific community as well as of African scientists with their peers in other regions.
- (q) Women, who are often excluded from the domains of technology, science, and engineering, must be integrated as full and equal partners and collaborators. Enabling female researchers and scientists to compete and to succeed on a fair and equal basis will help break the “glass ceiling” and provide role models for generations of young women and girls in the African education and science system.
- (r) There must be an increasing emphasis on imparting shared ethical principles and practices, especially as scientific knowledge and technological innovations expand into fast-developing scientific fields like genetics or in the field of clinical trials.

12. Accordingly, we propose a number of **specific measures** that should be pursued individually and jointly by African countries to harness the power of dialogue through education and science:

**(a) Education**

- Education and teaching should be more oriented towards dialogue through a reform of teaching methods (with more emphasis on conversation, active problem-solving, investigation and role-play);
- School curricula should be infused with knowledge about African culture, heritage, traditions and values;
- Appropriate curricula and learning materials should be developed aiming at the raising of awareness, the promotion of understanding, tolerance, respect for the Other, and the exigencies of a culture of peace;
- Learning materials should be designed in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner, giving emphasis to mother tongue and local language education, and help to shed stereotypes on gender, race, religion, and ethnic affinity and related prejudices, thus preventing a slide and escalation into conflict; they should be integrated at all levels of the education system;
- Human rights education, education for citizenship and for good governance should be promoted at all levels;

- Requisite teacher capacities should be built to support dialogue promotion;
- Peaceful conflict resolution approaches should be taught at all levels of the formal education system, using conflicts that may arise in school, be it among pupils or between teachers and pupils, as concrete examples and starting points for learning; likewise, sensitization to peaceful conflict resolution should be pursued through non-formal approaches
- A sustainable, regional platform/network should be established for the exchange of best practices on the promotion of dialogue through education, taking into account local and national experiences;
- At the national and regional levels a forum should be created to allow an interface between education, culture and science, including through a strengthened interministerial dialogue and through interdisciplinary working groups at the academic level;
- Inter-university linkages should be established to develop in science and technology and the humanities high-quality graduate study programmes within the African region and beyond;
- New alliances should be built for an education capable of opening up new avenues and integrating new partners and funding sources, beyond government, including the grassroots and community level;
- Innovative funding programmes, drawing on different sources, should be initiated, also in collaboration with non-state actors and through initiatives at the community level;
- At the international level, public-private partnerships, such as the UNESCO/DaimlerChrysler Mondialogo School Contest or the L’Oreal/UNESCO Prize for Women in Science, should be expanded as innovative mechanisms for promoting intercultural dialogue and networking among young people and students from all continents; similar partnerships should be created at national or regional levels;
- In all efforts, due recognition should be given to the fact that the family space with its inherent values is as important for education and the non-formal transmission of values relevant for dialogue, including gender equity;
- The media and popular culture should be mobilized to help educate and reach out to the young generation, especially those excluded from the formal education system;
- African arts, literature and theatre are a vital source for promoting values and the practice of dialogue and for building self-awareness and pride in one’s own capacities, culture and origin.

**(b) Science**

- The scientific community is challenged to communicate and disseminate scientific knowledge and information among African countries as well as the public at large more effectively;

- African countries should, individually or collectively, develop and implement holistic science and technology policies oriented at the exigencies of the daily life of the people, which should give pride of place to the promotion of indigenous knowledge and incorporate cultural dimensions and linguistic neologisms;
- Likewise, African countries should be urged to put in place policies that aim at attaining gender equity and women's empowerment in the scientific fields; in particular, measures should be taken and resources provided to ensure that girls will have unfettered access to science and technology education at all levels, including higher education leading to academic careers;
- Efforts should be made by governments, universities and the private sector to popularize science, especially among the young which will benefit from the introduction of hands-on science kits at the primary and secondary school levels.
- The strengthening of networking among various stakeholders in Africa requires practical support to build requisite capacities and infrastructures, as well as enhanced practice; centres of excellence and multimedia telecentres facilitate access for scientists and researchers on the one hand and to generate interest in scientific issues and findings among the general public on the other hand;
- African governments are invited to involve also scientists into peer review mechanisms, such as those created under NEPAD, in order to ensure a comprehensive examination of issues;
- African countries are encouraged to consider establishing National Science Foundations, as Nigeria is currently doing, to promote the building of scientific capacities in priority areas, on a competitive basis, and to foster the insertion into and interaction of scientists within international networks;
- Scientists should be more systematically informed about national and international grant opportunities and assisted in the completion of the application formalities, e.g. through a portal mechanism such as a virtual library or dedicated websites;
- Immigration and visa regulations and procedures should be adapted to facilitate the exchange and free movement of scientists within Africa and other regions;
- Local and national government entities as well as regional bodies should provide support to micro-industries that promote the use of science and technology applications at the domestic level;
- Strong impetus should be given to the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms, in particular along the lines envisaged in the Doha Declaration and Plan of Action, through South-South as well as triangular North-South-South collaboration. Twinning arrangements among universities, especially within Africa, play a particular role in that regard.
- The Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS) should be invited to promote dialogue through the sciences in Africa, facilitating contacts and exchange between institutions and individuals, and encouraging joint scientific research on specific problems of the region, and through the establishment of international centres of excellence;

- Young scientists should be motivated to engage more actively in dialogue with scientists in other African countries and other world regions, including through the World Academy of Young Scientists, the World Science Forum, innovative public-private partnerships as the UNESCO/DaimlerChrysler Mondialogo Engineering Award and established scientific and technological networks, including those of women scientists;
- Governments should not be considered as sole providers for the funding of the various proposals; rather resources should be generated locally and through community efforts and associations;
- Furthermore, the private sector – at national and international levels – should be enjoined to create and endow more public-private partnerships from which young African students and scientists could benefit, especially responding to needs in areas of highest demand;
- Problem-oriented teaching in the ethics of science and technology should become an integral part of curricula at various levels of the education system;
- UNESCO should create additional and strengthen existing UNESCO Chairs in the various fields of science and technology.

13. We were thrilled by the intercultural concert which President Olusegun Obasanjo offered in his capacity as Honorary Chairman of the Association “Melody for Dialogue among Civilizations” under the motto “Africa but not only ...”. It demonstrated the power of music, melody and artistic performance by artists from different cultures and continents to further mutual understanding and appreciation as well as peaceful engagement – through the creativity of the artists and in the perception and minds of the audience. We believe that such musical innovative engagement and dialogue can be an effective tool of building bridges among peoples and cultures.

14. We express our profound gratitude to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Government and the people of Nigeria for their generous hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made. Nigeria possesses a diversity of peoples, cultures, languages, religions and institutions and has demonstrated that there can be unity, strength and progress through diversity. Over the past years, it has also become a beacon for promoting peace through dialogue in West Africa and other regions of the continent. We commend Nigeria for this accomplishment and encourage it to proceed on this road.