



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

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on the occasion of the University of Ottawa Conference

Global Governance in the 21st Century

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Mr Allan Rock, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ottawa,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you Professor Mendes for your kind presentation.

I thank the University of Ottawa and The Hague *Institute for Global Justice* for this opportunity.

I am deeply honoured to be here, to listen to today's debates on Canada's re-engagement with the world, on the need for reinforced multilateralism. These are debates that resonate across UNESCO's wide mandate.

I can hardly think of a better place for this conference on "Canada in Global Affairs," on the future of global governance.

Minister Stéphane Dion's speech this morning reminded me of how Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently made clear the depth of this country's commitment to the United Nations.

In his words:

"From John Humphrey's work on the UN Declaration on Human Rights to Lester B. Pearson's pivotal role in the development of peacekeeping, Canadians have accomplished extraordinary things in support of the UN's mission to promote

human rights, development, and peace and security. We are determined to help the UN make greater strides in support of its goals for all humanity.”

It is true the values of this country are written into the DNA of the United Nations.

...the values of diversity, tolerance and dialogue.

...the values of human rights and dignity, defended in action.

...the value of effective multilateralism, for a more just, rules-based international order.

These values, and the leadership of Canada, have never been so important, in this year following the 70th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations – and of our own anniversary.

UNESCO is one of the agencies created right after World War II with the mandate to build the defences of peace in the minds of men and women – through what we now call the soft power of the United Nations.

They have never been so important than at this time of turbulence and uncertainty.

We must look straight at reality.

These are times of turmoil like never before.

The distinguished Louise Arbour spoke this morning about cyclical rather than linear change.

I come from Eastern Europe and living through the perestroika and the fall of the Berlin Wall, we had the sense there was no turning back. We never thought that in the 21st century we would see problems from the 19th century reopened, and institutions established in the 20th century not able to cope with today's challenges of a fragmented world.

Certainly, opportunities are high everywhere, for positive change, for trade and prosperity, for exchange and dialogue.

But challenges are steep.

Climate change is affecting all societies – and all societies are seeking responses, as witnessed by the recently adopted Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

With Ebola, we saw disease hold an entire region hostage – and we have seen also Canadian scientists design an experimental vaccine. I could also speak about the Zika virus in Brazil.

Poverty remains enduring, just as inequalities are deepening.

Conflicts endure across the world, eluding resolution, tearing societies apart.

We see the rise of violent extremism, terrorism, hitting societies across the world. I think of the brutal assassination of Charlie Hebdo journalists in January 2015, of the Paris terrorist attacks in November, and now Brussels.

In Syria and Iraq, we see a devastating humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the cultural cleansing of ISIS.

We see human rights violated on massive scale, minorities attacked, women enslaved, journalists beheaded, cultural heritage and cultural diversity destroyed.

At the same time, humanity is on the move like never before – sometimes at gunpoint.

In 2015 worldwide displacement was at the highest level ever recorded. The number of people forcibly displaced had risen to a staggering 60 million compared to 37 million a decade ago.

Most of the world's poor live in fragile and conflict situations – some 1.5 billion people, of which 40 percent are young. We must not forget that there are people who have been living displaced for decades in Africa.

The family of States has continued to grow, and so has the list of fragile countries – there are officially 37 states considered as fragile – where weak institutions, conflict and poverty co-exist.

This comes at a time when the role of non-State actors has never been so important, including organised criminal groups.

In this context, the very notion of power is changing.

We see every day the limits of “hard power” and the sheer difficulty of applying “soft power.”

As Moisés Naím put it:

“Power is easier to get, harder to use – and easier to lose.”

The world is not safe when extreme poverty remains so deeply prevalent.

The future is not secure when so many people lack access to education and health.

Societies are not sustainable when women still do not enjoy equal rights, when young people are desperate.

This setting raises hard questions.

About the relevance of institutions created in another century, for other challenges.

About the ability of the international system to tackle threats that pay no heed to borders, that seemed perversely designed to resist collective public action.

We hear pundits speak of a ‘G-zero world,’ without global leadership...

We hear international institutions compared to dinosaurs, bypassed by events, sclerotic, unable to adapt...

People point to the continuing conflict and humanitarian tragedy in Syria, five years of horror, resonating across the region, throwing a shadow over international peace and security.

I think we need to look at the world from the right angle, in light of the rising demand we see everywhere for global action against global challenges.

The rising complexity of global challenges calls for more United Nations, not less, more diplomacy, not less, more multilateralism, not less, and for its constant modernization and adaptation to the needs of today.

Look at the turning points of 2015...

Last September, the world agreed on the new *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

This builds on the Millennium Development Goals, and embodies a new global transformative agenda for people, for prosperity, for peace and for the planet, for the next 15 years.

But unlike the MDGs that were almost imposed on Member States, the 2030 Agenda is owned by countries and elaborated with their participation. The United Nations can work on creating norms, standards and building national capacities, but governments should be held accountable.

2015 closed also with the historic *Paris Agreement*, at the COP21.

This is a key moment for protecting the planet, for ensuring a life of dignity for all.

The *2030 Agenda* and *Paris Agreement* must be seen as one single agenda...

...as all-encompassing responses to complex challenges.

...as new forms of global action, joining all States, civil society, the private sector, academia, the scientific community and global public opinion. Partnerships are key.

These agreements were reached for several reasons – because they were led in a process owned by all States, because they were conducted on the principle of inclusion, allowing all voices to be heard, from civil society to the private sector, because they played to the trend of a rising global community, where global public opinion matters...

Inclusion, openness and ownership.

They succeeded also thanks to diplomacy, thanks to the skills of Governments, thanks to the leadership of the United Nations.

This shows the thirst that exists for multilateral diplomacy, against all odds.

This shows the enduring, unparalleled ability of the United Nations to pull the world together against challenges that threaten all societies.

Critics say multilateralism is dying.

I think they are wrong.

It has never been so vital.

Demand for the United Nations has never been so high.

Today, more than ever, the United Nations remains the beating heart of the international order, the foundation for rules-based multilateralism.

It is the only universal platform where new ideas can be transformed into norms, where new agendas for collective action can be framed, where global action can be both credible and legitimate.

Responding to complex global challenges demands effective and smart global action.

But not only.

It requires also action that is values-driven, that takes human rights and dignity as a starting point, that works for the benefit of all.

This is why the United Nations has never been so vital.

Of course, this requires adaptation to a changing environment.

This calls for new thinking, new partnerships, a new openness with civil society, with the private sector.

This calls for a new business model, of working together within the UN, of new approaches to governance, to reform, to staffing, to work differently, to build a coherent system that is fit for purpose, to respond to the rising demand we see everywhere for justice, for effective solutions. This is about the ethics of development, about human rights and dignity.

Fundamentally, this calls for a renewed engagement by all with first principles, with promoting international peace and security, with advancing human rights and dignity, with ending poverty. This is what Canada is doing and it is very energizing and encouraging.

In this light, I see three core areas on the global agenda today.

The first is written at the heart of the United Nations Charter – this is the core goal of the UN “*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.*”

Taking this forward today calls, above all, for a new focus on prevention and mediation.

We need a stronger culture of prevention across the United Nations system, stronger early warning, stronger monitoring capabilities as discussed this morning.

This means bolstered monitoring of human rights – the *Human Rights Up Front Initiative* launched by the Secretary-General is important here – as well as renewed attention to the responsibility to protect, to rethinking its modalities.

This means a new emphasis on diplomacy, on mediation and dialogue, at a time when globalization is pushing identities to the frontline, when ‘living together’ is essential to stability and peace in ever-more diverse societies.

Coming from UNESCO, this sensitivity to learning to live together, to intercultural dialogue, to respect for diversity, will not come as a surprise.

This means a new focus on building resilience and risk reduction, on learning lessons and gathering knowledge from previous mediation efforts, on building new skills.

We must also look again at the humanitarian system and the link to development – this is the importance of the forthcoming *World Humanitarian Summit*.

The world can no longer afford to play ‘catch-up.’

Take the challenge of violent extremism.

We must halt financing, stop foreign terrorists, push back violence.

But *countering* violent extremism is not enough -- we must *prevent* it.

Violent extremists are not born – they are made and fuelled.

This is the process we must disarm... starting on the benches of schools, through new forms of education, through media literacy, through new opportunities for youth engagement.

This was my message to the *Leaders’ Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism* last September, invited by the United States President Barack Obama.

This is UNESCO’s contribution to the Secretary-General’s new *Plan of Action to Prevent Extremism*.

Last November, UNESCO held the first *High-Level Conference on Education to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism*.

Next month, we will launch a *Teacher's Guide on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation*.

I see this as a new global battle for hearts and minds, especially young hearts and minds -- this is where the United Nations matters.

At the same time, we need a new approach to peacebuilding.

Peace support operations must be built into political and mediation strategies – they must be well-resourced, with targeted mandates, clear exit planning.

The need for legitimate and effective peace support operations has never been so urgent – I salute here the 2000 *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, led by H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi, and the 2015 *Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, led by H.E. José Ramos-Horta.

Prevention and peacebuilding today calls precisely for the ‘soft power’ of the United Nations.

We cannot just keep the peace – we must prevent conflicts and halt their recurrence.

We cannot just deliver aid – we must prepare the ground for human development over the long term.

This means integrating humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts.

This is the objective of SDG 16 – it is about building inclusive institutions, about good governance, accountability and justice for all - this requires effort across all the SDGs.

Recent challenges, for instance in Mali and elsewhere, have highlighted the need to better integrate the protection of cultural heritage, and emergency education into peacebuilding and stabilization operations.

We are working to establish a common platform for education in emergencies at the Humanitarian Summit because education is orphaned in protracted crises. We must do justice to the Syrian children and youth who are out of school to avert a lost generation in the making, vulnerable to despair, radicalization and violence.

We need an unbroken chain of action, to accompany societies from crisis to stability, to build resilience, to prevent fall-back.

This calls for action across the board, from legislation to health to education -- this is where the United Nations matters.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Dans cette université d'Ottawa, la plus importante université bilingue du continent, je ne résiste pas au plaisir de m'exprimer en Français.

La diversité linguistique et culturelle du Canada a toujours été l'une de ses plus grandes forces, et l'une des valeurs communes que nous partageons au sein de l'UNESCO.

Cette diversité est aussi un immense atout dans le monde actuel :

C'est une source de créativité, de force d'innovation, de prospérité et de paix, de renouvellement des idées et des sociétés, pour s'adapter aux changements, sans jamais s'enfermer dans une vision restrictive.

C'est le moyen d'apprendre à vivre ensemble avec nos différences, de cultiver à la fois la diversité qui nous enrichit, et les valeurs qui nous unissent – ce n'est pas facile, mais c'est devenu une compétence de base de tout citoyen d'un monde globalisé.

C'est aussi le moyen de construire des sociétés plus résilientes, plus ouvertes, et le Canada a clairement pris de l'avance sur ces sujets.

Telle est, je le crois, la vision profonde du nouvel agenda mondial pour le développement durable d'ici 2030.

Le Secrétaire général M. Ban Ki-moon l'a décrit comme un « *changement de paradigme* », un agenda réellement universel, et je suis parfaitement d'accord.

Changement de paradigme d'abord -- car il s'agit de dépasser la dichotomie Nord-Sud, et de réaliser un agenda réellement universel, qui s'appuie sur la diversité et l'expertise de chaque pays, pour éradiquer la pauvreté, protéger les droits humains, renforcer les fondements de la paix.

Changement de paradigme aussi -- car les 17 objectifs de développement durable sont conçus pour être connectés les uns aux autres, et sortir d'une approche en silos – ce qui suppose des politiques publiques capables de croiser les disciplines, de traiter ensemble l'égalité des genres et l'accès à l'eau, sécurité et inclusion sociale, qui se renforcent mutuellement.

Changement de paradigme enfin, -- parce qu'il s'appuie sur l'éducation, la formation, les compétences pour renforcer l'autonomie des hommes et des femmes – en particulier l'autonomie des femmes, qui est l'un des accélérateurs de développement les plus prometteurs.

Et c'est pourquoi, j'en suis convaincue, la résilience des sociétés dépend de notre capacité à renforcer à la fois cette *diversité créatrice*, qui ouvre des horizons, et la *capacité réelle des peuples* à trouver en eux-mêmes les ressources pour répondre à leurs défis, par la formation, par les talents, par les compétences.

C'est par ce moyen que les peuples peuvent s'adapter à l'imprévu, anticiper l'avenir, et se relever des crises.

Et l'expérience de ces dernières années, avec la multiplication des crises, a montré que les sociétés les plus robustes, les plus résilientes, sont aussi celles qui sont les plus inclusives, capables de compter sur la participation de tous leurs citoyens.

Et c'est précisément ce qu'exprime l'objectif de développement durable numéro 16, pour « *la paix, la justice et des institutions efficaces* », pour créer un environnement qui permet de faire éclore les capacités et les aspirations des peuples eux-mêmes.

Cette vision inclusive, centrée sur l'autonomie et les capacités, est fondamentale, car les défis que nous avons à relever sont globaux par définition, et personne ne peut espérer les résoudre seul, personne n'a les réponses à imposer aux autres.

Le changement climatique en est l'exemple parfait, et c'est, je crois, le défi unificateur de l'humanité, celui qui nous dépasse et nous fait sentir les membres d'une même communauté.

Et je veux saluer le gouvernement du Canada pour son engagement total sur ces questions, et sa contribution décisive à l'accord de Paris adopté à la COP 21.

Cet accord est inséparable de l'*Agenda 2030* – et ces deux accords constituent en réalité un seul et même agenda.

C'est un seul et même programme mondial, pour la durabilité, pour la dignité.

Tout ceci, je suis convaincue, souligne la pertinence accrue du système des Nations Unies, sa capacité à conduire des négociations et à fixer un cap.

Elle souligne aussi le profond renouvellement des valeurs et des principes à l'origine du pacte fondateur des Nations Unies.

Ce qui se dessine clairement, depuis une décennie, avec l'impact du changement climatique, avec la montée de l'extrémisme, avec les bouleversements sociaux qui ont changé des pouvoirs en place, c'est l'émergence d'une nouvelle vision de la paix mondiale.

La paix n'est pas l'absence de guerre.

Elle est une relation avec les autres, avec la planète, avec les générations futures.

Elle plonge ses racines dans la dignité humaine, dans le respect, dans l'égalité.

Elle est la condition du progrès, du développement, de l'épanouissement.

Les Nations Unies ne peuvent pas tout résoudre, l'action des Etats ne peut pas tout.

Il est devenu indispensable de s'appuyer davantage sur les partenariats, la société civile, des universités, et faire travailler ensemble cette grande diversité d'acteurs, d'innover sans cesse pour la paix.

Cela suppose de construire une Organisation des Nations Unies qui soit plus ouverte, plus transparente, plus démocratique, encore plus proche de la société civile.

Depuis l'époque des grandes découvertes, qui a d'ailleurs transformé le destin du Canada lui-même, les hommes ont excellé dans la « *mise en contact* », des régions et les peuples les plus éloignés du globe, traversant les mers et les continents.

La mondialisation ne peut plus se limiter à cette « *mise en contact* » - elle doit permettre la « *mise en commun* » des objectifs et des forces, et renforcer l'humanité comme une seule communauté, qui partage des valeurs, des aspirations, un destin, face à des défis qui nous dépassent.

Voilà, je crois, l'humanisme essentiel des Nations Unies.

C'est à la fois notre but, et notre meilleur atout ...la conviction que nous détenons ensemble, les moyens de construire un monde meilleur, pour tous, et en paix.

C'est le moyen de renouer avec la mission fondamentale des Nations Unies, comme l'a dit le Premier Ministre, et de combattre les forces de fragmentation du monde, qui cherchent à diviser l'humanité en groupes distincts.

Cette vision des Nations Unies, formulée il y a plus de 70 ans, dans un contexte complètement différent, n'a jamais été aussi importante aujourd'hui.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, allow me to return to English, to the words of Lester B. Pearson, in 1957 when he accepted the Nobel Peace Prize:

“Of all our dreams today there is none more important - or so hard to realise - than that of peace in the world. May we never lose our faith in it or our resolve to do everything that can be done to convert it one day into reality.”

Time has passed, the world has changed – this statement has not aged a day.

This remains the spirit guiding Canada in global affairs – this is still the dream inspiring us all.

I see this as a dream, but also as a duty, a responsibility, and this reminds me of the haunting lines from John McCrae’s poem, *In Flanders Fields*:

“To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.”

The ‘foe’ has changed, of course, but this remains, indeed, our responsibility... to grasp the torch... to hold it high.

Thank you.