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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
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Address
by
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of the United Nations Educational,
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(UNESCO)

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[The Director-General begins his speech in English]

'... It is in the interests of all the countries of the world, the North and the South, to ensure that we leave a more secure and just world to future generations'. These words, which sum up so well the message that lies at the heart of the United Nations system, were spoken by Secretary of State Clare Short on the occasion of the return of the United Kingdom to UNESCO last July. And in speaking of that happy return, the Secretary of State said: 'We look forward very much to working closely with those countries that we might not have been as close to in the recent past'. The function of UNESCO is precisely this: to encourage and to enable all nations and all peoples to work together towards our common goal; to bring closer in a spirit of mutual understanding those who have been separated, often quite simply by a lack of understanding. This example brings us to the very essence of UNESCO's intellectual and ethical role.

For although the entire United Nations system shares a single message, it is for UNESCO to give to that message its intellectual resonance. It is for UNESCO to clarify, update and reformulate its ethical foundation. In the words of the great statesman Nehru, speaking at the General Conference just over 40 years ago, 'UNESCO represents the conscience of humanity', just as the United Nations represents the political will of the international community. The conscience of humanity must be called upon when old injustices continue to be perpetrated and when new issues demand a new response. UNESCO's ethical role is at the same time permanent and in constant motion.

Mr President of the General Conference, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, distinguished Ministers, Delegates, Observers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to UNESCO House - a house which is now home to 186 Member States and in which I sincerely hope everyone gathered here today will feel really at home, whether a member of the UNESCO family or not, whether a newcomer or an old-timer. I wish to extend a specially warm welcome to the United Kingdom, which has come back into the Organization and to Nauru which has joined UNESCO as a new member. I also extend greetings to non-Member States, which have, as is our custom, been invited to send observers to the General Conference. It is my hope that the budgetary obstacles to rejoining can be overcome soon, so that the wishes expressed by President Bill Clinton of the United States in November 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, may be fulfilled.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my particular gratitude to Mr Krogh, President of the General Conference, whose term of office ends today but whose great wisdom, open approach and concern for balanced discussion and action will remain a model for us all. I would also like to offer special thanks to Mr Tidjani-

Serpos, Chairperson of the Executive Board, who has carried out - and is carrying out all through the General Conference - his functions with admirable wisdom, sagacity and rigour, with wit and understanding. He is really a wonderful partner for the Director-General.

Mr President, Mr Chairperson of the Executive Board, distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, when we lost the membership of the United Kingdom and the United States, we of course lost a considerable part of our budget. However much we tried to limit it, we also inevitably lost some of our scope for action. But we suffered an incomparably greater loss than that. We lost the participation of these countries in the collective effort to attain the aims and goals of the Organization. That was the greatest loss of all. That loss meant that the ethical and intellectual message of UNESCO rang out less vibrantly. Let me be absolutely clear. The truth and value of the message itself will never be diminished. The teachers, writers, scientists, artists, researchers, technicians, journalists of non-Member States have always and will always participate in our activities. But to be a mobilizing force and a catalyser, able to transform ideas into action and able to carry each new generation with it, this message needs the strong and committed backing of all the nations of the world. It needs political will at the highest level, at the level of governments. This, ladies and gentlemen, is something the world cannot afford to lose.

So we rejoice in the homecoming of the United Kingdom. What UNESCO gains with its return, what I hope it will gain one day very soon with the return of the United States, is more than the very welcome inflow of an exceptionally high level of expertise, ideas and experience. The United Kingdom's return is a restatement of its belief in the Organization's work and goals. It gives a new impetus to our efforts to bridge the gap between the UNESCO ideal and the reality of today's world. The new British Government with its fresh political vision has fired the imagination of people around the world. Fresh vision is inspiring. Confidence is catching. When it blossoms, everyone is invigorated and inertia begins to fade away. If we believe in the power of the countries of the world to make the UNESCO ideal a reality, then each nation will be able to say, as Prime Minister Tony Blair said of his aim for Britain, 'We can be the best place to live. The best place to bring up children, the best place to lead a fulfilled life, the best place to grow old'.

The reality of today's world is marked more clearly than ever by the global nature of the problems we face. It calls for global action co-ordinated by international, global bodies like UNESCO. Often, solutions have to be local and specific. But even then, in order to identify and implement those solutions, it is vital to

have a global response uniting the efforts of all who can contribute. We have a graphic illustration of our interdependence and interconnectedness on planet Earth with the case of the fires which swept out of control in South-East Asia. This disaster has shown yet again that environmental crises know no borders. Environmental protection standards must also know no borders. A natural disaster may also be on its way, with confirmation that the weather phenomenon known as *el Niño* has started again earlier than expected. It is likely to bring severe climate disruption in large parts of the globe. Scientific co-operation and precautionary measures must also know no borders.

Without international alliances, we are unprepared today to face natural and man-made disasters. We are unprepared to defend our environment. We are unprepared, without international alliances, to face drug trafficking and drug addiction, violence, terrorism, the abuse of children, the sexual and labour exploitation of youngsters. It is a sad irony that we are prepared to defend our frontiers but not our dignity. Media alliances like the one which adopted the Puebla Declaration show that the press **can** mobilize against violence. UNESCO is doing everything in its power to increase the capacity of foresight and of rapid response to the world's crises. Since the last General Conference, the creation of a new Unit for Disaster Reduction is one way in which we have tried to build up an anticipatory capability. In the face of global risk, the technical and organizational responses are many, but all must be based on the ethic of global solidarity. We must dare, we must dare to care, we must dare to share, we must dare to love.

[The Director-General continues in French]

Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us make an effort of memory. What was the physiognomy of the planet in 1945 ? The North was in ruins. It was year zero and the post-war climate was a sombre one. The South was under colonial domination, but already in revolt for emancipation, often enough in a pre-war atmosphere. It was against this civilization of weapons that the founders of UNESCO decided to oppose the weapons of civilization. Their path was lit by a simple but illuminating idea: that of constructing peace in the minds of men through education, science and culture and the free flow of ideas by word and image - in short by communication between human beings.

In the prophetic words of Paul Valéry, they intended to build a society of minds alongside the society of nations. However, they linked this function of international forum - 'encouraging co-operation in all branches of intellectual activity' - strictly to the ethical goals which the world community assigned itself: peace, the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity and its common prosperity, freedom and justice.

An ethical mission has been vested in UNESCO, as the intellectual institution of the United Nations system, ever since its creation. The aim is to preserve and transmit the scientific, natural and cultural - but also symbolic and spiritual - heritage, in other words all the fundamental common values, actually quite few in number, which are the honour and distinctive sign of humanity in all cultures and through all the ages.

UNESCO must denounce scandal from wherever it comes, wherever it breaks out and whatever the form it takes. UNESCO must have courage to raise its voice and act. It must set its mind on not tolerating the intolerable. I feel that this mission is now more topical and more urgent than ever and, in this respect, I am expecting a great deal from the twenty-ninth session of the General Conference, which can take decisions that are decisive for the future of humanity. UNESCO can and must act on the world - by the force of ideas and above all by virtue of the example it sets. We have the mandate, we have the experience, we have the opportunity: I trust that we shall also have the determination.

We have to make preparations for the twenty-first century. In scarcely three years' time, the world will enter the third millennium. We have to conceive, as from now, the UNESCO of the future, we have to build this organization of the future because the twenty-first century is already knocking at UNESCO's door. UNESCO is going to become an increasingly future-oriented organization because the Internet is already the twenty-first century; the protection of the human genome is already the twenty-first century; the increasing development of 'hybrid cultures', to quote Néstor García Canclini, and the irruption of 'virtual cultures' is already the twenty-first century; adult learning throughout life, as we have just decided at the major innovative meeting in Hamburg, is already the twenty-first century; the revolution in the efficient use of ecological and energy resources is already the twenty-first century.

Development is now in peril. Knocking at our door are poverty and indebtedness, exclusion and discrimination, the continued deterioration of the environment, exploitation and persecution, the marginalization of populations, especially indigenous populations, the scandal of famine, illiteracy and intolerance, violence and

war, social instability and also the threat of social apartheid and urban apartheid, with which we are now having to contend after having overcome racial apartheid and having applauded the fabulous transition of a country in which it was a daily offence to human dignity; social apartheid and urban apartheid which can undermine the foundations of democracy and are a negative heritage, a poisoned legacy which we should under no circumstances hand down to posterity.

Can we accept the fact that in the least developed countries, almost one-third of the inhabitants do not reach the age of 40, as is now the case, or that 20 per cent of the inhabitants of the planet share 1.1 per cent of the world's income. As James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank, recently put it, without parallel social development, there can be no satisfactory economic development.

The answer to the challenge of poverty is contingent upon sharing which, to my mind, is at the heart of our mission, since the duty of sharing is merely another form of the duty of solidarity, that 'intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind' which alone, in the words of the Preamble to the Constitution, can serve as a basis for a genuine and lasting peace.

I am delighted at the appeal launched recently by Mr Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom, for a global agreement by the year 2000 in favour of debt relief for the poor countries. Other countries have also expressed similar views. The burden of this debt is now dire. It weighs disproportionately on the poorest countries and inhibits investment by the most underprivileged countries in education, science and culture, the infrastructures of human development, in other words their investment in the future and in future generations. In this connection, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to welcome the effort of a number of countries which, like Brazil, have exceeded the 6 per cent threshold of gross domestic product devoted to education, which UNESCO had recommended be attained by the year 2000 in the framework of its action in favour of education for all throughout life. President Fernando Enrique Cardoso has said that Brazil has only one means of ensuring its social and economic development, and that is the education of its people. On the very day he made this statement, in a new effort the parliament of that great country allocated US \$460 million to the improvement of education.

Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our duty is to think of the future, that is to say, above all of future generations. We must share not only the space we occupy, but also the time. The question now facing the General Conference is, in my view, simple: What do we want to pass on to our children? The hope for a better future, or chronic poverty? Opportunities for all, or hardship for a quarter or a third of humanity? A living environment, or an unviable planet?

The ethics of the future entails the crucial responsibility of today's generations towards those of the future. The ethics of the future does not mean ethics in the future, postponed indefinitely; it means the ethics of time itself, embracing past, present and future. We need to start laying the foundations for this ethics now, otherwise we will be unable to build peace and development in the twenty-first century. All over the world, men and women of today are appropriating the rights of those of tomorrow, and we are beginning to realize that we are jeopardizing the exercise, by future generations, of their human rights in all their fullness - hence the establishment of UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee, hence the proposal, at the present session, for a declaration on the protection of the human genome, the first universal standard-setting instrument in the field of living matter, which, in my opinion, is of truly extraordinary moral, technical and symbolic importance, and hence the draft declaration on the responsibility of present-day generations towards future generations, which might, I believe, mark the beginning of a veritable worldwide awakening of consciousness, leading to practical initiatives.

To revert to what I was saying earlier, while the ethical issues of genetics are evident, the same cannot be said of other aspects of the common heritage of humanity that we have the duty to preserve and hand down: not only the scientific heritage, i.e. knowledge, the natural heritage and the cultural heritage, but also and above all the axiological heritage, by which I mean the set of values, actually few in number, that, in all cultures and through all the ages, constitute the greatness of human beings and the force of humanism.

Some basic common values therefore need to be revived. Such scandals as the exploitation of children, the drug trade, the manufacture of landmines or the criminal perversion of a religious belief which, like all such beliefs, must be denounced, yes, but action must also be taken in order to forewarn. As the basis of this action, UNESCO must disseminate and embody those values known as dignity, liberty, equality, justice and solidarity.

These values, ladies and gentlemen, were slowly and painfully forged, at the price of struggle and suffering, prison and

sacrifices. They are part of a common past in which we are rooted and which enables us to project ourselves forwards. The great risk we run is to forget the past, not to remember it, for without memory what would ethics be but a disembodied demand? Without the possibility to compare what would ethics be but an arbitrary absolute? The values of human ethics are what has given us, and will give us, the force to find unity in diversity. This is why, in the framework of the 'ethical vigil' that summarizes the mission of UNESCO, a veritable watchtower, it seems to me so important that we celebrate together in style the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As you will be aware, the forthcoming World Conference on Higher Education fits closely into the framework of respect for the provisions of that Declaration, and in particular Article 26, which stipulates that access to higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

At its twenty-ninth session, the General Conference will be able to set out, in UNESCO's various fields of competence, upon a new path towards the better protection of this new ethics - an ethics of values, an ethics of our natural heritage and an ethics of our cultural heritage.

What better proof is there of the need for this ethics than the calling into question of the achievements of the Rio de Janeiro Conference by the events which we witnessed just a few months ago? Agenda 21 has largely remained a dead letter and 'Rio+5', in many respects, has been 'Rio minus 5'. It is essential to overcome the apathy stressed by the extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly, 'Rio+5', and to revive and energetically implement the decision adopted at Copenhagen in respect of social development. More than just decision, what was adopted at Copenhagen were pledges. We have pledged ourselves; we must now act. We must keep our promise.

The Draft Programme and Budget submitted for your consideration at this twenty-ninth session makes provision for many ways to enhance this ethical function of the Organization, for example the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the holding of the World Conference on Higher Education, the publication of the UNESCO World Culture Report or the setting up of a permanent Forum to look into the various implications of the development of the new information and communication technologies.

The Greek historian Thucydides said that a political leader must not only have clean hands, he must also have clear sight. To

recover our former keenness and clarity of vision - dare I say clairvoyance - is that not what UNESCO needs?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Rio Conference on the Ethics of the Future which I inaugurated with the Minister of Culture of Brazil, Mr Francisco Weffort, I stated that we were overcome by the events of the moment, caught in a whirlpool of urgency, never taking time to prepare actions properly or reflect upon their consequences. We have embarked on an adventure into the future, with no brakes and poor visibility.

Yet we know that the faster a car goes, the brighter its headlights need to be. Let us therefore be guided by the sailor's maxim: 'No wind favours he who is lost'. Planning for prevention, planning for construction, that is what UNESCO is all about. As Leonardo da Vinci put it: 'lack of foresight leads to grief'.

Anticipation, prevention, reflection and future-oriented action are the main priorities of the Medium-Term Strategy adopted in 1995 by the General Conference. Our objective now is to establish a forum for scientific, intellectual and ethical planning in preparation for the twenty-first century. That is why, in full agreement with the guidelines adopted by the Member States, I am presenting at this session a report on the steps I have taken and the proposals I am putting to you with regard to anticipation and future studies, with a view to their renewal and consolidation (29 C/INF.9).

UNESCO has to face squarely the challenges of the twenty-first century, the challenges of the future, since its fields of competence - education, science and technology, culture, communication and information - are clearly the major tools for development in the next century. Since the major transformation currently under way is quickly changing these fields of competence, with an increasing number of linkages and overlaps between them. And since the survival of our Organization is at stake at a time when a routine approach is suicidal. UNESCO must remain a constant forum for future reflection. This was why the Analysis and Forecasting Unit - our future studies unit - organized last September the first meeting in the series of Twenty-First Century Lectures with Stephen J. Gould and Edgar Morin. The enormous success of this initiative was proof that there is a demand for the development of future studies in all intellectual and scientific areas. This demand is also a demand for meaning which UNESCO must heed by continuing to strengthen its programme through anticipation, future studies and its 'intellectual watch' function.

If UNESCO's areas of competence provide the keys to the future, we must now invest in these areas. I am delighted to note the remarkable efforts of the nine high-population developing countries to promote basic education. Several of these countries have already exceeded the 6 per cent of GDP allocated to education (as we recently learnt in Islamabad), or are about to achieve it. Education for all is the key to learning democracy and human rights and thus respect for human dignity. Education for all throughout life is the pillar upon which UNESCO hopes to build peace, justice and freedom in the minds of men and women. It means saving the life of each individual, which is of vital importance: this is where we must concentrate our energies if we truly wish for all individuals to control their own destiny, deal with the major transformations under way and assume responsibility for their children and their children's children.

Indeed, a little can go a long way. According to the UNDP *Human Development Report*, it would be enough for the developing countries to redirect 4 per cent of their military expenditure 'in order to reduce adult illiteracy by half, ensure universal primary education, and give women an educational level equal to that of men'. As the Secretary-General of the City Summit 'Habitat II', Mr Wally N'Dow said, 'The resources exist to provide every man, woman and child on this earth with safe water and sanitation and a roof over their heads' for less than \$100 per person. It is through such investment in development and human security that arms will one day give way to the ballot box, and the force of reason will finally be victorious over the logic of force.

'If the people begin to act, the leaders will follow.' I remember that sticker on the bumper of a car in Atlanta, which reminded me that by joining forces and by creating synergies of all kinds we can change the world. That was the message of Martin Luther King and it was the message of Mahatma Gandhi, the message of Mother Teresa, the message of the founding fathers of the United Nations and UNESCO. It was the message of all the Directors-General before me, and I am confident it will also be that of my successor for 'the future delayed is the future denied'.

The participation of everyone and responsibility in the hands of the public represent the surest way of beginning to build a living future based - as Martin Luther King and all those who shared his vision wished - on trust and the capacity of human beings to change, to build their own lives and to foster that permanent intellectual, cultural and biological evolution, that flowing river that is each of us. It is time now for us to rephrase the Cartesian 'Cogito ergo sum' of the twenty-first century citizen and say, as I have done on numerous occasions, 'I am involved, therefore I am'. If I am not involved, I may be included in the

statistics and I may be taken into account in the elections, but I do not count. This is why education is a genuinely democratic issue, the real, the only democratic issue. As the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century chaired by Mr Jacques Delors stated, education does not only mean learning to know, learning to do or learning to be; it also means learning to live together, and hence building Society, raising up the Society of the Future.

As I said just now, we must, above all, dare to love. The largest deficit today is not an economic deficit, but a deficit of love. Education without love, without sharing, without solidarity with others is, after all, no more than dust - a dead letter, rhetoric, words and abstraction. As the African proverb has it, 'Love is the only thing that increases when you share it'.

Peace and democracy cannot be built in a single day. Their building is a day-by-day process. Peace and democracy demand our daily commitment to the ideals and rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of 1948, whose fiftieth anniversary, as I have just said, I feel it is important for us to celebrate in style, not in words, but in deeds. We are a long way from having exhausted everything that this landmark text has to teach us and a long way from having observed all its provisions. Allow me to say again - because it is important - we must, in all regions of the world, lay stress on the development of human rights education for all. But states should not consider their work done once all the arrangements are in place for having this text displayed in every school. They must also 'search their conscience' in order to be sure that within their borders, human rights are exercised to the full and taught. The most effective protection for peace and democracy is provided by an educated and responsible public.

(The Director-General ends his speech in Spanish)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the past two years major victories have been achieved for peace and democracy: the end of conflicts in which thousands of human beings died for noble causes which they should have lived to see prosper. The lives of millions of young men, women and children is the price we have paid for war, conflict and lack of understanding. UNESCO has actively supported the signing of accords between guerrilla forces and the Government of Guatemala, ending a 30-year civil war, and has helped in various projects to forge a culture of peace in El Salvador, where it has had the full and exemplary co-operation of all citizens, the authorities and those fighting on the other side. The Organization has co-operated and

continues to be active in the reconstruction of Angola, Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina, also devastated by internal conflict.

Peace and democracy have nevertheless encountered significant setbacks during this period. The civil war in Afghanistan continues, with absolutely astonishing developments as regards human rights. The violence continues in Sri Lanka and Algeria. Intransigence and terror have delayed the application in the Middle East of the Oslo Agreements. Weapons have been used in Africa to settle political disputes which should have been settled only by elections.

In Africa, interests linked to oil and arms trafficking have fuelled civil wars. The most recent of these has blighted the democratic practices beginning to take hold in the Congo, spreading death and destruction across the country. As often happens in this type of conflict, most of the victims are children, women, the ill and the elderly. These events are an urgent appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts to promote peace, democracy and development and not to become a passive spectator of events which should no longer be happening. Such a high price was paid to construct these democracies that are taking their first steps against the background of the suffering, effort and dedication of so many of their citizens, and now, after such a high price has been paid, we see events once again setting in train the vicious circle of force and violence.

Only a strategy decided on unanimously and aimed both at promoting democratic values and at fostering development with a human face - endogenous, sustainable, environmentally friendly development - can lay the foundations for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups and cultures, living in states whose borders were arbitrarily laid down in the interests of the colonial powers and which are now subjected to neo-colonial systems of oppression and exploitation. In Africa as in the rest of the world, peace, development and democracy form an 'interactive triangle' each angle of which reinforces the others.

We must not confine ourselves to teaching peace, civic rights and democracy in our schools. Example is the best teacher. We cannot continually disappoint our children's expectations when they leave the classroom for the world outside.

The resources needed to alleviate the poverty and stimulate the development of the quarter of humanity which today lacks the most basic goods and services will never come within our grasp if defence spending continues - on weapons systems often meant to protect us against threats which no longer exist - and if the international community continues to accept the unacceptable.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly very recently, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs made a point of stating in his very first paragraphs that the current level of arms spending in the world, including the developing countries, was excessive. Citing figures, he said there was no chance of the most urgent social needs being properly met unless there was a rapid change in national priorities, meaning less spending on the great machines of mass destruction and more on education, health and nutrition.

The wealthiest countries in the world cannot allow their own businesses, in their scramble to corner markets and sources of raw materials, to contribute to the ungovernability of the poor countries. Neither should they tolerate the destruction of the environment by industrial and commercial practices that they would not allow on their own territory. In other words, we cannot afford to pay both the price of war and the price of peace. Our mission at UNESCO is to build peace; if we wish to carry out this task effectively we must be in touch with reality, in order to be able to change it. We must at all times be attentive to the reality which is hidden underneath superficial perceptions and information. We should be aware of the real riches and natural resources of the developing countries. No, we cannot pay both the price of war and the price of peace. A choice must be made, and the building of peace is a *sine qua non* for the preservation of freedom and the achievement of a more equitable economic, social and cultural development which respects the environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to set up and put into practice this 'management of intangibles', namely, prevention, foresight and anticipation, taking as a general premise that it is not so much a matter of winning battles as of seeking to avoid them, there is a need, among other things, for a far-sighted state policy, which must remain above the discontinuities resulting from sudden electoral shifts. Only a vision capable of combining the local with the universal, the immediate with the remote, the short term with a sense of history, can provide a sound basis for the formulation and implementation of initiatives of this kind. It is the parliaments of the democratic countries, supported by public opinion, that have the responsibility of ensuring the continuity of the state's basic policies.

So that it may participate in the general mobilization needed to foster the transition from a culture of war based on imposition and power to a culture of peace based on dialogue and conviction, UNESCO needs to enter into relations with all sectors of society: the representatives of states and legislatures, local and municipal authorities, public and private enterprises, churches,

associations, non-governmental organizations and the media, well-known singers and sportspersons, and representatives of the armed forces. We must work together if we want to achieve our goal.

UNESCO has many tasks but a single mission: peace. It accordingly analyses and identifies the roots of conflicts - social inequalities, poverty, oppression - and endeavours to avoid them, in accordance with the solemn pledge that introduces the Charter of the United Nations: 'We the peoples ... determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.

Under its mandate, UNESCO must draw attention to and if need be denounce any situation or action that runs counter to the ethical norms and values set forth with great lucidity in its Constitution. That is why the Organization must act in total independence: no influence or pressure must divert it from the complete fulfilment of its mission. UNESCO is much more than a Secretariat, much more than just an institution located in Paris. It is an ideal, a worldwide ideal, which, with the help of those who share it, can bring about this great transition for which we strive, to move from a culture of war to a culture of peace, and will open for all, and especially for future generations, a new chapter of love and hope. Enormous problems call forth great hopes, and these hopes can only be found, ladies and gentlemen, in the children, the young people who are the root from which life springs and in whom education finds its *raison d'être*.

Young people are the hope of humanity, whether or not they agree with our lifestyle, our way of thinking and our goals. When they look at us with their forlorn eyes, disappointed at the lack of understanding shown by a world which is incoherent, alien and remote, we realize that it is only in the look in their eyes that we may find peace - through education and greater sharing, and by bequeathing to them a clean and wholesome environment.

The 'human right to peace' is a prerequisite, a basic premise. Without peace, all other rights wither away. Some countries may wonder what peace is, not surprisingly since they have no memory of war. Countries with a recent memory of war or those which are actually living through violence and war do not need to ask what peace is. Neither development nor democracy is possible when violence prevails and, as was said during the French Revolution, the laws fall silent. In this silence of desolation and defencelessness, words lose their primary function, which is to communicate and link human beings together. And let us never forget: our only strength is that of the word.

I like to quote the words of the great poet Salvador Espriu, who wrote some verses for the younger generations which I have

already read out in this room on more than one occasion. He said: 'We shall have lived in order to save some words for you, in order once again to give each thing its correct name', because words are synonymous with ideas and values and are symbols of culture, and because every language is a treasure-house of wisdom and beauty which must be preserved and enhanced. If we do our duty in this respect, we shall also be able one day to say to our children and grandchildren that we have lived to preserve some words for them, to preserve the unique force of the word for them, because we shall have left behind us as our legacy a world of greater justice and freedom, societies that are better able to appreciate the wealth contained in cultural diversity and to respect the dignity of all human beings. We need a humanity capable of daring; people dare when they have feelings; people are human inasmuch as they have feelings, feel compassion and suffer with their fellow human beings.

Mr President,

This brings me to my conclusion. At the dawn of a new century and a new millennium, in a world that is crucially united both by the media and by transnational threats, UNESCO is more necessary than ever. It is necessary because the success of its mission means peace. As our own Constitution reminds us, such peace cannot be based exclusively upon political and economic arrangements but must be built upon solidarity, upon the intellectual ties and the moral force for the changes that humanity demands.

This crystal-clear message leaves no room for doubt: only unity around a few clearly defined ethical values will enable us to bind together in a tightly-knit combination of wills the diversity that represents our greatest source of wealth. Only through creativity, non-violent and peaceful rebellion in the face of things that are intolerable and perseverance in carrying through these guiding principles shall we succeed in constructing the defences of peace in the minds of human beings and in thereby ensuring a future of justice and freedom for the generations to come.

Fifty years ago, with the promulgation of the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humanity as a whole entered into a moral contract for peace and world security. This is what the founding of the United Nations and the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represented. This moral contract of the years 1945 to 1950 was based on the democratic principles - stated uniquely in UNESCO's Constitution - of freedom, equality, justice and solidarity. Little by little, these principles or values were gradually being eroded and replaced by other values or anti-values

such as individualism, elitism, short-termism and unconditional market-worship.

Today, half a century later and in the light of these events, we need to promote a new moral and social contract like the one which, 50 years ago, enabled us to avoid war on a world scale. As we know, war today is also intranational war, and it is rooted in poverty, exclusion and injustice.

All together, young people and older people alike, without any discrimination as to race, belief, gender or ideology - all together we can now proclaim that this new moral contract, at the dawn of the twenty-first century and of the new millennium, can enable us to say, as we look into the eyes of our children, that we have decided to avoid the horror of war and to give them the happiness of living in peace.