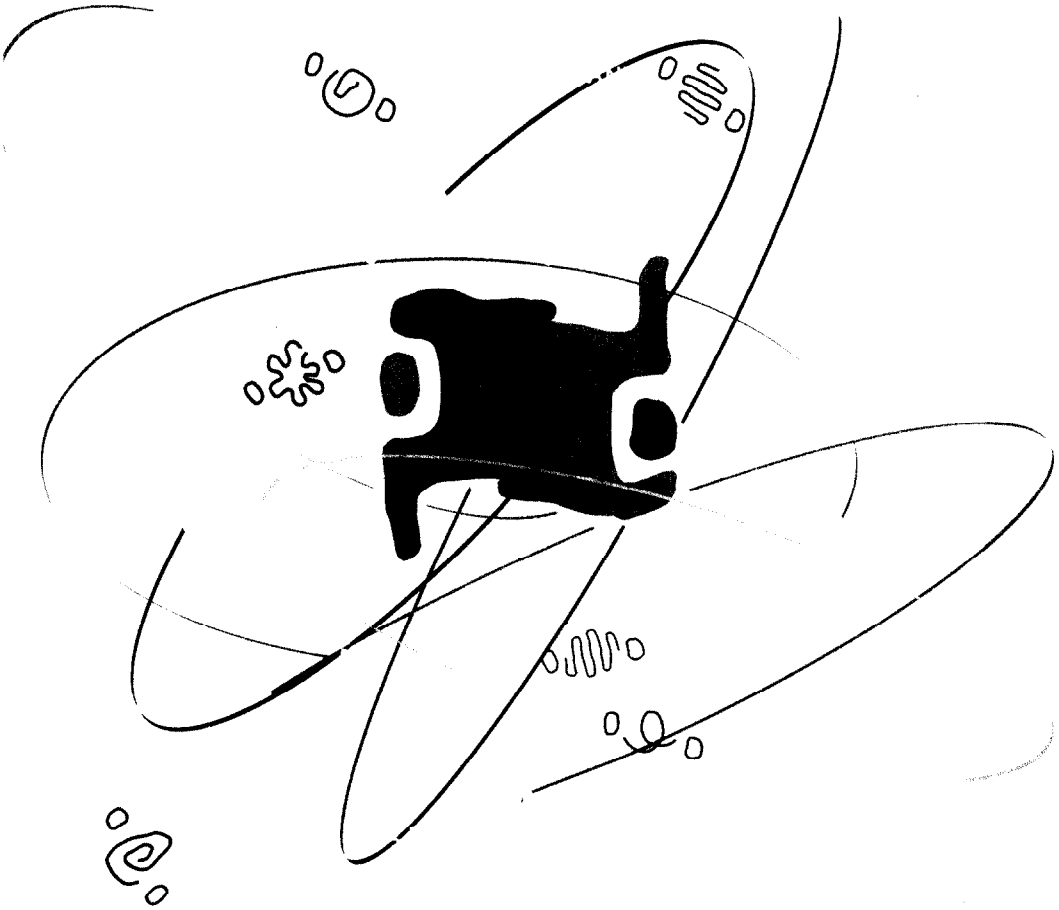# Launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000)

14 September 1999, Bangkok

UNESCO

Regional Unit for Social and Human Science in Asia-Pacific
UNESCO Principle Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000)

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

This brief publication is essentially a report of a ceremony which was held to commemorate Peace Day and to mark the launching of the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The Culture of Peace programme is known in UNESCO language, as a trans-disciplinary programme where all the sectors in the organisation have been committed to working together in order to achieve the objectives for which the programme was established. These objectives are clearly stated in the speeches and the background paper included in this volume.

UNESCO's Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences for Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) at the Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP) in Bangkok is the focal point for the Culture of Peace programme in the Asia and Pacific region. In this capacity RUSHSAP, with the invaluable collaboration from colleagues at PROAP and UNESCAP, and other supporters from the community organised this function.

Further activities are being organised for next year – the actual year designated as the International Year for the Culture of Peace – specifically to further promote awareness and to raise the profile of this important programme, both in Thailand and in other countries in the region. These will be publicised as widely as possible. We hope to involve as many of our UN colleagues as possible, UNESCO National Commissions, our partners in the NGO community and schools, and several individuals.

Malama S. Meleisea
Regional Adviser for Social and Human
Sciences in Asia and the Pacific
(RASHSAP)
UNESCO/PROAP, Bangkok

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO's Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP), in cooperation with UN-ESCAP, organized a function to launch the International Year 2000 for the Culture of Peace, on 14 September 1999 at the United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok. The event also commemorated the United Nations International Day of Peace.

The year 2000 was proclaimed as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace" by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 1997.

Dr. Federico Mayor, the last Director General of UNESCO, devoted much of his time and energy together with the resources and expertise from both inside and outside UNESCO, to mobilize support and awareness for the Culture of Peace Programme.

A Culture of Peace is an essential component in the rebuilding of any society. Dr. Mayor pointed out that:

There cannot be sustainable peace without sustainable development. There cannot be development without life-long education. There cannot be development without democracy, without a more equitable sharing of resources, without the elimination of disparities, which separate the most advanced countries from the least developed ones.

The "Culture of Peace" programme encourages people to adopt attitudes and modes of behaviour based on non-violence and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people. It seeks to solve conflict through dialogue, negotiation and mediation with the hope that ultimately war and violence are no longer possible. It is closely associated with the creation of a civil society through tolerance, social justice, and human rights.

The United Nations commissioned the past winners of the Nobel Prize for Peace to draft the *Manifesto 2000 for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence*, which was released on March 4, 1999. This marked the start of a worldwide public awareness campaign for the Culture of Peace. It seeks to obtain the personal commitment of individuals from all over the world to proclaim and to act for the values of peace.

The United Nations aims to build universal commitment by mobilising public opinion at the national and international levels for the purpose of promoting and establishing a culture of peace. With UNESCO as the lead agency, the UN will work with member states to prepare a

wide range of activities and programmes for the year 2000 to strengthen respect for cultural diversity, and promote tolerance, co-operation, solidarity, dialogue and reconciliation through activities at the national and international level.

Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director of UNESCO PROAP presenting UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme to the participants during the launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, Bangkok, 14 September 1999.

Senior officials and members of the Thai Government, heads and officials of UN agencies, diplomatic missions, NGOs involved in the promotion of peace, prominent Thai scholars and intellectuals, and members of the press and media attended the function. Altogether, more than 100 participants attended.

The function was officially opened by Dr. Adrianus Mooy, Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP. Speeches on the importance of the Culture of Peace Programme were delivered by the Special Guest of Honor, General Prem Tinsulanonda-Statesman, Chief of Privy Council and former Prime Minister of Thailand, and guest speaker Dr. Vichai Tunsiri, Deputy Minister of Education. A special message from Venerable Phra Prayudh Payutto, winner of UNESCO Peace Prize 1994 was read

by Phra Charoenchai. Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director of UNESCO PROAP spoke to officially launched the International Year and read a message from UNESCO's Director-General. The speeches delivered during the event are all included in this report. In addition a discussion paper on the Culture of Peace programme and the role of Parliaments and the Media in promoting it is also included. This paper was prepared initially for a Conference of Parliamentarians and the Media which did not eventuate. It is included in this report because of its obvious relevance to the theme of the occasion.

The presence of important personalities during the event as well as the importance of the event itself attracted members of the media. This event was covered by journalists from the national TV, radio stations and newspapers. Excerpts from media coverage of the event and some photos are also enclosed.

The ceremony ended with a minute of silence for the International Peace Day. Refreshments were offered following the concluding remarks by Dr. Victor Ordonez.

The main objective of launching the International Year was to raise awareness and ensure impact to the largest possible audience in Thailand. During the year 2000, more events and activities are planned in Thailand as well as in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Welcome address and statement on the
International Peace Day
by
Dr. Adrianus Mooy
Executive Secretary, ESCAP

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for all of us to launch the International Year for the Culture of Peace and to commemorate International Peace Day. ESCAP is greatly privileged to co-sponsor this important occasion with UNESCO.

I, from the core of my heart welcome General Prem Tinsulanonda, Chief of Privy Council, former Prime Minister of Thailand and a respected stateman who despite his pre-occupations has very kindly agreed to grace this occasion.

I would also like to welcome Dr. Vichai Tunsiri, Deputy Minister of Education, who is a renown educationist and is committed to the cause of promoting the International Culture of Peace through the educational networking and academia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are marking this occasion on the opening of the last session of the General Assembly of this Millennium. At this juncture I wish to remind now that Chapter I Articles 1.1 & 1.2 of the UN Charter clearly defines the purpose of the United Nations and stresses the maintenance of international peace and security. Towards that end it seeks to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law and adjustment of settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace. These articles also emphasize the development of friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace. A willful act on part of individuals Associations, Governments and Regional groupings to bring in force these sagacious Articles of UN Charter is the only hope for peace and prosperity.

As we stand on the very threshold of a new century and a new millennium, we must all strive to join forces to make peace the hallmark of the future of peoples through the world forum of United Nations. Learning lessons from the catastrophies of 20th Century which brought enormous toll on humanity and on human dignity, it is imperative for us to make together a new start in the building of peace. It is quite understandable that peace builds on learning, on human rights and democracy, which serve as the strongest defences against conflict, violence and destruction. We must understand today that if peace is the right of all people, then a culture of peace is the responsibility of all people.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is the main economic and social development centre within the United Nations system in Asia and the Pacific region comprising 51 members and 9 associate members representing over 60 per cent of the world population or 3.5 billion people. ESCAP's main aim is to promote economic activities and social progress in this diverse region. We, the peoples of this region have witnessed horrors of war, violence and destruction. It is taking us years to reconstruct what we lost due to wars in our region. We are indeed paying a lot of price in terms of time and money and still trying to survive. We wish to move from war to peace; to a culture of tolerance; respect for each others point of view and to march together for the alleviation of poverty, improving literacy, developing skills, and making development in this region which is enormously rich in traditions and in material and human resources. We may all agree that there cannot be any development without peace. Peace brings economic and social stability which is a pre-requisite for development.

If we take into stock the achievement and progress of mankind, we would see that some wonderful contributions have been made in the field of medicine, science and technology, and some noteworthy international cooperation is seen for promoting peace and stability, which I believe was a true service to the humanity. There are also a number of regional and subregional initiatives which have brought stability, progress and put an end to anarchy. I sincerely wish, hope and pray that the next millennium is the millennium of peace, prosperity and development.

To sum up, I would like to urge upon the intelligentsia, the world leaders and particularly the youth to move from violence to dialogue, from force to tolerance, from culture of war to the culture of peace and for a good civil society. We must all endeavour to build peace in our every day life; within our families, in our schools, our streets; our work place; our country and within our region.

Thank you.
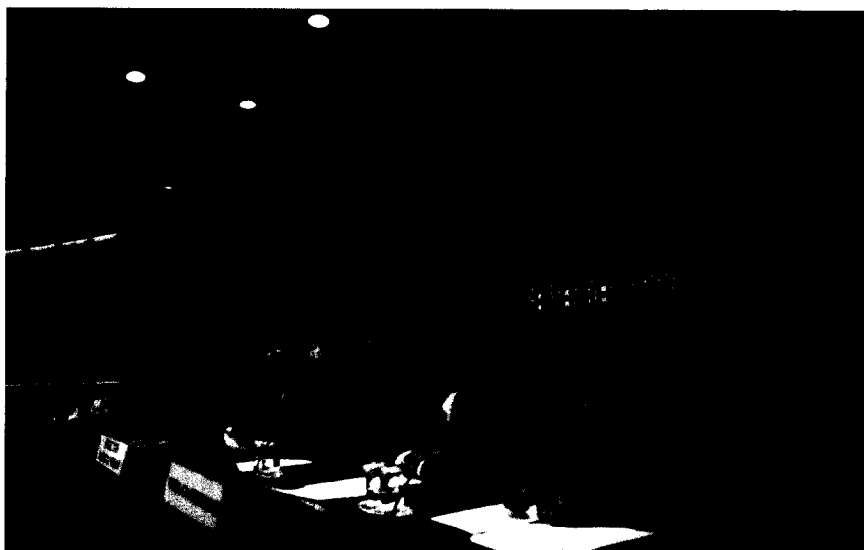
Members of the panel at the launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (from far end) Dr. Adrianus Mooy, Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP; Dr. Vichai Tunsiri, Deputy Minister of Education, Thailand; General Prem Tinsulanonda; Statesman, Chief of Privy Council and former Prime Minister of Thailand; Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director of UNESCO PROAP; and Phra Charoenchai (representing the Venerable Phra Prayudh Payutto, UNESCO's 1994 Peace Prize winner).

Address
by
**General Prem Tinsulanonda; Statesman,
Chief of Privy Council and former
Prime Minister of Thailand
(1980-1988)**

**His Excellency Dr. Adrianus Mooy,
His Excellency Dr. Victor Ordonez,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is indeed an honour to be given this opportunity to deliver an address here at the United Nations Conference Centre on the occasion of *the Launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and Commemoration of International Peace Day.* I should like to express my appreciation to both UNESCO and UN-ESCAP for extending to myself an invitation to attend this important event.

In several hours time, the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the last session before the next millennium, will be convened in New York. This year, as in other years, the United Nations and the international community will be faced with many challenges – challenges on a wide range of issues spanning the field of human interest, but more significantly, challenges to international peace and security.

The opening day of the UNGA this year takes on added significance. It has been designated as the day for *launching of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and,* equally important, the International Day of Peace. The timing cannot be more appropriate. As we leave the 20th century behind us, we should indeed take a pause and reflect upon one of the most important challenges which have faced mankind since the dawn of history, namely, how to achieve and sustain peace. Achieving peace is, after all, one of the most important raison d'etre of the United Nations.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

What type of peace should we all strive for? Peace certainly must be more than just the absence of war and armed conflict. It is sad to note, however, that even this minimal criteria has not been met. The

end of the Cold War has not generated the peace dividend that we had all hoped for. Conflict and strife continue in many parts of the world, causing immense suffering to many innocent people, especially women and children. These are the true casualties of war and the incalculable costs of the absence of peace. The cessation of the use of armed force to resolve disputes must certainly be one of the priority steps that humanity, individually and collectively, should take in its efforts to achieve peace.

But in order for genuine and lasting peace to be achieved, the fundamental conditions for peace must be in place. In examining these fundamental conditions, we should endeavour to look at the needs and wants of both individuals and societies. I do not see the needs and wants of these two groups as mutually exclusively – indeed they are interwined and, in many cases, one and the same.

Lasting peace will require that the basic survival needs of human beings, or the **"needs of the body"**, are met. Freedom from hunger, disease, poverty, natural disasters and other forces which make life a struggle, must be achieved through better access to and distribution of food, medicine and income. The common struggle for peace thus becomes very much the struggle for more equitable and sustainable economic development.

Meeting the fundamental needs of the human intellect is another important goal to achieve. People need to be able to express freely their ideas while respecting the ideas of others, to pursue their chosen livelihoods and to develop their own social norms and codes of conduct. Rejection of the belief in the diversity of views and values, and attempts to impose one way of thinking by any group of people over another, are threats to peace.

Lasting, enduring peace will require that we attempt to meet the needs of the human spirit. We cannot have genuine peace if there are threats to human dignity. Furthermore, peace cannot long endure if peoples and societies are not treated equally, if discrimination amongst peoples and societies continues, and if double standards rather than principles guide the way peoples and societies interact.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To develop a culture of peace would require that we all attempt to change how we think in our relations with one another. It will involve questioning and even re-thinking some of our values. Education is the key.

Perhaps one thing we can attempt to do is to re-evaluate the importance and value of competition, of trying to be the best, of winning. This competitive drive may have brought about economic modernization but it has also served as the root of many conflicts within societies and between societies. We may need to begin to ask the question as to whether being the best at everything is really worth it. In this connection, I recall a Buddhist precept which may be of some relevance here:

This roughly translates into English as **"He who loses is a saint while he who triumphs is a demon"**. Striving to win, thus, is not worth it if it leads to conflict and destroys the peace.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope I have given you some small food for thought on the very complex but important issue of enduring and genuine peace. It is my sincere hope that *the launching of the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and Commemoration of International Peace Day* meet with great success and lead to new activities as well as changes in perceptions which will ultimately make a difference in the livelihoods of all peoples.

Thank you.

Statement of
Verarable Phra Prayudh Payutto
UNESCO's 1994 Peace Prize winner

Friends and kinsmen who love Global Peace

The year 2000 is coming soon. It is a special Era that the global peoples welcome the United Nations have designated it "The International Year for the Culture of Peace", which UNESCO, the Global Organization of Culture, is designated to be the main centre of the event.

By the way, the United Nations has fixed the Year 2000 to be "The International Year of Thanksgiving" or "The International Thanksgiving Year" for all global beings – turn back to realize thankfulness, repay favour done and gratitude for developing life to be one of harmonious living, and developing a prosperous life for oneself and the community.

In the present world there are a lot of problems and a number of people are not quite satisfied, but they manage to live quite all right. In the meantime, other places are suffering quite a lot but there are also those living quite luxuriously. The alarming signal is that the trends of the recent developments which have taken place in the past and continued up the present, who that human beings are full of anxieties, feel unsustainable, lacking peacefulness of internal and external mind, even when being together with the community or the relationship with the natural world. The causes of these are from the hopeless depression, conflict, violence, collision between human beings and manipulation of the global environments. It could be said that there is not peacefulness in the internal and external minds.

In the year 2000, this is a year of hopefulness and hopelessness; that is the year of expectations for good development. But with a lot of frightening contention and strife, wars and bloodshed, human beings are soon going ahead to the day of the destruction of humankind.

Let's cooperate in the year 2000 so it will be a year of hopefulness or at least would start the new trend toward the sustainable development. If we look from the other point of view, that is also the sustainable peacefulness.

If the human development on the personal level is not leading to inner freedom, it is impossible to keep peacefulness, by giving the human being the right way of peaceful life. This is called "Culture of Peace"

and this obligation must be performed in every part of the globe, for the peaceful culture of all human beings. The year 2000 which is fixed to be "The International Year for the Culture of Peace", meaning the "International Year for Developing Peace" or the "International Year of the Peaceful Way of Life". These two meanings are involved with each other because whenever peacefulness is developed, human beings also develop the peaceful way of life.

How do we develop or cultivate that peacefulness?

Human beings are the same as other living beings, since they are born on earth, all beings, both human and animals, are struggling to maintain their live to be alive requiring the material necessities (wealth i.e. food, clothes, shelter, medicines, etc.) searching, hunting to seek, attain and gain all these things. These ways of the dominate the way of their thinking, feelings and generally developed, until they became the significant way of human life.

There are a lot of them, who believe that disease is the human nature itself, which is cultivated by itself whenever anyone wants what they wanted, but the material resources are limited. The insufficient resources cause conflict and violence, even when they get what they wanted, they want even more. From the sufficiency of their living, they become more aquisitive for their luxury lines and even increasingly more greedy.

Human beings have the power, the opportunity and different experiences. Each of them are struggling for the dominant power a favour to attain more, injustice, its treatment and dominating others to be tools for their own satisfaction. The weak beings, lacking good opportunity, having no experience, being poor, distressed and suffering, they may look for an opportunity to rob. The richest of the wealthy man wishes to gain more and more, they live a competitive life and struggling, live with the fearful community and the way of feeling is one of conflict. Whenever this human society will not be able to gain peacefulness, it will not be really safe.

But looked at from a different point of view, human beings are special living beings compared to other living beings, they have less instinct than the other living beings and it depends on aptitude rather less than the other living beings. This essential fundamental makes the human beings need a lot of taking care and long term care. By the way, the human beings need to learn and self educate a lot. These differences are such good opportunities for human beings. If human beings are willing to develop themselves to be admirable beings, they may develop themselves to be an excellent being and create this great human society's benefits with the enlightenment culture.

The instincts of a human being are a lesser need. Human lives depend upon the help of taking care, making the human being's society to be developed by the fundamental society's system, the necessities of the material life, for example, the necessities of the material life, for example food instead of self-struggling to get, having been offered by parents.

The contribution makes the human being live without struggling and competing the necessities for living depend on the help of the others, instead of happening by one's own desire or greed, but it happened by the satisfaction which relied on the gratitude of the one who reciprocates the favour done. It becomes the new trend happening to be known by the tenderness of personal loving, of the personal loving tenderness or the goodwill. It also happens through the affection of others, becoming a new thing which know that the affection of loving kindness between the persons and the good friendship between them. The society which is related regarding aspects of righteousness without the feeling of the wrong way of behaviour, the anger and animus, non interrupting, no violence, there is only warm feeling and being safe. The friendship, compassion and happiness is called the circumstances of peacefulness.

Loving kindness is the attachment in the hearts of parents which is inaugurated in influence the parents to start the situation of peacefulness with the role of giving, the contribution, the donor, this loving kindness is the smallest foundation of this society and becomes peaceful circumstances.

The giving of charity is a significant component of the peaceful construction because it is the only way to express the affection or goodwill of one's heart and being, the positive relationship which associated human beings to connect together, making the harmonious unity tied up, becoming the association, the unity which is the opposite of confusion.

Charity makes the man who is suffering be calm from hunger and lacking of necessities, e.g. food etc., throughout the competition of the struggling of life. This is the course to make everlasting external peacefulness.

Charity is the way of fulfilling the necessities, making comfortable happenings, removing uncomfortable depression, easing the restlessness of their minds which will cause the internal peacefulness.

The reasonable charity with the true loving kindness leans on the feeling of appreciation. The charity makes the grateful admirable relationship, being thankful for benefits received and reciprocates them back, thus having goodwill and other good feelings which may change

to the new right view to lead the society to sustainable peacefulness. The appreciative feeling, the acknowledgeable admitting, is the kinship to be thankful for this thanking. It is not expressed in the outer, but is an excellent giving condition also of profound charity. This is the aspect of one who is thankful for benefits received which is called 'Anumodana', or thankgiving. It is given by heart to heart, or given by the goodwill of one's heart, which is straight to the point of the United Nations rendering in English of 'Thanksgiving'.

Some of the participants during the launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, Bangkok, 14 September 1999.

Address
by
Dr. Vichai Tunsiri
Deputy Minister of Education

Excellencies, Dr. Adrianus Mooy, Dr. Victor Ordonez,
Venerable Phra Charoenchai, Representative of
Phra Prayudh Payutto, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for me to be invited to address this important meeting for the Launching of the International Year for the Culture of Peace.

Today nuclear weapons present indeed a serious danger and equally dangerous are the social implosions which constitute the greatest threats to the entire humanity, where societies are collapsing into chaos and senseless violence. Conflicts have always been part of human societies throughout history but today we reflect on the more hopeful directions which exist in the world today. Today on International Peace Day we remember that as a result of greater international cooperation, acceptance of international treaties, the work of the United nations and other international and regional mechanisms, the threat of wars between nations has been reduced.

Another means for the reduction of violent conflict is modern telecommunications. The mass media make it impossible for us to ignore terrible conflicts, which exist in our world. Our TV screens make us one world. We see the suffering of people caught up in wars we feel for them. Through the mass media we experience the brotherhood and sisterhood of mankind. Because we feel for our fellow human beings, as citizens we ask for action to remove or at least reduce the conflict, which causes their suffering.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Geneva Conference convened by IBE in 1996, certain conditions of peace have been laid down. To my knowledge, there are at least five principles declared at the International Conference of Education of that year. These are namely education for international understanding, peace, human rights, democracy, and sustainable development.

Education for international and within nation understanding is the first necessary condition for peaceful living and coexistence. War and Conflicts often result from misunderstanding, prejudices and distrusts. In the period after the Cold War, we may perceive that, civil wars are occurring more frequently. What is most alarming about these conflicts is that so many seem to be based on ethnic differences and ignorance of the cultures of others. It was hoped, after the second world war, that the ethnic cleansing of Europe by the Nazis would teach the world a lesson never to be forgotten. Yet it has happened again and again; we only have to think of Rwanda or Kosovo.

And what are the roots of these dreadful conflicts? Ignorance and lack of understanding of one's neighbours. Such ignorance, and such misunderstanding sows the seeds of hatred, which blossom into the violent persecution of those who are different. Hatred between ethnic and relgious groups can only have one outcome and that is violence and instability.

In today's world, the increase in human mobility has exposed more people to other cultures then ever before. But while this may have contributed to better understanding of other cultures, it has not resulted in cross-cultural appreciation and tolerance. The ideal of a multi-cultural community which most of us aspire to, is always at risk from extremist elements. The situation of competition and conflict between different cultures and religions has been aggravated and the growing population scrambles for increasingly scarce resources. Unfortunately, we have also seen that culture can serve as an excuse for closed minds, encouraging intolerance and hatred between individuals and peoples. The fact of human diversity implies a divergence of views and interest, which makes conflict seem inevitable.

Education for international understanding and multi-cultural toleration should therefore be the first pillar for world peace.

Therefore we would urge all nations to strive for education for value change as it is often reiterated in UNESCO, that tolerance and peace must be constructed in the minds of every citizen, particularly in children. Values of tolerance and understanding of others should be inculcated in each individual. It is in schools that lessons of tolerance and mutual respect can be taught and learned. It is in the democratic societies where universal values are respected that people of different origins, cultures and faiths discover a common interest in building prosperous societies in which all can share.

The second pillar for peace is the principle of social justice. Without social justice, the task of moral persuasion for peace is well-nigh

impossible. We are living in today world, full of examples of unjust practices and behaviour, exploitations of the weak and the have-not by the stronger and the have. In the name of free trade and open competition among nations and within nations, we may witness elements of exploitations, and unjust practices. The rule of law among nations is still imperfect. It does not yet touch the areas of most concern to us, such as international financial regulation to promote a stable development of each national economy, whereas within nations, the respect for the rule of law is not yet widespread, and deep-seated, with consequence on widespreading malpractice, privileged undertaking and gaffes. Social justice is therefore perceived to be faltering within nations and international community.

Without social justice, and in the situation where the strong can exploit the weak, where one group is in the privileged position at the expense of other groups, we cannot-really attain the condition for peace.

The new international order, therefore, has to strive for a just ordering of the economic and financial transaction based on just practices, and fair competition, and I emphasize, not just free but also fair competition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The third pillar for peace is the education for democracy. And what do we mean by democracy education?

The first condition for democracy is openness and tolerance for different opinions. School curriculum therefore should strive for inculcating the value of open discussion, and the acceptance of different-opinions. Classroom process should strive for the creation of new ideas, and real understanding of the concepts which are prevalent in society at present.

The second feature of education for democracy is the inculcation of scientific attitude, the regard for truth and the striving for facts and information. In the newly developed world, social gossip based on hearsay are often is harmful, and misleading more than clarifying the situation. And consequently social problems are aggravated rather than solved. For the emerging society – emerging from the traditional and oral tradition, the chief aim of education should therefore be the inculcation of scientific attitude and the regard for truth.

The third feature of democracy education is the inculcation of habit for peaceful resolution of conflicts. In this process, the moderation in attitude, the Buddhist golden means, is the ideal. Education for democracy should aim at reduction of extreme views of the world. It is the polarization of attitude and opinions which characterize most of

today internal conflicts. It is in the newly emerging democracies, that we see too much polarization of issue, that we cannot arrive at a peaceful resolution of conflicts. Such one issues politicized tend to divide, a society and cause instability within the polity which may lead to international instability finally.

Education for democracy is therefore very crucial for peace, in the world. The Geneva Declaration has pinpointed and affirm this aspect of peace education.

And finally, Ladies/Gentlemen, with international peace education though social justice, and democracy we still cannot really attain peace and stability in the world, if the process of economic development in the world today is unsustainable. The exploitation of natural resource should not go on unregulated and unlimited. The culture of consumerism should be reduced. As Gandhi said long ago, nature bounty is adequate for everybody needs, but not for everybody greed. We should therefore strive for gradual, based on industrious and hard work, rather than on over-heated pace of economic development Deforestation, and over exploitation of nature should be avoided or stopped. There ought to be some kind international regulation in the exploitation in the world. World-wide communication media should campaign for sustainable development, based on basic needs, and not on avarice, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej theory of development, based on sufficient economy, and community-based, should be further promoted and disseminated. There is an obvious logic in such course of action in reducing fierce competition among nations for unlimited growth. It may indeed by the condition for peaceful coexistence in today world.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, as we are entering the year 2000, it is appropriate for UN and UNESCO to launch the International Year for the Culture of Peace. I would advocate in my humble knowledge, that peace education should be based on the five pillars of principles as described the education for international and multi-cultural understanding, the elimination of ignorance, prejudice, and hatred within nations, the education for democracy, the education for peace and justice, and finally, the understanding of true sustainable economic development based on needs rather than greed, the preservation of natural resources rather than the exploitation of resources. Man will have to learn to live together in peace and harmony through correct understanding of the social process which leads to wars and conflicts. With that enlightenment, and the fostering of human ideals, it is possible that mankind will learn to live together in peace and harmony.

Thank you.

Address
by
Dr. Victor Ordonez
Director, UNESCO PROAP

The launching of the International Year 2000 for the Culture of Peace coincides with the opening day of the last session of the United Nations General Assembly of the year, a day designated as the International Day of Peace.

The 'Culture of Peace' aims to help member states address the challenge and potential conflicts of global transformation. Our world is characterised by rapid processes of change since the end of the Cold War, processes termed "globality" – the move away from government management of economies; the erosion of national borders as national economies become integrated; and the power of new communication technologies.[1] This process of transformation has both positive and negative aspects, and on the negative side we have seen a world-wide resurgence and proliferation of ethnic and religious conflicts.

A culture of peace embodies ideals of shared global values; attitudes and behaviours based on non-violence; respect for fundamental human rights; the equal participation of women; the elimination of prejudice and extremism; and the free flow of information. These ideals will enable people to shape new ways of thinking and acting, reflecting their particular national and region histories, cultures and traditions.

The 1998 Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen challenges this argument, pointing out that the ideals, fundamental to a civil society are not particularly modern, nor exclusively Western in origin, but were anticipated in many Asian and Pacific philosophies. Ideas about the values of a civil society have always moved between national and cultural boundaries at many different levels.[2]

A culture of Peace is a civil society in action, reflecting the deepest aspirations of humanity. It embodies values, attitudes and modes of behaviour based on non-violence. It enshrines respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of all people. It promotes the resolution of difference through dialogue and negotiation based on mutual respect. All these values are to be found in the highest spiritual and intellectual philosophies of Asia, some dating back for thousands of years.

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[1]   Daniel Yergin Birth of a Buzzword, Newsweek February 15, 1999.

[2]   Harvard International Review: 20, 3, 1998.

The United Nations commissioned winners of the Nobel Prize for Peace to draft the *Manifesto 2000 for the Culture of peace and Non Violence*, released on March 4, 1999. This marked the start of a world-wide public awareness campaign in preparation for the International Year for the Culture of Peace. The manifesto seeks to obtain the personal commitment of individuals from all over the world to proclaim and to act for the values of a culture of peace.

The United Nations aims to build a universal commitment by mobilising public opinion at the national and international levels for the purpose of promoting and establishing a culture of peace.

In the Asia-Pacific region UNESCO is involved in or had implemented a number of preparatory activities at the regional, sub regional and national levels and has provided assistance in the development of information networks to link individuals and organisations working in and outside areas of conflict. It has initiated training programmes for parliamentarians and other elected officials on the principles and practices of good governance, democracy and justice. It has provided financial and professional support for media outlets, particularly those which actively contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace. It is integrating the promotion of a culture of peace into its programmes in education, culture, science and environment, and social and human science.

Allow me now to read the Statement of the Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. Federico Mayor.

"In a few weeks" time we will be taking our leave of this century, filled with wonder at the scientific and technological progress made but at the same time with dismay at the violence, war and oppression that have taken such a heavy toll in human lives and suffering of every kind. Each and every one of us must do our utmost as we enter the new millennium to bequeath to future generations certain values and certain responses, on which a start has already been made, to deal with social inequalities, poverty, hunger, exclusion, discrimination, destruction of the environment, proliferation of drugs and weapons and, above all, the use of force to settle conflicts.

Abolishing violence, war and their causes requires much more than the action of States. It means that everyone must be involved in putting into practice in daily life the ideals so clearly set forth in UNESCO's Constitution and in achieving a radical change in attitudes within the family and the community and within countries and regions. It calls for a cultural transformation.

Will we be capable of making such a change in so short a time? Will we be capable of countering authoritarianism and intolerance with democracy and solidarity? Our answer is yet! Together we must find new hope in our troubled history and make sure that non-violent rebellion, creative disobedience and insubordination by those who will never accept the unacceptable will enable us to effect the transition from the logic of force to the force of reason. I therefore APPEAL SOLEMNLY.

✦ To the international community and political, military, religious, economic, social and Cultural leaders – especially parliamentarians, mayors and the media – to re-establish the principles upon which the United Nations was founded in order to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights... and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

✦ To educators in particular, to the media, to parents who are raising children and to older persons, who are living memories of past violence, to mobilize and help forge in the young people of today the fervent desire to seek new ways of living together based on conciliation, generosity and tolerance, unlimited respect for human rights, rejection of all forms of oppression and violence, equitable distribution of wealth, the free flow of information and the sharing of knowledge. In other words, a culture of peace.

✦ I suggest that there should be a square or historic monument – like the Eiffel Tower-Designated in every country and city as a "messenger of peace" symbolizing the political will and the will of the people to serve the cause of peace and non-violence. And by the same taken I call for measures to be taken and events to be held that will help foster these ideals,

✦ I appeal to each and every one of us – women, men and children – to endorse the Manifesto 2000 drafted by a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates, in order to create a global movement for the culture of peace and non-violence. Let us gather 100 million signatures to present to the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000, so that world society may have a strong voice in this great transition from a culture of ear to a culture of peace.

May the new century and the new millennium be a new departure, the setting of a new scene for human endeavour, locally and worldwide! Let us take up the challenge and together let us shape a new future by joining in the movement for the Year 2000, International Year for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence.

Participants observing one minute of silence for peace during the launch of the International Year for the Culture of Peace, Bangkok, 14 September 1999.

Culture of Peace, Parliamentarians and the Media:
Some Issues for the 21st Century
by
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Introduction:

Every year, the United Nations family of organizations and agencies spend billions of dollars throughout the world on a variety of activities which are all linked to one central objective: to bring justice, equality, fairness and peace to the people of the world. In this context, the United Nations is the only institution with the capacity and potential to comprehensively address global problems in all their political, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions. It remains the world's principal mechanism for international peace and security, able to mobilise international efforts to deal with global economic, social and environmental problems.[1] The tremendous achievements of the UN campaign to improve the standards of living for people throughout the world are undisputed. In particular, its crusade for universal acceptance of the ideals of justice, equality and peace as critical ingredients for a better and enlightened world, has been an unequivocal success, despite the wide range of opinions as to what these ideals constitute and how they should be achieved. History shows that conflict and war have, sadly, been part of the human condition since the beginning of time. World peace began to be seen as an achievable goal when the United Nations Organisation was created in the aftermath of the most destructive and wide-spread war in human history. This war illustrated as nothing else before, the possibility of extinction of civilised human society, even human life itself. Since then, throughout its 55 years of operation, the organisation has focused all its programmes and activities on achieving and maintaining peace in the world. Peace is the ultimate objective of all the United Nations programmes.

Peace is defined and perceived in many ways, and is the subject of many visions as to how it might be achieved. United Nations peace initiatives have and continue to be influenced by the vision of peace

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[1] The United Nations at 50, 1995.

which was powerfully delineated by Theodore Roosevelt, former President of the United States, in his acceptance speech as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1906. President Roosevelt was unequivocal about his disapproval of the kind of peace achieved by tyrannical suppression of honest and legitimate protest. He argued:

> *Peace is generally good in itself, but it is never the highest good unless it comes as the handmaid of righteousness; and it becomes a very evil thing if it serves merely as a mask for cowardice and sloth, or as an instrument to further the ends of despotism and anarchy. We despise and abhor the bully, the brawler, the oppressor, whether in private or public life, but we despise no less the coward and the voluptuary.*[2]

But in spite of huge achievements of the last fifty years, the concerns expressed in these words are still relevant today, almost a century after they were delivered. With the end of the "Cold War", created in the aftermath of World Ward II, the international community moved into a state of uncertainty, and, as the old Chinese curse 'may you live in interesting times' implies, times of uncertainty carry with them dangerous potential for new forms of conflict arising from the processes of change.

This calls for the United Nations to be even more vigilant and forthright in the implementation of its post World War II charter which, among other things, commits the organisation "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which, twice in our lifetime, has brought untold sorrow for mankind".

Significant progress has been made in several areas of human development this century, particularly in the transformation of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes into democratic societies in many parts of the world. Substantial contributions have also been made towards improving the lives of many in poverty. Yet there are at least thirty areas throughout the world today, which have been identified as serious threats to world peace, with Kosovo as the latest major addition; and unacceptably high rates of violent abuse of human rights still exist. Ethnic tension, various forms of discrimination and intolerance still abound accompanied by violence and denial of human rights. The fruits of human development programmes are still a dream for an unacceptably large number of the world's population.

In this contemporary climate of hope amidst all the uncertainties, the United Nations through UNESCO took the initiative to rededicate and refocus world attention on peace. UNESCO, and particularly its

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[2] *Peace! An Anthology*, by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates (ed.) by Marek Thee, UNESCO, 1995.

Director General, Dr. Federico Mayor, has taken up this challenging mission by launching the "Culture of Peace Programme".

The Culture of Peace Programme

The Culture of Peace programme is a contemporary expression of the original constitutional mandate of UNESCO which is 'to construct peace in the minds of men', based on non-violence and respect for the fundamental rights and freedom of all people. The idea was born, as Dr. Federico Mayor explains, in 1989, at the Yamoussoukro Conference on Peace in the Minds of Men, where:

> *...the idea of a culture of peace received its international consecration. The conference agreed that UNESCO should ...help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women. The establishment of such a culture of peace, understood as the antithesis of a culture of war, was seen as the prime mission of our organisation.[3]*

Dr. Federico Mayor took on this challenge with enthusiasm and conviction, and has used every opportunity he has been offered at major international fora, to clearly articulate and promote the ideas behind the Culture of Peace programme. He has placed it at the centre of the UNESCO's multi-disciplinary activites, within its current medium term strategy, guaranteeing the organisation's long-term commitments to achieving its objectives.

Defining Culture of Peace

Culture of Peace has been described as an ideal which is achievable when certain pre-conditions exist. These conditions are themselves often expressed in abstract terms such as justice, human right, tolerance, understanding. The ideals of the 'Culture of Peace' include shared global values, attitudes and behaviours based on non-violence; respect for fundamental human rights; the equal participation of women; the elimination of prejudice and extremism; and the free flow of information. Culture of Peace can be seen as both product and a process implying that its achievement must be influenced by the unique histories and cultures of the peoples and societies who are striving to achieve it. The unique goals of a Culture of Peace are such that everyone knows what it is or should be, but there is no universally acceptable prescription of

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[3]   Dr. Federico Mayor, *Culture of Peace and Democracy*, UNESCO, 1997.

how to achieve it. This can be frustrating and confusing for policy-makers and legislators who tend to prefer concrete principles and prescriptions. Yet flexibility may be one of the strengths of the concept because it requires people to shape new ways of thinking and acting, reflecting their particular national and region histories, cultures and traditions.

'Peace' is often taken to mean 'order' and thus the exercise of state control over citizens, their rights of free speech, and their access to information. Arising from the certainties of the past, the fundamentals of a civil society: freedom of expression, respect for differences, civil rights and citizen participation, have often been dismissed as the values of individualistic Western culture, at odds with the values of Asia and the Pacific.

The 1998 Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has challenged this argument, pointing out that the ideals, fundamental to a civil society are not particularly ancient, nor exclusively Western in origin, but were anticipated in many Asian and Pacific philosophies. Ideas about the values of a civil society have always moved between national and cultural boundaries at many different levels.[4]

A Culture of Peace is based on tolerance and solidarity. Tolerance might be understood as an attitude of persevering, of attempting to solve problems according to the principle of peace, rather than resorting to aggression or repression. Tolerance, however, does not mean indifference; it does not imply lack of interest in those whom we tolerate, nor does it mean that we have to agree with those whose views, values, or practices differ from our own.[5]

Dr. Federico Mayor, reiterating UNESCO's commitment to establishing lasting peace founded on the 'intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind' and its mission to establish and reinforce peace through education, science, culture and communication, has described the Culture of Peace as:

> *An everyday attitude of 'non-violent rebellion', of peaceful dissent, of firm determination to defend human rights and human dignity. A culture of peace is not a luxury. It is not an option to be added on at the end of the process of recovery. It has to be built in from the very early stages. It is just as essential as credit-ratings and monetary policies. It is structural. Symbolically, the concept of a culture of*

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4   Harvard International Review: 20, 3, 1998.

5   Wan-sang Han, Hyup Choi 1995.

peace is based on the fact that a lasting peace does not just mean the absence of war, but rather a dynamic process based on democratic principles.[6]

Peace is thus defined as the most basic of human rights, the one which underlies all the others. The right to peace and the right to live in peace must be respected as part of the right to life.

Goals for the Culture of Peace

The goals for the Culture of Peace programme are long-term. The basic objective behind the Culture of Peace Programme is the process of transformation from traditions of conflict to those of cooperation through dialogue. Dr. Federico Mayor offers concrete examples of how this transition might be achieved. Military peace-keeping for example, should be transformed into non-violent peace-keeping. Full and democratic participation in civil society must underlie the decision-making process of government; a multi-vocal approach must be introduced into consultation processes; force must be replaced by reason as a means of solving differences; and there must be rapid transition from plutocratic to democratic systems of governments. The rich diversity of cultures and their beliefs, traditions, languages, religions, and political organisations must be appreciated and used as a basis for cooperation amongst the people of the world.

Through a Culture of Peace, a better quality of life for everyone is achievable based on endogenous, equitable and sustainable development. A fundamental assumption of the Culture of Peace concept is that people will live peacefully if they are more secure; thus economic, social and political security are its essential building blocks. Achieving the goals of a Culture of Peace will require great financial and intellectual resources, as well as full support and co-operation from the international community, governments and all sectors of society. It will require revolutionary changes to be made – for example, education systems will have to be reviewed to ensure they reflect the goals of a Culture of Peace, so that transformation will include the socialization of the youngest and most vulnerable in society.

A Culture of Peace cannot be achieved without the support and active participation of the global community. As a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional project, it should be worldwide in scope and linked to all aspects of society. It cannot be achieved if the partners fail to

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6   Dr. Federico Mayor, Regional Symposium on Co-operative Peace in Southeast Asia, Jakarta, 11 September.

address the crucial questions such as imbalances in development. Such imbalances perpetuate economic insecurity, which are the enemies of peace. It will entail democratic and institutional reforms to build trust in political systems. It will require effective and efficient delivery of social services to reassure the population of their governments' commitments to social security.

The International Year for the Culture of Peace

To further publicise its continuing crusade for global peace, and its search for lasting solutions to continuing, and in some cases, worsening abuses in human rights, violence and equality, the United Nations has designated 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace (IYCP), designating UNESCO as the focal point for all the activities. The purposes for the IYCP are:

+ to mobilise, inform, promote and stimulate the awareness of all individuals, social agents and political leaders about the programme;

+ to give renewed impetus to the work of building the future in order to speed up the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace; and

+ to encourage people everywhere to take immediate and concerted action to make peace and non-violence part of their daily lives.

The many objectives of the IYCP include: the promotion of peace, human rights, democracy and tolerance in and through education; to respect cultural diversity; to combat discrimination of any kind; to eliminate poverty; to protect the environment; and to strive to provide everyone with the quality of life which preserves human dignity.

As focal point, UNESCO has planned activities throughout the world to mark the event. These include competitions for the Culture of Peace logo from young people; media programmes in different regions and in different languages; international, regional and local meetings and seminars to discuss the programme's objectives.

As part of the international appeal, the "Manifesto 2000 for the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence", produced by a number of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates with the help of UNESCO, was launched in Paris at the beginning of March 1999. The Manifesto will be addressed to individuals and civil society who, by signing it, "...will commit themselves to adhere to the values of peace, tolerance, and solidarity and undertake to translate the values, the attitudes and modes of

behaviour which underpin the culture of peace into daily action." UNESCO aims to collect 100 million signatures from people who receive the manifesto, by September 2000, when the General Assembly meets for the first time in the new millennium. (*Unesco Press* No. 99.38). UNESCO has also prepared a draft provisional Declaration and Programme of Action which has been presented to the United Nations Assembly. Once approved, this will provide the guidelines for future activities for the programme.

Constructing a Culture of Peace

UNESCO has helped design and implement a number of regional, sub-regional and national activities and provided assistance in the development of information networks to link individuals and organisations working in and outside areas of conflict. It has initiated training programmes for parliamentarians and other elected officials on the principles and practices of good governance, democracy and justice. It has provided financial and professional support for media outlets, particularly those which actively contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace, and has embarked on a project to identify and collect information and materials on traditional methods of conflict prevention and resolution from cultures around the world.

The role of education in facilitating reconciliation and reconstruction for peace is vital. In this context UNESCO has included culture of peace ideas and materials in all its training and educational programmes. UNESCO Chairs are being established at universities with programmes which are specifically devoted to the teaching of human rights and peace studies. UNESCO has also initiated a number of peace-related projects through its Associated Schools Programme (ASP). To ensure that the culture of peace movement remains relevant and sustainable, the Director General has linked it to the pursuit of social and economic justice and urged everyone to become involved.

A key element in the UNESCO strategy is to engage parliaments and the media in the discussion of a Culture of Peace and the fourmulation of strategies for its achievement.

Parliaments and Parliamentarians

UNESCO has specifically targeted parliaments and members of parliaments around the world and the media, as crucial partners in the promotion of a culture of peace. At the 1996 joint meeting between UNESCO and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), the IPU President presented participants with a very clear perception of the new

and increasingly vital role of parliaments and parliamentarians in the world. In pointing out that public policy is becoming more international in orientation, he said: "... parliaments, which are an essential force in the design of public policy, are playing a new and growing role in foreign relations and international cooperation". He observed, that "... it is today impossible to speak of dialogue and discussion among States while referring only to inter-governmental structures, without including inter-parliamentary institutions in the process". In explaining the unique democratic characteristics of parliaments, he pointed out that: "Through the conjunction of democratization and globalization, parliamentary diplomacy is emerging as a force to be reckoned with. The aspirations of economic, cultural and social actors – that is to say the people themselves – must also be heard on the international scene through those unparalleled representative institutions – parliaments."

Given this unique position of parliaments, it follows that parliamentarians are in an excellent position to achieve four steps towards building a Culture of Peace:

1. Strengthen the links between local cultures and democracy, with the former as both a tool to achieve growth and development and also a desirable end in itself, and the latter being both an ideal to be pursued and a mode of government to be applied according to modalities which reflect diversity of cultural particularities without derogating from internationally recognised principles, norms and standards.

2. Ensure a sustained state of democracy which requires a democratic culture and climate, constantly nurtured and reinforced by civic education and other methods used to shape peoples' opinions.

3. Establish strong links between a culture of peace and development at all levels and in all areas of society.

4. Introduce and reinforce legislative and other governmentally supported measures to promote and defend cultural rights.

In recognition of the important roles of parliaments and parliamentarians in the implementation of its Medium-Term Strategy, UNESCO has established a special Unit for Relations with Parliamentarians, to strengthen the links between the organisation and members of national, regional and international Parliaments and Parliamentary associations.

The special conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNESCO in June 1996, saw the first concrete move to establish closer

working relationships between the two organisations. It was pointed out in the conference documents that there is little that international organisations like UNESCO can do without the support of parliaments, for they provide the essential legislative framework and funds for national action in education, science, culture and communication. Indeed, as these documents declared, they are for their respective nations, the guardians of democracy and stability, the defenders of the values espoused by the United Nations and its specialised agencies.

Since the first international articulation of the reasons behind these moves, UNESCO, in collaboration with IPU and other organisations, has further supported these with several initiatives. On the national level, UNESCO has:

✦ on a regular basis, distributed its publications and other relevant materials to parliamentary libraries around the world.

✦ hosted an increasing number of parliamentary delegations visiting UNESCO headquarters to familiarize themselves with the organisation's programmes.

✦ responded positively to increasing number of invitations for the Director General to address Parliamentary Commissions around the world.

✦ sponsored a number of seminars and conferences for parliamentarians to enhance their role in peace-building processes.

✦ offered to parliamentarians the use of UNESCO expertise in order to facilitate their policy-making process.

✦ participated in numerous regional and international inter-parliamentary forums in its fields of competence.

UNESCO has also established working relationships with numerous regional and international parliamentary organisations. These include the European Parliament, the International Assembly of Francophone Parliamentarians, Parliamentarians for Global Actions, Parlamento Andino, Parlamento Latino Americano, etc.

In a report to the United Nations General Assembly 51st session in December 1996, Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali also pointed to the unique role of parliamentarians as bridges for promoting dialogue and discussions at the international levels between and within the community of states, and the citizens of the states who elected them.

The Media

The Director General of UNESCO pointes out that "...a society which restrains freedom of speech, is forced to govern by violence". The world of today is often referred to as the "information" age; for never before in history has there been mass media capable of reaching, via television, radio, news publications, virtually every person on earth. The media is perhaps the most potent force in the world in shaping the beliefs, perceptions and aspirations of its audiences for better or for worse.

UNESCO aims to work with the Media both to build partnerships in the dissemination of the values of a Culture of Peace and by enlisting the support of the Media in the implementation of a Culture of Peace programme. The organisation also wishes to work with the media to reinforce the principles of the right to free speech and freedom of expression as necessary ingredients for the culture of peace.

But UNESCO also wishes to promote a dialogue on the role and responsibilities of the media. This includes providing the public with accurate and up-to-date information; shaping of public opinion in favor of constructive and peaceful dialogue and non-violent conflict resolution; promoting freedom of expression; and by acting as a watch-dog on the formation and adoption of public policy.

UNESCO has organised and co-sponsored several regional and international workshops and conferences for media personalities, at which journalists and owners have been informed about the Culture of Peace Programme. These conferences and workshops have all issued public statements expressing their agreement with and support for the ideas behind the programme.

For example at a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian media professionals on Rhodes in Greece the participants issued a declaration stating "...that freedom of expression is an essential condition for the practice of journalism, and for fostering the culture of peace in the region." They agreed that they all shared "...the same aspirations for making peace, regardless of personal opinions of individual participants on the proposed means of achieving them".

Further, at a meeting of Latin American publishers and editors, their Puebla Declaration noted with concern the experience within their region that "...the growth and spread of violence is usually preceded and accompanied by hostility and attempts to silence the free press. They stressed that "...peaceful understanding between nations require openness of information and opinion in order to overcome differences and reach agreements". They also condemned the increased use of economic pressure, through long and expensive law suits, to suppress

media freedom by governments, rich companies and wealthy individuals. They declared their support for the educational role of the press and its potential role in encouraging cooperation for the consolidation of a culture of peace.

Joint meetings for the Media and Parliamentarians

Traditionally the relationships between parliamentarians and the media can only be described as cordial, at best. While to some extent some tension between the media and parliamentarians is inevitable in an open society, the media should provide a forum for all points of view, including those critical of governments, to be heard. However an adversarial relationship between parliamentarians and journalists is as bad as one in which there is strong political control over or collaboration with the media. Both are antithetical to a Culture of Peace.

In its attempts to encourage dialogue and mutual understanding and respect for the areas of public responsibility between the media and parliamentarians, UNESCO is sponsoring a series of regional and sub-regional conferences for journalists and media owners, and parliamentarians to explore areas of co-operation in promoting the goals for the culture of peace. The meeting at Almaty is the first to be held in the Asia Pacific region.

Some Asia-Pacific Regional issues for the Culture of Peace

The Asia-Pacific region is one of great diversity, one in which there are numerous existing and potential conflicts, threatening the possibility of a culture of peace. The following discussion identifies some themes and issues for possible discussion.

Nationalism and Sovereignty

Colonialism and the post-World War II struggle for decolonization has resulted in the drawing and redrawing of national boundaries. This has contributed to the partition of India and the traumatic creation of the new states of Pakistan and then Bangladesh. It has contributed also to the Indo-China war which has had devastating effects on the development of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and it left a number of issues of national boundaries contested and unresolved – for example Tibet and Taiwan, Kashmir and East Timor, and access to the islands in the South China Sea. More recently the break up of the former Soviet Union in 1990 has led to the expansion and further diversification of the Asia Pacific regions with the re-alignment of the Republics of Central Asia to the Asian region.

Sovereignty and nationalism have often provided excuses for violence and oppression, as the Secretary General of the United Nations Dr. Kofi Annan pointed out in a statement to honour the Press Freedom Day this year. Referring to the increasing use of sovereignty to justify abuses in human rights violations, Dr. Annan said that "...as long as he was Secretary General of the United Nations, he would oppose governments using national sovereignty arguments as an excuse to terrorize citizens" and warned that the commitment of the United Nations to the sovereignty of nation states should not prevent the organisation from speaking out on abuses of sovereignty. No government" he said "has the right to hide behind national sovereignty in order to violate the human rights or fundamental freedoms of its people"[7].

Economic Stability and Security

The rapid growth of prosperity in Japan and subsequently in the "Tiger" economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Korea and then Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines created great social changes. The most notable of these were the growth of the middle class (accompanied by a decrease in poverty levels) and a growing demand from the middle class for greater democratic freedoms. At the same time the rapid economic growth created a massive increase in labour migration from poor regions within countries, and from poorer countries within the region. The financial crisis of recent years has slowed growth and general social well-being in South East and East Asia, presenting governments, academics, and international institutions with a number of challenges. One of these will be to protect the gains in citizen participation in government. Another will be to ensure that the welfare of the hundreds of thousands of people who have been cast into poverty by the crisis remains high on the national agenda.

Education and Curriculum Development

In the Asia Pacific region, post-colonial educational curriculum, at least in the social sciences tended to focus on the study and promotion of local and national history, culture and language, and analysis of the social, cultural and economic effects of past oppression on the nation. But in the 1990s there has been an increasing movement towards the examination of contemporary, regional, international and globalisation processes that effect the nations. The trend is toward more interdisciplinary approaches to issues of common interest and concern.

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7   Bangkok Post – May 2, 1999.

Education curricula in the Asia-Pacific region has developed an increasing concern with the situation of the poor, and of youth and women. There are many national and sub-regional social research projects to document the causes and conditions of poverty, the exploitation of child labour, and the recruitment of young women, men and children into the sex industry. There is also an increase in teaching programmes and research centres for Women in Universities in most countries of the region. There is evidence to suggest that collaborative action between social scientists and national youth associations through out the region to document and analyse the problems and issues facing young people is increasing. Governments should encourage these developments through funding and through reviews of policies relevant to these areas.

Globalisation

Debates on the merits and threats of trade liberalisation are one of the great issues of the decade. Some see trade liberalization as one of the most powerful engines of economic growth, and oppose international limits on liberalization to promote workers' rights. But many fear that social protection, if left to the discretion of each State, would allow countries to seek a comparative advantage by minimizing the rights and conditions of workers. Small Pacific Island states risk losing the niche markets that are crucial to their economic survival if trade liberalisation continues. Dr. Federico Mayor quotes Zaki Laidi's idetification of five areas covered by globalisation:

♦ *The globalization of markets (whose impersonal forces have become more mighty than the states than the power they exert over societies and economies).*

♦ *The globalization of communication, which is creating unprecedented opportunities for social communication.*

♦ *The globalization of culture, which, with the advances made by civil societies, has led to a considerable rise in the number of players in the world game.*

♦ *The globalization of ideology, as increasingly radical liberalism becomes the prevailing orthodoxy worldwide.*

♦ *Political globalization, which marks the end of centuries of the West living off the rest of the world or, put it another way, a shift in the centre of the world's geopolitical gravity.*

Referring to the frustrations so far with the long-awaited fruits of globalization, Dr. Federico Mayor makes this point:

> *The end of the cold war might have been expected to 'release' resources for development and peace. But such transfers have been negligible. The globalization of communication, which has turned our planet into a single community – a village, so they say – might have been expected to engender a more widespread sense of unity, and by abolishing distance, to create ipso facto a global sense of solidarity. Nothing of the sort has occurred. Please do not misunderstand me: I am not damning globalization, which in many ways liberalizes, even liberates, invents and forges links. Globalization is neither a good thing nor a bad thing. It is devoid of any emotional content, it is what the human community makes of it – either further proof that fortune smiles on the well-off, the egoists and the cynics among us or, on the contrary, a sign that justice, dignity and solidarity have not entirely deserted this world. It may be either a golden opportunity or a dire peril. In that sense, it is like knowledge: neutral in itself, it acquires meaning and value through the use that is made of it.[8]*

Environmental Degradation

The greatest issue, as we approach the 21st century, is the threat to world survival posed by the rapid depletion of natural resources due to pollution and over-exploitation. It is widely assumed in the region that environmental degradation is largely a consequence of to the farming and fishing practices of the poor. However more consideration of the effects of the quest for rapid economic growth and consumerism on the depletion of resources is needed to develop a more balanced and realistic view of the problem. Its potential to create conflict is the growing contest within and between nations to control increasingly scarce natural resources.

Water Resources

An example of the potential for conflict over natural resources is the issue of water, a resource without which there could be no life on earth. Water is becoming vital, shrinking and contested resource and an increasing focus of conflict. For example in the Cauvery river dispute in Southern India, the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are in conflict over water access. The issue has been complicated and intensified due to the displacement of local farmers who depend on the water from the river for their livelihood. In the countries sharing the Mekong River,

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[8] Dr. Federico Mayor, Speech to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Armed Forces Committee of the Senate on "Globalisation and culture of Peace: the African example" Paris, 20 November 1997.

Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and China, there are major debates about internationally accepted criteria for equitable uses of the river's resources. In Thailand and Laos there is conflict between those who advocate and oppose the construction of hydro-electric and irrigation dams. Some point to the benefits of generating 'clean' energy, prevention of flooding and giving poor farmers who live far from rivers access to water for irrigation. Others point to the displacement of settlements, loss of livelihoods from fishing, and environmental damage.

Ethnic conflicts and resources

In hard economic times old forms of discrimination and ethnic conflict re-emerge and civil unrest is more likely to occur. As poverty increases so does competition for resources. It becomes more difficult to restrain the destruction of the environment through pollution, deforestation, over-fishing in the pursuit of renewed economic growth. Such issues are uniting social scientists and natural scientists in the investigation of problems and analysis of issues.

For example well before the present problems of political change in Indonesia ethnic conflict and violence over ownership and utilization of resources had begun to erupted between indigenous and transmigrant communities. In the West Kalimantan, the mainly Christian Dayaks' traditional way of life was based on harvesting but not destroying the rain forest. When Moslem Madurese transmigrants were resettled in sparsely populated Dyak territories, they were given deforestation rights in order to clear lands for palm oil. In December 1996, ethnic violence between these two groups began. It continued for six weeks and it was reported that over 300 people died during these clashes. As with many other similar conflicts around the region the religious differences between the two communities were highlighted in reports, diverting attention from the underlying economic conflicts or competition over scarce resources.

Dissemination of Information

One of the most important challenges in the Asia Pacific Region is to get information to the general public in an intelligible form so they may make informed decisions on issues which affect their immediate and long term future. This is the foundation stone of a "culture of peace". The UN Secretary General Dr. Kofi Annan pointed out recently that: "The global information revolution has transformed civil society before our very eyes," But the growth of global information networks and the internet assist only those who can afford television, cable subscriptions, computers and modems. The international scholarly

community may use these resources to keep abreast with emerging issues and debates, but the majority of the population in the Asia Pacific Region is "information poor". This includes many of the social scientists in the region whose institutions cannot afford to acquire the information technology to join the "global village". The challenge of disseminating key information must be constantly reviewed by the countries in the region with special consideration of the gap between the information rich and information poor.

Dissemination of information is also impeded by political as well as technological and economic barriers. Free and open debate is not exactly encouraged in most countries in the region, and because these usually question the status quote in many countries, the initiators have faced political impediments, as has the local press and electronic media. Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region have a long way to go in order to achieve academic freedom or freedom of speech.

Western versus Asian Values

This issue, briefly referred to in the earlier part of this paper, is so contentious and frequently cited an argument in the Asia Pacific region, that the views of the Nobel prize-winning economist Armatya Sen mentioned above are worth quoting here:

> *The question is often asked, that non-Western societies should be encouraged and pressed to conform to "Western values of liberty and freedom"? Is this not cultural imperialism? The answer, of course, is that the notion of human rights builds on the idea of a shared humanity. These rights are not derived from citizenship of any country, or membership of any nation, but taken as entitlements of every human being. The concept of universal human rights is, in this sense, a uniting idea. Yet the subject of human rights has ended up being a veritable battleground of political debates and ethical disputes, particularly in their application to non-Western societies.*

> *...Dissidents exist in every society, often at great risk to their own security. Western discussion of non-Western societies is often too respectful of authority – the governor, the Minister, the military leader, the religious leader. This "authoritarian bias" receives support from the fact that Western countries themselves are often represented, in international gatherings, by governmental officials and spokesmen, and they in turn seek the views of their "opposite numbers" from other countries.*

> *The view that Asian values are quintessentially authoritarian has tended to come almost exclusively from spokesmen of those in power and their*

advocates. But foreign ministers, or government officials, or religious leaders do not have a monopoly in interpreting local culture and values. It is important to listen to the voices of dissent in each society.[9]

Role of Non-Government Organisations

The NGOs have demonstrated their ability to organise globally and to put pressure on national governments and international organisations in a way that would have been unthinkable just a decade or so ago. Their campaigns and advocacy on issues like land mines, the formation of an International Criminal Court, against unethical practices by the multi-national co-operations, child labour and several other issues have contributed tremendously to the demands for transparency. Governments should encourage and respect the watch-dog role of NGOs.

Intellectual Freedom and Exchange of Ideas

The search for knowledge cannot focus exclusively on issue-based research. There is also an equally important higher level of theoretical and scholarly discourse based on on-going debate and the continuous re-evaluation of prevailing paradigms amongst national, regional and international communities of scholars.

Many scholars in the Asia Pacific region are restricted in their capacity to participate in the global exchange of ideas within their areas of interest because they cannot afford to attend international conferences, or to subscribe to leading journals in their field, or in some instances, because there are political barriers to such participation.

Scholars from Central Asia for example (Mongolia, Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, etc.) have been isolated from international scholarly debates for much of this century, as it operated within the framework of Soviet education values, bounded by the Russian language and the Marxist Leninist paradigm. Now these republics, independent since 1990, need assistance and encouragement to revitalise their teaching programmes through various means, including international exchange programmes and translation facilities. UNESCO is in a position to assist member countries to pursue these activities.

Governance

A major issue for the Culture of Peace is governance. Many countries of the Asia-Pacific region are affected by problems of corruption,

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[9] Amartya Sen, Harvard International Review, Summer 98, Vol. 20, Issues 3.

cronyism and a lack of transparency and accountability, which contribute to internal conflict and unrest. Associated with such problems is often the suppression of free speech and restriction upon the press and electronic media.

There are several assumptions which need to be reviewed with respect to the accepted practices and the way they have been abused not just by those who aspire to them but also by their proponents. For example, is democracy still the best way to ensure a just and caring society? Is it still possible to believe in words like "participation", "citizenship" or "justice" when corruption, social marginalisation and erosion of identity are on the rise, along with extremism, wars and massacres aimed at ethnic cleansing? What is the connection between democracy and a society's rate of development?[10] Democracy however, it has been argued, is nothing without transparency.

> *A democratic society must be governed in such a way that people who hold differing or even opposite opinions nevertheless live in harmony. When a society cannot tolerate the members making free use of their right to express their opinions, it demonstrates its weakness and tends to become even weaker still. It inevitably encourages dissimulation and flattery. The hiatus between intimate convictions and expressed opinions becomes constant and a part of daily life. The more citizens are distrustful of their leaders, judges and civil servants, the more the exercise of freedom seems to threaten the cohesion of society. By a pernicious reversal of logic, civic sense becomes a threat to the social fabric since it represents a living denunciation of an order, which can remain in place only by flattering greed and fomenting division. Such a society is condemned to strife, intolerance, hatred and, in the end, to dissolution.[11]*

Transparency – making the actions and dealings of governments and large corporations open to public scrutiny – is widely accepted to be requirement for good governance. But concurrence with the ideas behind transparency is too often limited to lip-service. Owners and holders of information wield significant influence and power, sharing information means sharing – even losing – power, which is a significant disincentive to translating transparency from rhetoric to reality. Transparency, despite the contradictions in its practice and theory, must be pursued for without it the practice of democratic government and the exercise of people's

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[10] "Justice and Participation" in *Sources*, No. 110, March 1999.

[11] Dr. Federico Mayor. Speech at a meeting on "Africa and Globalization: the Challenges of democracy and governance" in Maputo (Mozambique), 2 July 1998.

democratic rights would be difficult if not impossible. In arguing for the establishment of a culture of transparency, Florini points out that although the idea of fostering a culture of transparency, just like the idea of fostering a Culture of Peace, may sound vague, even idealistic, it actually concrete proposal for changing the incentives people face and how they think about those incentives. Furthermore there is considerable historical evidence that values can be changes if an new idea and a desire for reform is held and pursued by sufficient numbers of people, particulalry those who are in a position to educate and shape public opinion.[12]

Conclusion

In the last year of this millennium the three main forces of globality are changing the face of the Asia Pacific region and the world – the move away from government management of economies; the erosion of national borders as national economies become integrated; and the power of new communication technologies. The UN proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace will help member states address the challenge of global transformation. The Director General of UNESCO, Dr. Federico Mayor, points to the need for a new global mode of co-operation. This must involve a transition from societies in which the states are the sole organiser of security in a dangerous world, to civil societies that welcome and encourage *citizen participation* in national and international affairs. It must construct peace in the minds of men and women by linking local communities to international communities, and individuals to global networks of shared interest.

Two of the principal actors in building a Culture of Peace are parliaments and the media. Both are responsible to the people in different ways. Parliamentarians are empowered by their electorates to promote justice and the rule of law, the free flow of information, and freedom of expression. The media has a duty to the people to practice high professional standards, to disseminate information responsibly and accurately, and to act as guardians of the values of a civil society. As Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Dr. Surin Pitsuwan commented recently, a free press is the best guarantee for sustaining reform and forcing accountability and transparency in the public and

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[12] A.M. Florini: Does the Invisible Hand Need a Transparent Glove? Politics of Transparency. Paper prepared for the Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics, Washington DC, April 28-30, 1999.

private sectors.[13] The Almaty conference will launch activities in the region for the International Year of Peace, will encourage a dialogue between the representatives of parliaments and media organisations from the Asia Pacific region. It aims to promote greater co-operation and understanding between parliaments and the media, and the formulation of common goals, objectives and programmes of action for peace-building.

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[13]   The Sunday Nation, Bangkok: 22, 48411, February 1998.

**Programme for the
Launch of the International Year for
the Culture of Peace (2000) and
Commemoration for International Peace Day
14 September 1999,
United Nations Conference Centre (Room 4),
Rajadamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200,**

10:00 - 10:10	Welcome address and statement on International Peace Day by Dr. Adrianus Mooy, Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP
10:10 - 10:15	Address by Guest Speaker, General Prem Tinsulanonda, Chief of Privy Council and Statesman, Thailand
10:15 - 10:25	Discourse of the Venerable Phra Prayudh Payutto, UNESCO's 1994 Peace Prize winner
10:25 - 10:40	Speech by the Chief Guest, Dr. Vichai Tunsiri, Deputy Minister of Education, Thailand
10:40 - 10:55	Statement for launching of the International Year for the Culture of Peace by Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director, UNESCO PROAP
11:00 - 11:01	Minute of silence for the International Peace Day
11:01 - 11:05	Closing remark by Dr. Victor Ordonez, Director, UNESCO PROAP
11:05	Refreshments