United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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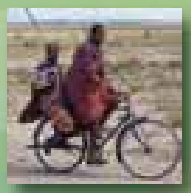
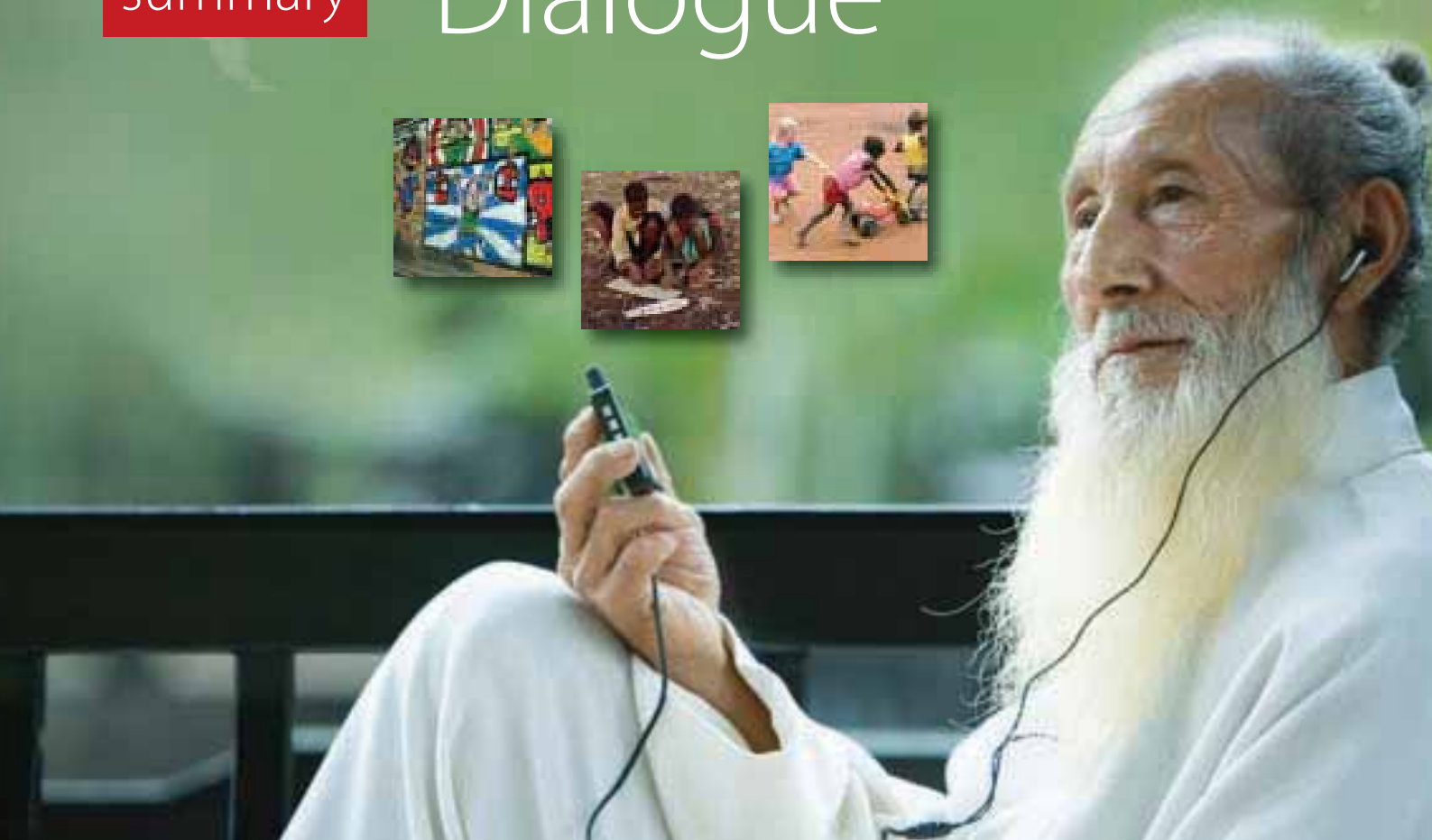


UNESCO World Report

Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue

Executive summary



UNESCO World Report

Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue

Executive summary

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Introduction

Cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of a new century. Yet the meanings attached to this catch-all term are as varied as they are shifting. Some see cultural diversity as inherently positive, insofar as it points to a sharing of the wealth embodied in each of the world's cultures and, accordingly, to the links uniting us all in processes of exchange and dialogue. For others, cultural differences are what cause us to lose sight of our common humanity and are therefore at the root of numerous conflicts. This second diagnosis is today all the more plausible since globalization has increased the points of interaction and friction between cultures, giving rise to identity-linked tensions, withdrawals and claims, particularly of a religious nature, which can become potential sources of dispute. The essential challenge, therefore, would be to propose a coherent vision of cultural diversity and thereby to clarify how, far from being a threat, it can become beneficial to the action of the international community. This is the essential purpose of the present report.

A UNESCO World Report

In line with UNESCO's conviction of the inherent value and necessity of the 'fruitful diversity of the world's cultures', as inscribed in its Constitution (1945), the objectives of the World Report on Cultural Diversity are:

- to analyze cultural diversity in all its aspects by attempting to show the complexity of the processes at work while at the same time identifying a main thread among the wide range of possible interpretations;
- to show the importance of cultural diversity in different areas (languages, education, communication and creativity), which, their intrinsic functions apart, may be seen as essential for the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity; and
- to persuade decision-makers and the various stakeholders of the importance of investing in cultural diversity as an essential dimension of intercultural dialogue, since it can renew our approaches to sustainable development, ensure the effective exercise of universally recognized human rights and freedoms, and strengthen social cohesion and democratic governance.

A monk in Osaka, Japan

The front of a small shop in Naivasha, Kenya

The World Report aims to take account of the new perspectives opened up by reflection on the challenges of cultural diversity and thereby to map out new approaches to monitoring and shaping the changes that are taking place. Thus, the World Report does not seek to provide ready-made solutions to the problems liable to confront decision-makers. Rather, it aims to underline the complexity of these problems, which cannot be solved by political will alone but usually call for better understanding of the underlying phenomena and greater international cooperation, particularly through the exchange of good practices and the adoption of common guidelines.

The World Report does not claim to offer a global inventory of cultural diversity, established on the basis of available indicators in the manner of UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Reports. While the World Report does include a Statistical Annex made up of 19 tables spanning the cultural domains, as well as a chapter devoted to methodological considerations, compiled in close cooperation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in Montreal, the development of indicators in the field of cultural diversity is only just beginning. For the purposes of such an inventory, it would have been necessary to carry out, with the agreement of UNESCO's Member States, a truly global enquiry into cultural diversity – a task that would have required far greater resources than those allocated to the present report, but that could one day be undertaken by a World Observatory on Cultural Diversity, whose creation this report recommends.

UNESCO hopes in this way to play a part in the recent renewal of thinking on cultural diversity, in keeping with its work in the 1950s and the conclusions of *Our Creative Diversity*, the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (1996). In the text entitled *Race and History* written in 1952 for UNESCO, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that the protection of cultural diversity should not be confined to preservation of the status quo: it is 'diversity itself which must be saved, not the outward and visible form in which each period has clothed that diversity'. Protecting cultural diversity in this view means ensuring that diversity continues to exist, not that a given state of diversity should perpetuate itself indefinitely. This presupposes the capacity to accept and sustain cultural change, while not regarding it as an edict of fate. The report of the World Commission on Culture and Development had argued along similar lines that cultural diversity is not simply an asset to be preserved but a resource to be promoted, with particular regard to its potential benefits, including in areas relatively distant from culture in the narrow sense. The present report seeks to build upon the earlier report's main conclusions.

In recent years, the arguments UNESCO has developed in its thinking on cultural diversity have been taken up by a significant number of programmes and agencies in the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank, for example, has on several occasions followed UNESCO's lead in the context of the World Decade on Culture and Development (1988–1997) in its enquiries into the links between culture and development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have likewise published important reports. Subsequently, the Report of the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations has given unprecedented prominence to initiatives promoting dialogue between peoples, cultures and civilizations. The present report is also intended to contribute to the thinking and studies of UNESCO's partner programmes and agencies, particularly with regard to development.

A billboard advertising a mobile telephone operator in Nigeria

A Berber festival in the Sahara Desert of Southern Morocco

Zápara woman weaving, Ecuador / Peru

South Pacific man

What is cultural diversity?

Cultural diversity is above all a fact: there exists a wide range of distinct cultures, which can be readily distinguished on the basis of ethnographic observation, even if the contours delimiting a particular culture prove more difficult to establish than might at first sight appear. Awareness of this diversity has today become much more widespread, being facilitated by globalized communications and increased cultural contacts. While this greater awareness in no way guarantees the preservation of cultural diversity, it has given the topic greater visibility.

Cultural diversity has moreover become a major social concern, linked to the growing diversity of social codes within and between societies. Confronted by this diversity of practices and outlooks, States sometimes find themselves at a loss to know how to respond, often as a matter of urgency, or how to take account of cultural diversity in the common interest. To contribute to the devising of specific responses, this report seeks to provide a framework for renewed understanding of the challenges inherent in cultural diversity, by identifying some of the theoretical and political difficulties that it inevitably entails.

Cultural diversity is not simply an asset to be preserved but a resource to be promoted... including in areas relatively distant from culture in the narrow sense

A first difficulty has to do with the specifically *cultural nature* of this form of diversity. Many societies have recourse to various proxies, particularly ethnic or linguistic characterizations, to take account of their cultural heterogeneity. The first challenge will therefore be to examine the different policies pursued without losing sight of our topic, which is cultural diversity and not the proxies to which it is sometimes reduced. One solution would be to adopt the broadest possible definition of culture, along the lines of the consensus embodied in UNESCO's 1982 *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies*, which defined culture as the 'whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group' including 'not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs'. This has the merit of neither adopting an excessively restrictive definition of culture nor focusing on a particular aspect (e.g. religion) in order to define a culture.

What is needed is a new approach to cultural diversity which takes account of its dynamic nature and the challenges of identity associated with cultural change

A billboard on Suva's main street, Fiji

Another difficulty concerns the identification of the *constituents* of cultural diversity. In this connection, the terms 'culture', 'civilization' and 'peoples' have different connotations depending on context, for example scientific or political. Whereas 'cultures' refers to entities that tend to be defined in relation to one another, the term 'civilization' refers to cultures that affirm their values or worldviews as universal and adopt an expansionist approach towards those that do not (or do not yet) share them. It is therefore a very real challenge to attempt to persuade the different centres of civilization to coexist peacefully. As conceived by UNESCO – a conception remote from those ideological constructions that predict a 'clash of civilizations' – 'civilization' is to be understood as work in progress, as the accommodation of each of the world's cultures, on the basis of equality, in an ongoing universal project.

A third difficulty concerns the *relationship of cultures to change*. For it took almost seven decades of the 20th century before cultures started to be understood as shifting entities. Previously, there was a tendency to view them as essentially fixed, their content being 'transmitted' between generations through a variety of channels, such as education or initiatory practices of various kinds. Today, culture is increasingly understood as a process whereby societies evolve along pathways that are specific to them. The concept of difference aptly captures this particular dynamic, whereby culture changes while remaining the same. What is needed, then, is to define policies that give a positive slant to these 'cultural differences' so that groups and individuals that come into contact, rather than withdrawing into closed identities, discover in this 'difference' an incentive for continuing to evolve and change.

These considerations argue in favour of a new approach to cultural diversity – one that takes account of its dynamic nature and the challenges of identity associated with the permanence of cultural change. This necessarily entails substantial changes to UNESCO's role in this context. For whereas the Organization's longstanding concern has been with the conservation and safeguarding of endangered cultural sites, practices and expressions, it must now also learn to sustain cultural change in order to help individuals and groups to manage diversity more effectively. ***For this ultimately is the major challenge: managing diversity.***

A man playing a trumpet in the old French Quarter of New Orleans, US

Women practising a traditional dance in Shanghai, China

PART I:

Cultural Diversity: What is at Stake?

In the context of globalization and increasing migration and urbanization, the interrelated challenges of preserving cultural identity and promoting intercultural dialogue assume a new prominence and urgency. The World Report begins by considering the impact of accelerating globalization processes on the different facets of cultural diversity, highlighting the way in which strong homogenizing forces are matched by persistent diversifying trends. The report goes on to examine the essential role of intercultural dialogue in bridging cultural differences, while nurturing the diversity of cultural expressions through processes of mutual interaction, support and empowerment.

Chapter 1: **Cultural diversity**

Cultural diversity in a globalizing world

While cultural erosion has become an issue of global concern in light of the perceived impact of technologically mediated Western paradigms, the association of globalization with standardization and cultural homogenization is often overstated. Trade and cultural transfer invariably involve processes of adaptation and, in an increasingly complex and interactive international environment, do not usually take place unilaterally. Moreover, cultural roots run deep and in many cases lie beyond the reach of exogenous influences. In this sense, globalization is best seen as a multidimensional and multidirectional process involving accelerated and increased flows of virtually everything – capital, commodities, information, ideas, beliefs, people – along constantly evolving axes.

Weavers on Taquile Island, Lake Titicaca, Peru

The polyphonic singing and dancing of the Aka Pygmies of central Africa

Group of tourists in front of the Giza sphinx in Egypt

Generally speaking, the globalization of international exchanges is leading to the integration of a diversity of multicultural exchanges in almost all national contexts, paralleling and nurturing the trend towards multiple cultural affiliations and a 'complexification' of cultural identities. This is not to ignore, however, the negative impacts of globalizing forces on the diversity of cultural practices.

One of the main effects of globalization is to attenuate the link between a cultural phenomenon and its geographic location by transporting distant events, influences and experiences into our immediate vicinity. In some cases, such attenuation is experienced as a source of opportunity; in others, as a loss of certainty and identity. A parallel phenomenon is the growth in international migration, which is leading in some cases to novel cultural expressions, demonstrating that diversity is ever in the making. The growth in the number of international tourists is another phenomenon with potentially significant impacts on cultural diversity. While such tourism is to some extent self-contained and its consequences ambiguous for local populations, its outcome in terms of greater knowledge and understanding of differing cultural environments and practices would seem self-evidently positive.

Our increasing intercultural contacts are also giving rise to new forms of cultural diversity and linguistic practices, particularly due to advances in digital technology. Thus, rather than attempting to preserve diversity in all its forms, the focus should be on devising new strategies that take account of such changes while enabling vulnerable populations to 'manage' cultural change more effectively. Every living tradition is subject to continual self-reinvention. Cultural diversity, like cultural identity, is about innovation, creativity and receptiveness to new influences.

The Hudhud chanting of the Ifugao in the Philippines

An elderly woman in Surgut, Russia

National, religious, cultural and multiple identities

The question of identities – national, cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender-based or consumer-based – is assuming renewed importance for individuals and groups who see globalization and cultural change as a threat to their beliefs and ways of life. The growing tensions over identity, which are often the result of a culturalization of political claims, are in contradiction with a more general trend towards the emergence of dynamic and multifaceted identities. Political activism related to religious identity can serve as a powerful marker of cultural identity and difference. In this context, there is a risk of religious conviction being instrumentalized for the furtherance of political and related agendas, with the potential for precipitating intra-religious conflict as well as dissensions within democratic societies.

There has been a tendency to equate cultural diversity with the diversity of national cultures. Yet national identity is to some extent a construction, grounded in a sometimes reconstructed past and providing a focus for our sense of commonality. Cultural identity is a more fluid, self-transforming process, to be seen less in terms of a past inheritance than of a future project. In a globalizing world, cultural identities often derive from multiple sources; the increasing plasticity of cultural identities reflects the growing complexity of the globalized flows of people, goods and information.

In a multicultural context, some people will choose to adopt a particular form of identity, others to live in a dual mode, and still others to create for themselves hybrid identities. Many contemporary novelists have been drawn to the theme of migrants confronted by a new cultural environment and faced with the challenge of fashioning new cultural identities. Generally speaking, the blurring of boundaries in the context of globalization has favoured the emergence of a nomadic spirit, which can be seen as the new horizon of contemporary cultural experimentation.

Aboriginal elder uses mobile phone, central Australia

There is a general trend towards dynamic and multifaceted identities in the context of globalization, which is favouring the emergence of a nomadic spirit

A beggar passing a street advertisement in Athens, Greece

Regional and international initiatives

In a world marked increasingly by the intermingling of cultures, efforts to safeguard the manifestations of cultural diversity assume particular importance for national governments as well as for the international community. In domains as varied as tangible heritage, intangible heritage, cultural expressions, cultural exchanges and the illicit traffic in cultural goods, the agreements and standard-setting activities at regional and international levels have sought to protect and promote some of the key tokens of cultural diversity and markers of cultural identity. UNESCO, in keeping with its mandate within the UN, has played a leading role in the formulation, promotion and implementation of many of these normative and other instruments.

The development that leads from the 1954 *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*, through the 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, and the 2001 *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* to the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* reflects a progressive extension of the concept of cultural heritage, increasingly understood to include not only the material expressions of the world's diverse cultures but also their intangible manifestations, including oral traditions, performing arts and traditional know-how. In parallel, there has been a shift of emphasis from an implicit ranking of World Heritage sites (deemed 'of outstanding universal value') to a concern for highlighting exemplars of the intangible heritage that provide its repositories with a sense of identity and continuity. The development reflects a dual movement: one leads to the recognition of a 'common heritage' that the international community has a duty to safeguard as the expression of a common human inheritance; the other leads to the recognition of the specificities of cultures, which, though they may be fluctuating and transitory in nature, must be valued and recognized in their own right.

Culture refers both to the creative diversity embodied in particular 'cultures' and to the creative impulse at the heart of that diversity of 'cultures'

A new era has begun in the exploration of the concept of cultural diversity with the adoption in 2001 of the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* and in 2005 of the complementary *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. In addressing the exchanges between the cultures that constitute our universal heritage, the 2005 Convention aims to preserve the specificities of cultures while promoting their development on a global scale through interaction and commercialization.

Indeed, culture has two meanings, which are different yet wholly complementary. Firstly, culture is the creative diversity embodied in particular 'cultures', with their unique traditions and tangible and intangible expressions. Secondly, culture (in the singular) refers to the creative impulse at the heart of that diversity of 'cultures'. These two meanings of culture – one self-referential, the other self-transcending – are inextricably linked and provide the key to the fruitful interaction of all peoples in the context of globalization.

African immigrants queue at the port of Lampedusa before being transferred to Sicily, Italy

The Mostar Bridge was rebuilt after the war in Bosnia

Chapter 2: **Intercultural dialogue**

In a culturally diverse world, it is necessary to develop new approaches to intercultural dialogue, beyond the limitations of the 'dialogue among civilizations' paradigm. The prerequisites include consideration of the ways in which cultures relate to one another, awareness of cultural commonalities and shared goals, and identification of the challenges to be met in reconciling cultural differences.

Cultural interactions

Cultures are not self-enclosed or static entities. One of the fundamental obstacles to intercultural dialogue is our habit of conceiving cultures as fixed, as if fault lines separated them. One of the main objections to Samuel Huntington's thesis of a 'clash of civilizations' is that it presupposes singular rather than multiple affiliations between human communities and fails to take account of cultural interdependency and interaction. To describe as fault lines the differences between cultures is to overlook the porosity of cultural boundaries and the creative potential of the individuals they encompass. Cultures, like individuals, exist in relationship to one another.

The intermingling of cultures throughout history has found expression in a variety of cultural forms and practices, from cultural borrowings and exchanges (the Silk Roads) to cultural impositions through war, conquest and colonialism. Yet even in the extreme circumstance of slavery, exchanges take place whereby certain discreet processes of reverse enculturation come to be assimilated by the dominating culture. Recognition of the universality of human rights has made it possible today – in theory at least – to think in terms of genuine exchanges on the basis of equality between all the world's cultures.

Globalization processes are giving rise to more systematic cultural encounters, borrowings and exchanges. These new transcultural links are potentially powerful facilitators of intercultural dialogue. Rethinking our cultural categories, recognizing the multiple sources of our identities, helps to shift the focus away from 'differences' towards our shared ability to evolve through interaction. Awareness of history and understanding of cultural codes are crucial to overcoming cultural stereotypes on the path to intercultural dialogue.

Cultural stereotypes and intolerance

Cultural stereotypes, while serving to demarcate one group from the alien 'other', carry with them the risk that dialogue may stop short at difference and that difference may engender intolerance. Cultures belonging to different civilizational traditions are particularly prone to mutual stereotyping.

Intercultural tensions are often bound up with conflicts of memory, competing interpretations of past events, and conflicts of values – particularly religious values. Where it has not been excluded by the will to power and domination, dialogue remains the key to unlocking these deep-rooted antagonisms and to pre-empting their often violent political expressions. The cultural challenge that faces each multicultural society is to reconcile the recognition of, protection of and respect for cultural particularities with the affirmation and promotion of universally shared values emerging from the interplay of these cultural specificities. In seeking to meet this challenge, the tensions between different identities can become the driving force for a renewal of national unity based on understanding social cohesion as the integration of the diversity of its cultural components.

The challenges of dialogue in a multicultural world

Intercultural dialogue is largely dependent on intercultural competencies, defined as the complex of abilities needed to interact appropriately with those who are different from oneself. These abilities are essentially communicative in nature, but they also involve reconfiguring our perspectives and understandings of the world; for it is not so much cultures as *people* – individuals and groups, with their complexities and multiple allegiances – who are engaged in the process of dialogue.

A caravan of camels at Mingsha Shan in Dunhuang, China

The Samba de Roda of Recôncavo of Bahia, Brazil

Muslims praying in Jakarta, Indonesia

Intercultural dialogue requires the empowerment of all participants through capacity-building and projects that foster interaction without a loss of personal or collective identity

Rather than knowledge of others, what determines the success of intercultural dialogue is the basic ability to listen, cognitive flexibility, empathy, humility and hospitality. Accordingly, numerous initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and empathy between young people from different cultures are being initiated, from school projects to educational and exchange programmes involving participatory cultural, artistic and sports activities. The arts and creativity in particular testify to the depths and plasticity of intercultural relations and the forms of mutual enrichment they embody. They also help to combat closed identities and promote cultural pluralism. Similarly, multicultural practices and events such as 'global city' networking, carnivals and cultural festivals can help to transcend barriers through experiences of urban communion and entertainment.

Preparing for the traditional polyphony, dances and rituals, the Shoplouk region, Bulgaria

A man in Niamey, Niger

Divergent memories have been the source of many conflicts throughout history. Although intercultural dialogue cannot hope to settle on its own all the conflicts in the political, economic and social spheres, a key element in its success is the building of a shared memory-base through the acknowledgement of faults and open debate on competing memories. The framing of a common historical narrative can be crucial in conflict prevention and post-conflict strategies, in assuaging 'a past that is still present'. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and national reconciliation processes in Rwanda are recent examples of the political application of such a healing strategy. The showcasing of 'places of memory' – such as the Robben Island Prison in South Africa, the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia and the Buddhas of Bamyan in Afghanistan – likewise demonstrates that what distinguishes us can also serve to unite us, in contemplation of testimonies to our common humanity.

Empowerment

The promotion of intercultural dialogue converges significantly with the 'multiple identities' approach. Dialogue should be seen not as involving a loss of self but as dependent upon knowing oneself and being able to shift between different frames of reference. It requires the empowerment of all participants through capacity-building and projects that permit interaction without a loss of personal or collective identity. This also involves recognizing the ethnocentric ways in which mainstream cultures have often proceeded and making room for systems of thought that recognize both 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' forms of knowledge. A noteworthy example in this regard is community mapping, which has been very successful in helping to empower indigenous populations to regain internationally their rights to ancestral lands and resources and self-determined development.

A major obstacle to the accommodation of new voices in the sphere of intercultural dialogue is the pervasive subordination of women to male-dominated interpretations of cultural and religious tradition. In many social contexts, women have a distinctive role to play in the promotion of cultural diversity, since they are often the 'value carriers' in the transmission of language, ethical codes, value systems, religious beliefs and behavioural patterns. Gender inequality is multidimensional and interacts with racial, social, economic and other forms of inequality in insidious ways.

The key to successful intercultural and interfaith dialogue lies in the acknowledgement of the equal dignity of the participants. This presupposes recognition of – and respect for – diverse forms of knowledge and their modes of expression, the customs and traditions of participants, and efforts to establish a culture-neutral context for dialogue that enables communities to express themselves freely. This is especially true of interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue is a crucial dimension of international understanding and thus of conflict resolution. Beyond institutional exchanges between authoritative or representative figures, interfaith dialogue aimed at reconciling different viewpoints should seek to integrate exchanges of all kinds, including through informal local and community networks, and to involve new partners, especially indigenous populations, women and youth.

PART II:

Key Vectors of Cultural Diversity

While virtually all human activities have an impact on cultural diversity, its prospects are increasingly bound up with the future of languages, education, communication and cultural content, and creativity and the marketplace. These four fields are explored in four chapters with a view to identifying trends and factors that impact on the state of cultural diversity and refining our political agendas in keeping with the complex realities of today's world.

Storyteller speaking to a crowd in Jemaa el-Fna Square in Marrakesh, Morocco

Chapter 3: **Languages**

Languages mediate our experiences, our intellectual and cultural environments, our modes of encounter with human groups, our value systems, social codes and sense of belonging, both collectively and personally. From the perspective of cultural diversity, linguistic diversity reflects the creative adaptation of human groups to their changing physical and social environments. In this sense, languages are not just a means of communication but represent the very fabric of cultural expressions, the carriers of identity, values and worldviews.

Language dynamics today

Linguists believe that a large percentage of the world's languages is likely to disappear in the course of this century. Half of the languages in existence today – estimated at between 6,000 and 8,000 – are spoken by less than 10,000 people, and one such language is said to disappear every two weeks. While the growth of vehicular languages (English in particular) associated with globalization processes is having major impacts on languages worldwide, languages shift in response to myriad political, social, economic and cultural conditions, and the effects of globalization on linguistic diversity are far from simple and often contradictory. In many instances, transfer away from minority languages is not towards English but towards other rival languages and regional dialects, suggesting that the widespread use of English may be limited to specific purposes, such as transactions and functional communication. Globalization has also encouraged more plural and hybrid approaches to English, revealing the highly complex ways in which language, identity and relationships interact and how speakers adapt inherited forms of language to new cultural contexts and for new purposes.

Through migration, colonial expansion, refugee displacement or professional mobility, many language communities are now dispersed across the world. As connections between language and place become increasingly multiple, communication patterns are becoming highly variegated, characterized by code-switching, multilingualism, different receptive and productive competencies in different languages or dialects, and are marked by mixtures of full, partial and specialized proficiencies. In this way, continuously expanding networks – based on mobile phones, broadband Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) – are creating new forms of human association of unprecedented scale and flexibility, spanning cities, nations and cultures. These are in turn forging new linguistic forms and practices linked to new cultural identities that are broadening, and redefining, existing boundaries across public/private domains and social, cultural and educational contexts.

Epic storyteller, Kyrgyzstan

Languages and identities

Despite the complexity of the contemporary world, most languages remain 'narrow-niched' and are largely culture-specific. Like species, languages adapt to specific ecological settings, and like cultural artefacts, they have historicity. Languages have an important boundary-marking function between different social groups; and when a language is lost, it is far more difficult to recover than other identity markers. Dominant languages exercise a power of attraction over the speakers of minority languages. Young people in particular tend to vest their identity in the majority languages of communication. Over successive generations, this has been reflected in the loss of many vernacular languages, along with the cultural diversity they embodied. Moreover, traditional languages are linked to the corresponding ecosystem, so that their loss further impacts on environmental and ecological diversity.

From this perspective, there is a vital need for measures to protect and promote languages of local relevance, all the while supporting the learning of vehicular languages, which offer access to global communication and exchange of information.

The challenges of language assessment and revitalization

Many consider language vitality to be a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture – from kinship classification to religion – is dependent on language for its transmission. Yet language is not equivalent to culture. There are numerous instances where the same language is spoken by groups with otherwise radically different cultural practices and worldviews.

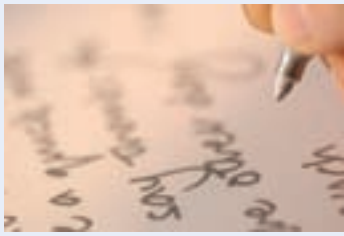
Traditional approaches to documenting and assessing language shifts have been mainly centred on linguistics and have tended to neglect socio-economic realities and political contexts. However, language loss is a late onset form of cultural attrition, indicating an already advanced process of cultural decline. The variety of circumstances surrounding language health and its prospects for revitalization in the case of erosion depend upon the specific socio-cultural, economic, political and historical configurations that apply uniquely to each language, and thus tend to defy generalization and broad analysis. While many of today's approaches to minority language revitalization and preservation recognize and integrate these factors, the process remains profoundly political.

Indeed, the active preservation of an eroded language can be perceived to compete with the culture and the instrumental value of the language that has replaced it.

The causes of language endangerment may be external (globalization, political pressure, economic advantage, etc.) or internal (reflecting a community's negative attitude towards the language) or, in most cases, are a combination of the two. The prestige of the mainstream language and its predominance in public life can lead a community to devalue its own language. Language revitalization thus depends first and foremost on a community's reassertion of its cultural identity. New ICTs can have a positive impact on such revitalization efforts, most successfully where the media participate in the overall effort.

The preservation of small languages is in the interest of majority and minority communities alike. While measures to protect minority languages are implicit in many existing instruments, the question of language rights remains contentious. UNESCO's Executive Board is currently debating the feasibility of a new standard-setting instrument on languages, as well as whether it should focus on the safeguarding of linguistic rights in general or on those of certain vulnerable groups.

Languages are not just a means of communication but represent the very fabric of cultural expressions, the carriers of identity, values and worldviews



© *A translation and typing service in Hyderabad, India*

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books in Italian, German, Spanish, Catalan and Czech translations

Multilingualism, translation and intercultural dialogue

Multilingualism (i.e. the ability to use several languages) fulfils the dual function of facilitating communication between individuals of different cultures and contributing to the survival of endangered languages. Translation for its part serves as a necessary bridge over the many linguistic divides that multilingualism is not able or available to span. Both are necessary components of a pluralistic society.

Multilingualism in schools is now practised in many countries, where national educational objectives have made social cohesion one of the priorities of public investment in education. Language policies that support multilingualism, language learning and endangered languages are indispensable to the long-term sustainability of cultural diversity.

There is a need to both preserve global linguistic diversity as a prerequisite for cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism and translation in order to foster intercultural dialogue

Major imbalances in translation flows worldwide reflect global asymmetries in the representation of cultures, peoples and languages. Data compiled by the *Index Translationum* show that 55 percent of all book translation is from English, as compared with 6.5 percent into English. The hierarchy between majority and minority languages determines translation flows; translations from and into indigenous languages hardly exist. While literary translation has declined, technical translation – with English as the predominant source language – in the major industrialized countries is increasing. Automatic translation systems, which are also on the rise, still largely serve the major source or target languages. Given the important role of translation in the promotion of cultural diversity, a case can be made for the development of a translation policy on a global scale.

Generally speaking, language policy and planning are only just coming to terms with the social transformations of the last decades of the 20th century. To ensure the continued viability of the world's languages, we must find ways *both* to safeguard linguistic diversity by protecting and revitalizing languages *and* to promote multilingualism and translation by developing policies at the national level that foster the functional use of all languages in society. These two objectives are intertwined since the promotion of multilingualism that includes mother-tongue education also constitutes a means of safeguarding indigenous and endangered languages. On the international level, this translates into a two-pronged approach: 1) to preserve global linguistic diversity as a prerequisite for cultural diversity and 2) to promote multilingualism and translation (including in administration, education, the media and cyberspace) in order to foster intercultural dialogue.

A sign outside a school in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

Chapter 4: **Education**

Education is frequently discussed in terms of knowledge transmission and the development of often standardized conceptions of behavioural and social skills. Yet education is also about value transmission – both within and between generations and across cultures. Policies in the field of education have a major impact on the flourishing or decline of cultural diversity, and must seek to promote education *through* and *for* diversity. This guarantees the right to education by acknowledging the diversity of learners' needs – especially those of minority, indigenous and nomadic groups – and by integrating a corresponding diversity of methods and contents. In increasingly complex multicultural societies, education must enable us to acquire the intercultural competencies that will permit us to live together with – and not despite – our cultural differences. The four principles of quality education defined by the report of the World Commission on Education for the 21st Century – 'learning to be', 'learning to know', 'learning to do' and 'learning to live together' – can be successfully implemented only if cultural diversity is situated at their core.

The relevance of educational methods and contents

A curriculum shaped by the standardization of learning processes and contents – a 'one size fits all' approach – does not serve the needs of all learners, nor does it respond to the context of their lives. This is becoming increasingly obvious to a growing number of countries which are seeking alternative pathways within educational systems. However, information about the kinds of education people are receiving worldwide and how these differ across (and sometimes within) countries has yet to be systematically compiled and evaluated.

In the name of *quality education*, which has to be both *appropriate* (i.e. culturally acceptable) and *flexible* (i.e. adapted to changing societies), curriculum development must aim to increase educational relevance by adjusting learning processes, educational content, teacher training and school management to the circumstances of learners. This entails the development of multicultural and multilingual curricula, based on multiple perspectives and voices and drawing on the histories and cultures of all groups in society. Such an approach, which is sensitive to the diversity of learners, should also provide for special measures to reach vulnerable and marginalized groups and to improve school and

In increasingly complex multicultural societies, education must enable us to acquire the intercultural competencies that will permit us to live together with – and not despite – our cultural differences

An open-air school in the South Omo, Ethiopia

In the corridor of a primary school in Hanoi, Viet Nam

educational environments, particularly for girls. The ultimate goal is one of empowerment with respect to the promotion of human rights, the enhancement of democratic citizenship and the furtherance of sustainable development. Developing culturally sensitive education calls not only for subject specialists but for teachers who are knowledgeable and sensitive to cultural differences. The desire to promote relevant teaching methods for the whole range of educational publics has led to an unprecedented diversification of educational media and methods – not least in the private sector, sometimes in partnership with NGOs.

The benefits of mother-tongue-based multilingual approaches at all levels of formal and non-formal education can be illustrated by a number of developing countries in primary education. Bilingual educational programmes are relevant in most learning contexts and can be instrumental in improving the quality of education and expanding educational opportunities for marginalized and under-served groups, including immigrant populations. While most countries may still be far from attaining the objectives of teaching national, local/regional and international languages in their official curricula (as highlighted by an analysis of timetables on language education), this objective is crucial both for the preservation of linguistic diversity and for intellectual functioning.

Learning societies and the right to education

Advancement of the right to education, as reaffirmed in the principles of Education for All (EFA), and the protection and promotion of cultural diversity make pluralism a central educational requirement, contrary to the tendency of educational systems to be a source of standardization. The failure to take account of non-mainstream forms of learning (e.g. indigenous knowledge of resource management), combined with the constraints of the job market, risks further marginalizing those populations that education should seek to empower.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of knowledge diversity (including local and indigenous knowledge), the belief in value-free theories and conceptualizations unrelated to the social settings in which they arose is still widespread. Insofar as mainstream educational discourse considers science to be universal,

The failure to take account of non-mainstream forms of learning risks further marginalizing those populations that education should seek to empower

A young indigenous girl in a classroom in High Orenoque, Venezuela

'traditional' or other forms of knowledge tend to be reductively compartmentalized. Yet the strategies that promote recognition of traditional and even tacit forms of knowledge can open avenues for the preservation of vulnerable societies while broadening the scope of 'mainstream' knowledge.

The international community is increasingly recognizing that traditional and pragmatic ways of learning can be as efficient as Western didactic approaches. Storytellers, for example, contribute to the vitality of oral cultures, while literacy strategies may involve an unintended devaluation of those cultures. Among other benefits, informal and indigenous education may contribute to more participatory forms of learning, which are not so much analytical as adaptive. Education has much to gain from such pluralistic approaches to learning, which remind us that the right to education goes hand-in-hand with the right of parents to 'choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children' (UDHR, Art. 26).

Participatory learning and intercultural competencies

In multicultural societies, one of the major challenges facing lifelong education involves our capacities for learning to live together. Thus, multicultural education has to be complemented by intercultural education. Arts and humanities education, multimedia activities, museums and travel help to develop the critical capacities indispensable to combating unilateral viewpoints, adapting to culturally diverse social environments and responding to the challenges of intercultural dialogue. Sensitizing people to cultural diversity is more a matter of approaches, methods and attitudes than of the assimilation of content. Before tolerance can become a skill, it must be practised.

The founding principles of UNESCO rest on the conviction that education is fundamental to addressing the ignorance and mistrust that are the source of human conflict. Since prejudice is based on, among other things, what we do not know or false preconceptions, facilitating cultural openness is key to fostering intercultural dialogue and forestalling a 'clash of ignorances'. The humanities and social sciences encourage learners to become aware of their own biases and to re-examine their assumptions. The inclusion of world religions and faiths in curricula can help to dissipate many of the misunderstandings that can make living together problematic. The arts are a strong and universal tool for promoting mutual understanding and peace, and practising the arts is a powerful way of socializing with others. The teaching of arts helps to reconnect scientific and emotional processes with intuition – a key component for the cultivation of attitudes favouring intercultural openness. Arts education can also help to address ethnocentrism, cultural bias, stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination and racism.

A pupil at Ferdeusi school in Kabul, Afghanistan

Thus the development of intercultural competencies should not be limited to the classroom but must extend to the 'university of life'. Inclusiveness must be fostered in both the classroom and the school environment in general, as well as through the involvement of parents and local communities.

Chapter 5: **Communication and cultural contents**

As the world comes to resemble a 'global village', the landscape encompassing the press, books, radio, television, cinema, the Internet and a wide range of digital devices is playing a major role in both heightening the visibility of cultural diversity and shaping our tastes, values and worldviews. The extent to which these expressions translate the reality, complexity and dynamics of cultural diversity is worth considering, however; for while the new media undoubtedly facilitate our access to cultural diversity, opening up greater opportunities for intercultural dialogue and diversification of voices, the asymmetries implicit in the digital divide continue to restrict the possibilities for genuine cultural exchange. Moreover, the sheer number and variety of choices and the cultural challenges they embody can prompt various forms of cultural isolationism.

Globalization and new media trends

In 2006 the media and cultural industries generated more than 7 percent of global GDP and were worth about US$1.3 trillion, or nearly twice that year's total international tourism receipts (estimated at US$680 billion). In the 1990s in OECD countries, the cultural and creative economy grew at an annual rate twice that of service industries and four times that of manufacturing. Recent years have seen a concentration of power in the hands of a few large transnational multimedia corporations and a handful of global media players. In terms of printed and recorded media, the export market is dominated by the OECD countries. Similar trends regarding the origin of content production are observable in the radio, television and film sectors. In the case of cinema, the general trend is that of national productions struggling to compete with the blockbuster films produced by large movie conglomerates (Bollywood and the nationally supported French film industry being notable exceptions). The vast majority of developing countries is still not in a position to harness their creative capacities for development in this sector. Africa's share in the global trade of creative products, for example, remains marginal (at less than 1 percent of world exports), despite its abundance of creative talent.

Yet the global media landscape is changing, as some developing countries begin to emerge as both exporters of cultural and media equipment and content producers,

Television satellite dish outside a yurt in Mongolia

An increased supply of media content can lead to a 'false diversity', masking the fact that some people are communicating only with those who share the same cultural references

contributing to so-called 'counter-flows'. Developing countries' exports of cultural and media equipment increased rapidly between 1996 and 2005 as a result of strategies to increase global competitiveness and an expanding demand for communication equipment. This trend facilitated the emergence of local markets for media contents, though those markets remain fairly localized due to technological limitations and distribution difficulties. Furthermore, the development in media exports from newly industrialized societies, the rise of new regional media hubs, the global significance of the Latin American audiovisual sector (*telenovelas*) and the rise of pan-regional/international news networks are visible signs of a 'globalization from below', which is creating new opportunities for alternative voices (minority, indigenous, diasporic communities or special-interest groups) to be heard.

In these ways the production of communication and cultural content, as well as their dissemination and consumption patterns, are undergoing significant changes, which are characterized by connectivity, interactivity and convergence. New practices and contents are appearing – linked to the development of some of the newer cultural, informational and communication products accessible via the Internet, mobile phones or similar tools – which are enabling the emergence of small production structures that target micro-markets and new models of (user-generated) content creation and delivery. As access to the Internet increases, the World Wide Web is demonstrating the potential to provide significant support to those seeking to redress not only the imbalances in political and economic power between the local and the global but also the divides between diverse groups in society.

Impacts of communication and cultural products

These new opportunities for interactive exchanges between participants from different cultural backgrounds come with their own set of challenges however, related to audience fragmentation and stereotypes, which need to be addressed through appropriate information and media literacy initiatives.

An increased supply of media content does not necessarily result in a greater diversity of consumption. Confronted by an overabundance of choice, some consumers prefer to confine themselves to a small number of familiar titles or themes rather than explore something unknown or different. A significant intergenerational gap is opening up as new practices of consumption of digital content lead to new forms of social networking and challenge the traditional actors of cultural prescription, such as school and the family. Audiences are increasingly made up of 'fans' or 'sects' whose 'members' have little contact with one another and tend to reject other modes of thinking. This can lead to a 'false diversity', masking the fact that some people are interested in communicating only with those who share the same cultural references.

Moreover, the limited range of representations in the larger media and communication networks tends to promote the creation of stereotypes through what is often called the process of 'othering', whereby the media tend to fix, reduce or simplify according to the dictates of standardized programmes and formats. Among the multiple strategies designed to eliminate stereotypes, *media and information literacy initiatives* can help audiences to become more critical when consuming media and also help to combat unilateral perspectives. Media literacy is an important aspect of media access and a crucial dimension of non-formal education; it is imperative that it be promoted among civil society and media professionals as part of the effort to further mutual understanding and facilitate intercultural dialogue.

The roofs of a city in North Africa

A young girl talks with a German journalist about life working in a garment factory in Bangladesh

Policies fostering cultural diversity

Policies aiming to foster cultural diversity in communication and cultural content contribute to the flourishing of pluralism and the free flow of ideas. Cultural diversity must therefore lie at the core of quality media. Large segments of the population, such as marginalized groups and ethnic minorities, are often absent from the media, in part because of their lack of access to editorial, managerial or gate-keeping positions within media outlets. Fostering internal diversity in the newsroom, and a diversity of cultural backgrounds and gender within media structures, are fundamental to ensuring diversity of content.

To this end, the potential of new media practices and user-generated content should also be harnessed. Innovative journalism practices are emerging, for example, through mobile-device-based video-reporting. Hybrid reporting across cultural and national boundaries – through co-production and pool-production schemes or through national, regional and international networks of media professionals – are being tested and encouraged. The Internet offers the potential to support communicational democracy through a range of progressive cultural initiatives that bypass mainstream information sources: identity-building within diasporic communities; support structures defending the interests of minority cultures; online communities, activist groups and people with shared cultural interests.

Three challenges must be met if communication and cultural content is to contribute to cultural diversity: those represented by the requirements of innovative content, expanded access and balanced representation. The *production of innovative content* ensures the integration of cultural diversity into the media and the cultural industries, together with a strong emphasis on local content. *Access* involves among other things coherent measures to reduce the digital divide, accessibility of production and distribution to innovative content, and encouragement of new information and communication strategies by ensuring that opposing viewpoints are represented in discussions on all subjects. Cultural diversity likewise dictates a *balanced representation* of the different communities living together in a particular country, in accordance with the principles of the freedom of expression and the free flow of ideas.

Artistic creation and all forms of innovation spanning the spectrum of human activity may be seen as primary sources of cultural diversity

Russian matrioshka dolls

Chapter 6: **Creativity and the marketplace**

This chapter considers the interrelations between cultural diversity and a broad spectrum of activities extending from cultural creation through the commercialization of cultural expressions to the broader impacts of culture on business and the marketplace. Underlying the phenomenon of globalization, the creative impulse at the root of cultural diversity is key to the analysis of the present situation of the world's cultures. Indeed, cultural diversity can only be preserved if its roots are constantly nourished by innovative responses to a rapidly evolving environment. In this sense, artistic creation and all forms of innovation spanning the spectrum of human activity may be seen as primary imaginative sources of cultural diversity. Creativity is thus fundamental to cultural diversity, which is itself conducive to creativity.

Artistic creation and creative economy

It is important to avoid an ethnocentric conception of creativity. Rather, creativity should be understood to encompass all the material productions by which human beings give meaning to their existence. The boundaries of 'art' vary considerably from one culture to another, reflecting divergences of outlook as well as the materials and techniques available to the societies concerned. The second half of the 20th century has been marked by a radical diversification of tastes, venues and markets in the art world and the growth in artistic exchange worldwide. From the perspective of contemporary art practices, the world is moving towards forms of outwardness and is no longer structured in terms of the centre/periphery relation. This broadening of artistic outlooks and expressions has contributed to forms of cross-fertilization reflected in all forms of artistic creation. While cultural policy should be receptive to these cross-cultural influences, it should also recognize that such globalizing trends are not without their danger to cultural diversity. The borrowings or hybrid forms to which globalization gives rise can turn out to be little more than stereotypes, just as international markets for indigenous 'exotic' art can function as venues rewarding artistic conformism.

The diversification and interpenetration of artistic traditions is reflected in the performing arts in substantive international exchanges in the spheres of

theatre and dance and in a broadening in the appeal, sources and practice of Western classical music. In the field of popular music, diversity is everywhere apparent in its myriad, multicultural and often overlapping genres and venues. The risk of this artistic melting pot lies in the commodification of cultural expressions and the substitution of a 'world culture' concept for the diversity of cultural expressions. Globalization and technology have altered the stakes for the creative artist by posing with unprecedented force the perennial question of how to balance pure artistic creativity with hard economic realities. The financial rewards available within a globalized trading environment have tended to favour economic considerations, which has important implications for cultural diversity. In popular music, the asymmetry of cultural flows encourages local artists to exploit their creative talents in an increasingly global market, accentuating acculturation processes worldwide. Similar tendencies are apparent in the visual and plastic arts, where the top five exporting countries are all Western (with the exception of China) and where the Western-controlled market favours artists from the West. The exchange and circulation of artists also needs to be encouraged and facilitated.

Zafimaniry woodcraft, Madagascar

Tourists with a South American Indian woman

While literature presents something of a barrier to acculturation, literatures in the main vehicular languages have a major advantage in terms of cultural diffusion. A valuable corrective to this trend is provided by a number of literary prizes devoted to foreign works in translation and by ventures such as the recently launched World Digital Library, a project on which UNESCO and the US Library of Congress have collaborated, making available primary materials from cultures around the world.

Crafts and international tourism

Cultural consumption today involves an increasingly broad public and encompasses an expanding range of cultural expressions and experiences. Crafts and tourism – the former, by giving artistic shape to decorative or domestic objects; the latter, by providing access to the diversity of cultures in their natural settings – illustrate the tension between authenticity and commercialization that is central to the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity.

Crafts production is an important form of cultural expression and, increasingly, of income and employment in many parts of the world. Crafts have become part of a highly organized system of guilds, traders and banking systems, which is transforming the traditional craft economy in keeping with the requirements of the global marketplace. Craftwork that remains faithful to its traditions embodies a form and philosophy specific to the culture from which it derives. Mass production can lead to the impoverishment of craftwork by cutting it off from its creative roots. The flooding of traditional markets with Western industrial products has had a serious impact on craft economies. Ensuring fair returns on craft products and preserving traditional know-how are of equal importance, and a case can be made for safeguarding craft manufacture under provisions for the legal protection of folklore.

The promotion of cultural diversity depends to an important extent on support for commercial ventures adapted to cultural contexts and local economic constraints. Microcredit – based on the mechanisms of the commercial economy while taking account of the cooperative structures within a given society – has proved remarkably successful in this regard, particularly in developing countries.

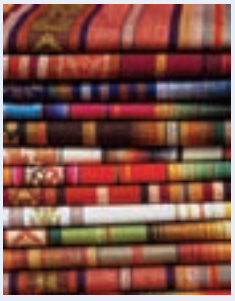
Statues of the Holy Virgin Mary in a souvenir shop in Lourdes, France

Tourism plays an important role in combining profit-making initiatives with the promotion of intercultural dialogue. After decades of so-called mass tourism, we are experiencing a renewal of tourism in search of authenticity, which is motivated by the desire to discover other people in their natural, social and cultural settings. So-called 'cultural tourism', which includes forms of religious tourism and tourism linked to World Heritage sites, can help to promote cultural understanding by situating others in their natural settings and lending historical depth to other cultures. Involving communities in the process can also help to nurture in them an enhanced sense of pride and contribute to sustainable development. This said, the results of this new trend in tourism have been mixed, since tourism can also lead to the exoticization of cultural difference, reducing cultural expressions and practices to 'folklore spectacles' divorced from their true context and meaning.

A multinational business team joining hands

Street art in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Ecuadorean blankets



Recent research suggests the existence of a positive link between diversity and the financial and economic performance of multinational corporations

Cultural diversity and the business world

In the context of the internationalization of markets, the ability of firms to respond to the challenges of cultural diversity by capitalizing on its resources has become a key factor in economic success. With regard to conception, brand images and marketing strategies, as well as corporate structures and staffing, it is essential for cultural diversity to be taken into account in commercial operations at the global level.

Multinational corporations are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of diversifying and customizing their products in order to penetrate new markets and meet the expectations of local consumers. Efforts to check these commercial inroads by marketing rival brands under different names with local associations only serve to promote the 'universalization' of the generic flavour. Some multinational enterprises base their image on a synthesis of the local and the universal. In practice, a product has to take account of local conditions and preferences even if the brand itself is international. In emerging markets, strategies developed in the context of Western consumer societies must be adapted, with the support of local personnel, to local conditions.

In a globalized business world, very different cultures are brought into professional contact across multinational partnerships, mergers and relocations. Today's managers are increasingly aware of the need to take cultural factors into account in order to optimize company performance. This ranges from the adoption of a culturally neutral professional attitude to emphasis upon the specific origins or cultures of colleagues. Corporate culture aims to ensure that employees feel valued and respected by their colleagues, in order to produce organizations that are more fully integrated across occupations and hierarchical levels. As managerial competencies increasingly embrace the ability to work in very different cultural contexts, 'chief diversity officers' (CDOs) have come into existence, tasked with managing diversity within companies so as to prevent conflicts that could be detrimental to the group's overall performance.

Cultural diversity is also becoming an increasingly important concern of corporate management, and research is taking place in order to assess the diversity-performance link in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Recent research suggests the existence of a positive link between diversity and the financial and economic performance of multinational corporations. Indeed, firms are promoting 'cultural intelligence', which focuses on the potential benefits of employee diversity, such as: greater creativity and innovation; more successful marketing to different types of consumers; comprehensive decision-making as firms internationalize and become exposed to a variety of environments; careful employee selection and training; and governance structures that bridge different corporate culture schemes.

PART III:

Renewing International Strategies related to Development and Peace

Cultural diversity – understood as a dynamic process within which cultural change can best be managed through intercultural dialogue – can become a powerful lever for renewing the international community's strategies towards development and peace, based on respect for universally recognized human rights. Sometimes construed as being of secondary importance, cultural diversity needs to be placed at the heart of policies for the furtherance of international cooperation and cohesion, in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Chapter 7: **Cultural diversity: A key dimension of sustainable development**

Contrary to a widespread assumption, there is no prescribed pathway for the development of a society, no single model towards which development strategies should be directed. The conception of development as a linear and essentially economic process, in keeping with the Western model, has tended to disrupt societies pursuing different paths or holding to different values. A sustainable development strategy cannot be culturally neutral: it should be not only culturally sensitive but also capitalize on the gains resulting from the dynamic interaction between cultures. Thus, an approach to development sensitive to cultural diversity is the key to addressing the interlinked economic, social and environmental problems confronting the planet as a whole.

The cultural approach to development

A view still prevalent in the industrialized world posits a causal relationship between 'culture' and 'under-development' or, to put it another way, between economic performance and Western cultural values. A broader conception of development is increasingly challenging the implicit equation of development with the maximization of profit and the accumulation of material goods. By failing to take account of cultural diversity, development strategies risk perpetuating or compounding the shortcomings they are supposed to remedy. Consideration of social factors and cultural context, as well as community participation in project design and implementation, are essential to sustainable development efforts. In the words of James D. Wolfensohn, former President of the World Bank, 'we are starting to realize that development effectiveness depends, in part, on "solutions" that resonate with a community's sense of who it is.'

Following the UNDP's elaboration of the human development model in the 1990s, increasing emphasis has been placed on integrating the cultural dimension in development thinking and projects, thereby taking account of the 'webs of significance' that people create, the cultural context in which communities and groups exist, local social hierarchies and living patterns, and local forms of communication and expression.

Acknowledgement of cultural diversity adds a crucial dimension to strategies that view sustainability as facilitating the integration of the economic pillar of development with its social and environmental pillars. In this sense, cultural diversity can be seen as a key cross-cutting dimension of sustainable development.

Perceptions of poverty and poverty eradication

Cultural perspectives shape how poverty is understood and experienced. It is often the ways in which the poor are perceived or perceive themselves that relegates them to situations of inferiority, constituting a major obstacle to their empowerment. Differing conceptions of poverty make it difficult to apply a comprehensive international cooperation strategy for poverty eradication. Yet poverty is a violation of basic human rights, and there is no acceptable cultural justification for poverty (as 'fate' or the consequence of an overarching social order). By looking at poverty from the inside and with a clear commitment to human-rights-based poverty eradication, local solutions can often be found in concert with the communities involved, who can themselves become the ones who find a way out of poverty. Holistic approaches that integrate cultural strategies and the commitment to human rights contribute greatly to *empowerment* and *capacity-building*.

The core of the cultural diversity approach lies in the idea that cultures are trajectories towards the future. In the words of Arjun Appadurai: 'We need a sea change in the way we look at culture in order to create a more productive relationship between anthropology and economics, between culture and development, in the battle against poverty. This change requires us to place *futurity*, rather than pastness, at the heart of our thinking about culture.' The task then is to unleash the 'capacity to aspire' and enable individuals and groups to become the agents of their own development.

Social policies that favour cultural diversity help to increase the level of self-determination among low-income or low-status minority groups. In addition to income redistribution and equal access to rights, poverty alleviation requires measures to ensure that such groups can play a more active role in the public sphere. Breaking the spiral of poverty involves restoring a sense of pride, which in turn entails valuing the intangible heritage of which those concerned are the depositaries. Efforts to revitalize crafts and promote community-based tourism, in keeping with the principles of the Fair Trade movement, can help to improve socio-economic conditions while enhancing the creative link between cultures, traditions and modernity. What matters is that poverty eradication strategies are relevant and accepted by local populations – which is more likely when the strategies emphasize dialogue with the groups concerned and their participation in capacity-building initiatives – so that they are empowered to make their own informed decisions.

An Indonesian woman making a basket

An approach to development sensitive to cultural diversity is the key to addressing the interlinked economic, social and environmental problems confronting the planet

Two young children playing at a local waste dump in Maputo, Mozambique

Lake in China

A child is vaccinated against polio in Afghanistan

There is much to be learned from the environmental management skills embedded in local, rural or indigenous knowledge and know-how

A Fair Trade coffee farmer sorting through organic beans at a coffee plantation

Jars of traditional Chinese medicine, Hong Kong

Cultural diversity and environmental sustainability

In issues ranging from the erosion of biodiversity to climate change, cultural diversity has an important – though often underestimated – role to play in addressing current ecological challenges and ensuring environmental sustainability. Cultural factors influence consumption behaviour, values related to environmental stewardship and the ways in which we interact with nature. There is much to be learned from the environmental management skills embedded in local, rural or indigenous knowledge and know-how, including multi-use appropriation strategies, small-scale production with little surplus and low energy needs, and custodial approaches to land and natural resources which avoids waste and resource depletion. While indigenous populations, as the guardians of thousands of species and varieties of domesticated plants and animals, can play a crucial role in inspiring solutions to contemporary environmental problems, political constraints have restricted progress towards indigenous participation under the five-year Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation to Climate Change (2006).

In keeping with UNESCO's longstanding emphasis on the dynamic interdependences between humans and nature, there is increasing recognition of the links between biodiversity and cultural diversity, even though each may have evolved differently. Areas of correspondence include linguistic diversity, material culture, knowledge and technology, modes of subsistence, economic relations, social relations and belief systems. The renewed interest of decision-makers in the 'terroirs' paradigm shows the extent to which cultural practices can contribute to the revitalization of biological, agricultural and other forms of diversity. But these two commitments – to cultural diversity and to these other forms of diversity – are not necessarily reconcilable, as is illustrated by the debates that can arise locally around the hunting of endangered species.

Since cultural expressions and practices are often bound up with environmental conditions, the impact of large-scale environmental changes will inevitably be considerable. Possible consequences include massive population displacements, seriously threatening cultural continuity and diversity. The effects on cultural transmission will be particularly acute in rural areas and among place-dependent minority groups already under

stress. The emergence of a daunting nexus of environmental problems that threaten the stability, if not the very existence, of human societies has triggered widespread reflection on the limitations of a purely technical and scientific response to the ecological imperative and on the potential of a sustainable-development perspective that would draw on a broad range of cultural experience, intuitions and practices.

There is thus a pressing need both to devise and to promote new forms of development thinking, indicators and methodologies which focus on those whom development is to serve or whom it may exclude, as well as on how it affects the human condition and the social fabric into which it is introduced. In this regard, UNESCO's Cultural Diversity Programming Lens, for use by decision- and policy-makers, has begun to operationalize a series of norms and standards in order to mainstream cultural diversity into programme design, development and implementation.

Chapter 8: **Cultural diversity, human rights and democratic governance**

'No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.' This core provision of the 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* highlights the opposition that is sometimes confusedly invoked between cultural diversity and universally proclaimed human rights. Far from opening the way to forms of relativism, cultural diversity and its corollary intercultural dialogue are the pathways to a peace based on 'unity in diversity'. A full understanding of cultural diversity contributes to the effective exercise of human rights, enhanced social cohesion and democratic governance.

Cultural diversity and universally recognized human rights

Those who view cultural diversity as synonymous with relativism and thus as a rejection of universal principles, and, conversely, those who view the application of universal human rights as impositions on traditional values or beliefs, incorrectly assume that cultural diversity and universal human rights are mutually exclusive. For human rights emanate from the very fabric of cultures, as recognized by the nations that have become signatories to human-rights instruments. From this perspective, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are key levers for strengthening the consensus on the universal foundation of human rights.

Indeed, as stated in the 1993 *Vienna Declaration*, the challenge is, while bearing in mind 'the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds', to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms 'regardless of [the States'] political, economic and cultural systems'. The emphasis on the cultural dimensions of all human rights should be seen not as undermining universality through diversity but as encouraging the appropriation of these rights by all, whether individuals or groups. A set of standards protecting human rights is best incorporated in a cultural context through dialogue and communication. Cultural diversity is thus vital for reaching people in their everyday lives, failing which the universality of human rights is liable to remain abstract. As the Fribourg Group has so clearly underlined in the *Fribourg Declaration*, it is necessary to take into account 'the cultural dimensions of all human rights in order to enhance universality through diversity and to encourage the appropriation of these rights by all persons, alone or in community with others'.

Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are key levers for strengthening the consensus on the universal foundation of human rights

Young children playing, Alice Springs, Australia

Moreover, there can be no effective implementation of civil and political rights unless the cultural requisites that contribute to individual and collective self-realization are themselves addressed. Exercising the right to vote, for example, is to some extent contingent upon having achieved at least a minimum level of education, such as literacy. Most of these cultural requisites may be equated with cultural rights, which are enablers of capacities. Language rights are of particular importance since they provide access to a capacity essential to all other rights.

Cultural rights are themselves poorly developed in international law and have received scant mention in a variety of international instruments. The broad compass of cultural rights poses numerous problems of definition, opposability and compatibility with other human rights. Collective claims in the name of cultural rights – embodying a rights-based approach to the promotion and the protection of cultural diversity, relating to cultural creations, cultural expressions or even the sum of a community's material and spiritual activities – are difficult to translate in terms of human rights. Furthermore, it is not clear who is to guarantee the exercise of such rights. Finally, there is an ongoing debate concerning tensions between cultural rights and fundamental human rights, such as the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination.

Cultural diversity: A parameter of social cohesion

Cultural diversity today represents a key challenge because of the multicultural composition of most countries. The UNDP's 2004 Human Development Report, *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World,* stresses the need to implement public policies that recognize difference, champion diversity and promote cultural freedoms. Yet this is only possible to the extent that we are conscious of the conflicts that arise in multicultural societies from the recognition of diversity. Experience has shown that attempting to reinforce the national fabric by pretending that differences do not exist leads to cultural backlashes and that confronting cultural differences is the only effective way of living with them.

While a culturally homogenous society has never existed, the cultural web is becoming progressively more complex as globalization takes hold. In many countries

The obelisk of Buenos Aires, Argentina

that have not seriously taken account of cultural diversity, mass immigration has led to the emergence of community 'ghettos' that can become sources of conflicts – hence the need for 'reasonable accommodations' between cultures. Issues of perception are important here, since intercultural conflicts invariably involve confusions and distortions between fact and perception, especially between the majority population and minorities that feel themselves insufficiently recognized and integrated in the social fabric. Steps should be taken to ensure that minority voices and views can be heard and that debates involving all members of the communities concerned can take place.

Since the 1970s, multiculturalist policies – notably in the areas of education, information, law, religious observance and media access – have been one of the main approaches to ensure equality in diversity. Such policies have proved to have a number of shortcomings, particularly that of encouraging a drift towards cultural isolationism. Several countries are currently challenged with finding new models that fuse agendas for promoting national identity with those 'celebrating' diversity. In this context, the aim is to go beyond assimilation and multiculturalism conceived in terms of separateness, in order to highlight multiple interactions and allegiances and facilitate access to other cultures, particularly through the development of networks and new forms of sociability.

The challenge of cultural diversity for democratic governance

Governance involves the whole range of decision-making processes and actors within formal and non-formal structures in a given social or political context. Recognizing the interdependence of all these actors connects governance to a wider concern with social capital and the underpinnings necessary for social cohesion.

Building cohesive societies requires developing and implementing policies that ensure empowerment of all groups and individuals, as well as their political participation. Power-sharing arrangements, such as consensus democracy, should be complemented by empowerment policies in the fields of education, culture and the media.

The overarching goal is to promote an *enabling environment* for realistic progress towards genuine democratic governance. Such a universalistic approach founded on mutual trust is the key to peaceful coexistence within societies, for it is the point of departure for the forging of a wider international consensus in keeping with the goals of the United Nations. As with human rights, such an overarching goal gains in acceptance when it takes root in the diversity of cultural models of governance in use in societies. In this regard, customary law and dispute-settlement mechanisms – as rediscovered through the prism of intangible heritage – can coexist with State organization and serve to strengthen democratic governance.

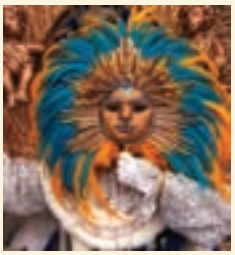
The overarching goal is to promote an enabling environment for progress towards genuine democratic governance

The fortified town of Ait ben Haddou near Ouarzazate in Morocco

Aboriginal rock paintings at Carnarvon Gorge, Central Queensland, Australia

New Jersey City skyline on the Hudson River, US

Conclusion



A 'Roi de Soleil' mask at the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

One of the 6th-century Buddhas of Bamiyan, a UNESCO World Heritage site destroyed in 2001 by the then Taliban government in Afghanistan

There is an urgent need to invest in cultural diversity and dialogue. Integrating cultural diversity in a wide range of public policies – including those somewhat remote from the cultural field proper – can help renew the international community's approaches to two key objectives: *development* and *peace building and conflict prevention*. Regarding *development*, culture is increasingly recognized as a cross-cutting dimension of the three economic, social and environmental pillars of any truly sustainable development. Regarding *peace* and *conflict prevention*, acknowledging cultural diversity places the emphasis on 'unity in diversity', that is to say, the shared humanity inherent in our differences. Far from representing a potential restriction on universally proclaimed human rights, cultural diversity furthers their effective exercise; it strengthens social cohesion and fosters renewed forms of democratic governance. However, this requires that we refine our understanding of cultural diversity and dialogue so as to dispense with a number of received ideas.

Towards a new understanding of cultural diversity

The World Report sets out to promote such an understanding by examining certain common *preconceptions*:

- *Globalization leads inevitably to cultural homogenization.* While globalization undoubtedly weakens cultural diversity in some respects by standardizing modes of life, production and consumption, it equally helps to reconfigure cultural diversity in the ways highlighted in the present World Report.

- *Cultural diversity is reducible to the diversity of national cultures.* Yet national identity is not a fixed quantity: it represents an historical construction; and identity that may appear seamless is in fact the product of multiple interactions to be found in all national contexts.

- *Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are mutually exclusive.* Rather than viewing the world as a plurality of civilizations, whether in terms of conflict (the 'clash of civilizations') or dialogue (the 'alliance of civilizations'), we need to move towards the reconciliation of differences whereby the harmony of the whole is born of the resonance inherent in receptiveness to others. Cultural diversity is the precondition of intercultural dialogue, and vice versa. Without genuine dialogue, the dynamic of change (which is the very essence of cultural diversity) is not sustained, and diversity is lost or declines as a result of self-enclosure. Dialogue, including interreligious dialogue (conceived as dialogue between all spiritual and intellectual traditions), does not mean that we relinquish our convictions but simply that we remain open-minded. Intercultural dialogue must be seen as a complex and ongoing process that is never complete.

- *Cultural diversity and the economy are mutually incompatible.* In practice, cultural diversity pervades all sectors of the economy, from marketing and advertising to finance and business management. Diversity is becoming a resource, since it stimulates creativity and innovation within the enterprise, particularly of a social kind. Recognition of the tools required for cultural diversity to flourish ('cultural intelligence') is one of the most tangible signs of this gradual shift in the way the economic sector (and the market) views cultural diversity.

- *Scientific and technological progress and the diversity of cultural practices are mutually incompatible.* Cultural diversity is in no way incompatible with progress or development. Indeed, the emergence of genuine 'knowledge societies' implies a diversity of forms of knowledge and its sources of production, including indigenous knowledge conducive to the preservation of biodiversity.

It is tempting to see cultural factors as the cause of conflicts, whereas they are only the pretext for conflict; the ultimate cause of conflict lies in political or socio-economic circumstances

- *There is an irreconcilable contradiction between cultural diversity and universalism.* The assertion that cultural diversity leads inevitably to the relativization of rights and freedoms, seen as varying in time and space, rests on an unjustified conflation of standardization and universality. The rights and freedoms universally recognized by the world community are intrinsic to every human being and are in this sense intangible. They are also inalienable since no one can renounce his or her rights. On the other hand, these rights and freedoms are exercised in a wide variety of cultural environments, and all have a cultural dimension that needs to be underlined. This is not to say that universal norms are relative in terms of their application. It is rather that cultural diversity can further the exercise of rights and freedoms, since to ignore cultural realities would be tantamount to affirming formal rights and freedoms without ensuring that they can in practice be rooted and enjoyed in diverse cultural contexts.

It is all the more necessary to dispel these preconceptions since it is tempting to see cultural factors as the cause of conflicts, whereas they are only the pretext for conflict; the ultimate cause of conflict lies in political or socio-economic circumstances. To clarify the question, it is necessary – as the present report recommends – to establish new mechanisms for monitoring, data collection and the circulation of information.

➲ *Four Dogon Dancers with Masks and Stilts, village of Irelli, Mali*

In challenging such received notions, the World Report suggests a new approach that emphasizes the *dynamic character of cultural diversity*. It implies that policies to promote cultural diversity should not be confined to safeguarding the tangible and intangible heritage and creating the conditions in which creativity can flourish, but should also encompass measures aimed at assisting vulnerable individuals and groups ill-equipped to cope with cultural change.

The implications of cultural diversity for public policy

Although the cultural dimension of the challenges confronting the international community is not directly reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, an informed awareness of the implications of cultural diversity is essential to public policy-making in areas lying outside the cultural domain proper:

- *In the field of languages,* it is cultural impoverishment, as much as the political, social, administrative and cultural status of languages, which is at the root of language decline.

- *In education,* integration of the cultural dimension makes for greater relevance of educational methods and contents. The cultural dimension contributes to the full realization of the right to education and the diversification of forms of learning, including out-of-school learning, ensuring that no group in society (e.g. indigenous minorities, vulnerable groups) is overlooked. If cultural diversity is not taken into account, education cannot fulfil its role of learning to live together. Consequently, the development of intercultural competencies that are conducive to dialogue between cultures and civilizations should be an educational priority.

- *In the area of communication and cultural contents,* since the diversified communication of varied cultural content contributes to the vitality of exchanges, and since globalization and the

new technologies have expanded the scope of possible choices, cultural diversity is a factor that has to be taken into account in this connection. It enables minority communities to make themselves known to the public at large, even if continued efforts are necessary to limit the stereotypes and prejudices to which the communities concerned are often subject.

- *In the private sector,* cultural diversity is impinging on all spheres of economic activity, since creativity and innovation are linked.

Because cultural diversity cuts across a whole series of public-policy areas not obviously related to culture, UNESCO has a particular responsibility to assist Member States in the formulation of relevant policies in all its fields of competence.

The main challenges to be addressed

The World Report highlights *three challenges* relating to cultural diversity that will confront the international community in the years ahead: combating cultural illiteracy, reconciling universalism and diversity, and supporting new forms of pluralism resulting from the assertion of multiple identities by individuals and groups.

- In a globalized world in which the contacts between cultures are expanding rapidly, ***it is necessary to combat the spread of cultural illiteracy***. Indeed, the ability to accept cultural differences, to welcome them without being unsettled by them, calls for intercultural competencies that some societies have learned to develop in particular contexts but which can sometimes appear sorely lacking at the individual level. Helping to equip individuals or groups with the tools they need to manage cultural diversity more effectively should be the new concern of public and private decision-makers. Intercultural dialogue should ensure equality between all stakeholders in society. Multilingualism and media and information literacy have an important role to play in this regard.

- ***There is a need to strengthen the foundations of universalism*** by showing how it can be embodied in a wide variety of practices without being compromised. Cultural diversity is central to human rights. These rights must be 'appropriated' at the local level, not as elements superimposed on cultural practices but as universal principles deriving from the practices themselves. For each cultural practice constitutes a pathway to the universal, testifying to our shared humanity.

- ***There is a need to explore the new approach opened up by recognition of the multiple – multidimensional – identities of individuals and groups in order to further the development of cultural pluralism.*** Increasingly, individuals decline to be limited to fixed categories (whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political or otherwise). This is an opportunity to be turned to account. The growing number of potential points of encounter between individuals can reduce the obstacles to intercultural dialogue, and the plasticity of identities can create a dynamic of change conducive to innovations of all kinds and at every level. Such an approach makes it possible to transcend the limits of the multiculturalist policies initiated in the 1970s.

It follows that States should invest increased financial and human resources in cultural diversity as a matter of priority. What are the main areas in which these investments should be made and what should be their goal? The recommendations that follow offer a number of pointers in this regard. The returns that can be expected on such investments are no less than progress towards the achievement of sustainable development and a peace based on 'unity in diversity'. The cost of such action may be high but the cost of inaction could be even greater. ***If the international community is able in ten years time to measure the progress made along this long road, the approaches outlined in this World Report will have served their purpose.***

A young boy in Kihnu Island, Estonia

In a globalized world in which the contacts between cultures are expanding rapidly, it is necessary to combat the spread of cultural illiteracy

Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed as appropriate to States, intergovernmental and non-governmental international and regional bodies, national institutions and private-sector entities.

Cocolo street parade in San Pedro de Macorís, Dominican Republic

Chapter 1 – CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1. Consideration should be given to establishing a World Observatory on Cultural Diversity to monitor the impacts of globalization and to serve as a source of information and data for comparative research with a forward-looking function.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Collect, compile and widely disseminate data and statistics on cultural diversity, building *inter alia* on the revised 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics.

b. Develop methodologies and tools for assessing, measuring and monitoring cultural diversity, adaptable to national or local conditions by governments and public and private institutions.

c. Establish national observatories to monitor policies and advise on appropriate measures for the promotion of cultural diversity.

Chapter 2 – INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

2. Support should continue to be given to networks and initiatives for intercultural and interfaith dialogue at all levels, while ensuring the full involvement of new partners, especially women and young people.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Develop measures to enable members of communities and groups subject to discrimination and stigmatization to participate in the framing of projects designed to counter cultural stereotyping.

b. Support initiatives aimed at developing real and virtual spaces and provide facilities for cultural interaction, especially in countries where inter-community conflict exists.

c. Showcase 'places of memory' that serve to symbolize and promote reconciliation between communities within an overall process of cultural rapprochement.

Chapter 3 – LANGUAGES

3. National language policies should be implemented with a view to both safeguarding linguistic diversity and promoting multilingual competencies.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Facilitate language use through appropriate measures, be they educational, editorial, administrative or other.

b. Make provision – as appropriate – for the learning, alongside mother tongues, of a national and an international language.

c. Encourage the translation by all possible means of written and audiovisual materials in order to promote the international circulation of ideas and artistic works, including through the use of new technologies.

d. Develop reliable and internationally comparable indicators for assessing the impact of language policies on linguistic diversity, and promote good practices in this regard.

Chapter 4 – EDUCATION

4. In order to further the process of learning to live together, there is a need to promote intercultural competencies, including those embedded in the everyday practices of communities, with a view to improving pedagogical approaches to intercultural relations.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Undertake a global comparative survey of educational contents and methods, including traditional modes of transmission, with particular reference to the recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity.

b. Support efforts to identify and/or create opportunities and facilities for culture-specific learning in each educational system, making use of existing instruments such as EFA National Assessment Reports.

c. Adapt teaching methods to the requirements of the everyday life of learners, with the necessary support of

educational policy-makers, educational professionals at all levels and local communities, recognizing the cultural dimension as a central pillar of Education for Sustainable Development.

d. Develop international guidelines for the promotion of intercultural dialogue through the arts, based on the identification of good practices in arts education.

Chapter 5 – COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL CONTENTS

5. There is a need to encourage cultural sensitivity in the production and consumption of communication and information contents, thereby facilitating access, empowerment and participation.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Support the production and distribution of innovative and diversified audiovisual materials, taking account of local needs, contents and actors, and having recourse as appropriate to public-private partnerships.

b. Assess the impact of ICT-driven changes on cultural diversity, with a view to highlighting good practices of multilingual access to written and audiovisual productions.

c. Promote media and information literacy for all age groups in order to increase the ability of media users to critically evaluate communication and cultural contents.

Chapter 6 – CREATIVITY AND THE MARKETPLACE

6. Creativity being a source of social and technological innovation, there is a need to invest in its development, both in the cultural sector and in the business sector, within which cultural diversity is to be understood as a source of profit and enhanced performance, conducive to corporate 'cultural intelligence'.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Facilitate the exchange of artistic productions and the circulation of artists, including through a system of cultural visas.

b. Develop appropriate systems for the protection of traditional know-how in the crafts sector, as well as ways and means of compensating the communities concerned for the commercial exploitation of such know-how.

c. Draw up and widely disseminate good practices in relation to tourism development with a view to maximizing its positive impacts on cultural diversity.

d. Develop 'cultural intelligence' in the business and marketing world through the establishment of real and virtual forums and the production of relevant research on the profitability of cultural diversity, not limited only to ethnic or gender difference.

Chapter 7 – CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

7. The principles of cultural diversity, as embodied in particular in the Cultural Diversity Lens, should be duly taken into account in the design, implementation and monitoring of all development policies.

To this end, action should be taken to:

a. Identify concrete measures to operationalize research on the cultural dimension of natural resources conservation and management, with particular reference to the knowledge and know-how of indigenous communities.

b. Establish a clearing-house for documenting participatory approaches to environmental problems, including indications as to their success.

c. Encourage the participation of members of all communities in defining resource allocation criteria on the basis of social justice, so as to foster a dynamic of social dialogue and promote intercultural solidarity.

Chapter 8 – CULTURAL DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

8. As universally recognized human rights should be guaranteed to every individual, their effective exercise can be fostered through the recognition of cultural diversity, which can also reinforce social cohesion and encourage renewed modes of democratic governance. Policies conducive to the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity should be encouraged to this end.

Action should be taken in particular to:

a. Collect striking examples of cases in which the cultural context is a key factor in the effective exercise of universally recognized rights and freedoms, so as to highlight the cultural dimension of all rights and freedoms.

b. Map exchanges within and between minority groups and between majority and minority communities, especially in the context of 'global cities', in order to create informal networks of solidarities, and widely publicize such exchanges.

c. Study the diversity of the intangible heritage as a source of examples of modes of democratic governance based on the empowerment and participation of all communities.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

9. There is a need to promote awareness among policy- and decision-makers about the benefits of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, while bearing in mind its potential instrumentalization.

10. Consideration should be given to establishing a national mechanism for monitoring public policies as they relate to cultural diversity, with a view to ensuring improved governance and the full implementation of universally recognized human rights.

UNESCO World Report

Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue

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Two men on a bicycle near Arusha, Tanzania

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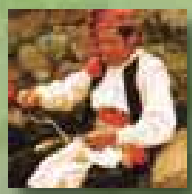
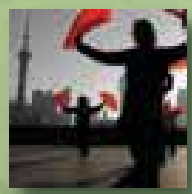
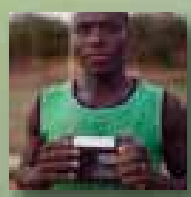
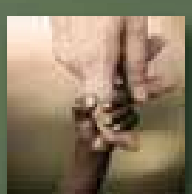
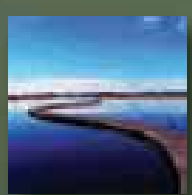
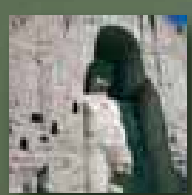
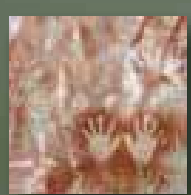
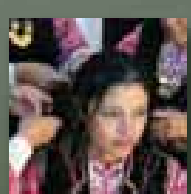
UNESCO World Report

Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue

Executive summary

Cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of a new century. Yet the meanings attached to this catch-all term are as varied as they are shifting. Some see cultural diversity as inherently positive, insofar as it points to a sharing of the wealth embodied in each of the world's cultures and, accordingly, to the links uniting us all in processes of exchange and dialogue. For others, cultural differences are what cause us to lose sight of our common humanity and are therefore at the root of numerous conflicts. This second diagnosis is today all the more plausible since globalization has increased the points of interaction and friction between cultures, giving rise to identity-linked tensions, withdrawals and claims, particularly of a religious nature, which can become potential sources of dispute. The essential challenge, therefore, would be to propose a coherent vision of cultural diversity and thereby to clarify how, far from being a threat, it can become beneficial to the action of the international community. This is the essential purpose of the present report.

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