



33 C/38  
3 October 2005  
Original: English

**REPORT OF THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE YOUTH FORUM (2005)  
Paris, 30 September-2 October 2005**

**Introduction**

Young people have come together from all over the world to attend the 4th UNESCO Youth Forum: 184 delegates from 128 countries plus 45 observers, making a total of 229 participants, which is the highest number of participants ever in the history of the UNESCO Youth Forum. Although its history is very young, by coming together, evaluating, strongly holding on to and defending our beliefs as we have done, we can ensure a future for the UNESCO Youth Forum. We are the embodiment of this year's theme: 'Young people and the Dialogue amongst Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples – ideas for action in education, the sciences, culture and communication'.

The meeting was convened by the UNESCO Section for Youth and opened by the Director-General, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, the President of the 32nd session of the General Conference, Mr Michael Omolewa and the Chairman of the Executive Board, Mr Hans-Heinrich Wrede. Mr Wrede left us with the following quote, which we think should prevail throughout the General Conference: "When you go into a dialogue, you should accept the risk that the other might be right."

We acknowledge that this is an opportunity to seize, as this is the first time that the Youth Forum Report will be consulted during the deliberations of the Member States. In this report, you will find the main issues and recommendations that were discussed in the working groups. The Drafting Committee has deliberately made this report short because simplicity is the key to life. We would like to remind Member States that this report is the fruit of the dialogue among youth and the beginning of our dialogue with the Member States.

**I. "All different, all unique: celebrating diversity through dialogue"**

We recognize the initiatives that UNESCO has undertaken in relation to protecting and promoting cultural diversity among the youth, such as "Mondialogo" and the DIGIARTS young digital creators programme.

The reality is that ignorance and violent conflicts as well as cultural homogenization are the main hindrances to cultural diversity and the preservation of both tangible and intangible cultural

heritage. Cultural diversity manifests itself in diversity of languages, cultural expressions such as music, performing arts and traditional knowledge.

Analysis and key concerns revealed during the sessions:

- Education is the key to cultural diversity: most civilizations can only be protected if the people are actually able to read and write and therefore learn to protect their heritage. Therefore, it is very important for all young people to have real access to education and be given the same opportunities regardless of our ethnicity, origin, background, conviction and religion, nationality, gender or economic position.
- The **media and education** complement one another and constitute the pulse of society. Efforts must be made by all countries to deploy a media and educational strategy to combat any kind of intolerance.
- The absence of shared knowledge and understanding as well as the lack of respect for cultures, freedom of expression, religions and civilizations, have impacted negatively on international security, peace and stability.
- Culture should not be time dated or viewed as mere history but as something which is ever evolving. Further, as different cultures are mixed, new subcultures are formed. However, efforts must be made to preserve all cultures.

We would like to propose some concrete steps:

1. Concerning the definition of cultural diversity, we recommend **disseminating as widely as possible the innovative definition set out in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity** (November 2001). Together with the circulation of this Declaration, UNESCO should increase its youth-awareness campaigns.
2. **Potential facilities in national organizations** of Member States and youth-led NGOs which are cooperating with the idea of dialogue among civilizations should be actively supported by our youth and UNESCO.
3. UNESCO should **create a mechanism for the effective use of cyberspace**, such as an **interactive digital newspaper** which talks about various aspects of different cultures. Take into account the digital divide.
4. **Set up an inventory and training programmes in non-formal education. UNESCO should create an international network on specialized training for volunteer efforts in socio-cultural counselling.**
5. **International Youth Exchange, global youth Festivals, celebrations and regional exhibitions about culture and education** should be supported as a way to foster the dialogue among all cultures. We also suggest combining these actions with Summer Camps, based on a geographical rotation, for an exchange on cultural heritage. UNESCO scholarships should also be expanded to include financial assistance in cultural studies.

As a show of commitment to cultural exchange and enhancement, an **Open Youth Alliance Community** was proposed by numerous youth representatives at the Forum. The aim is to support an active dialogue and exchange of experiences via ICT, by developing an interactive portal.

6. The Ministry of Education or the appropriate body in the Member States should **include in the curriculum of every school the Model of the United Nations programme**. Further, governments should ensure **special workshops for educators**, to train them to work in situations where any kind of discrimination exists or when there are cultural conflicts among the students. NGOs working in this area should be supported by UNESCO.

It will take time to create an environment of cultural harmony but we must work together to enhance the appreciation of cultural diversity.

## **II. Safeguarding the future: Practising dialogue for sustainable development**

We recognize that sustainable development is the biggest challenge of the 21st Century and acknowledge the gap between sustainability talk and practice.

We emphasize the important role of intergovernmental and international organizations in promoting sustainable development, but also know that our participation is crucial.

We strongly believe in rights-based approaches such as the Millennium Development Goals and other United Nations declarations.

### **Education for Sustainable Development**

Although a number of steps and measures have already been taken to promote awareness of sustainable development, such as UNESCO's Small Island Voice programme, we call on UNESCO to facilitate our efforts in the following ways:

- **UNESCO must be a leading example in sustainable development** by integrating sustainability practices into its operations, such as the use of recycled paper.
- **Institutionalizing youth participation** in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development awareness programmes.
- **Peer-to-peer education for sustainable development** is the most likely to result in behavioural change. As such, we should encourage peer education within the formal education system.
- **Introducing education on sustainable development at an early age** with a focus on educating young women and girls as well as out of school youth and other marginalized youth.
- **Facilitating inter-regional and inter-cultural discussions on sustainable development** at international, regional and local levels throughout the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

### **The significance of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, intergenerational, informal and non-formal education**

Local, indigenous and informal, non-formal knowledge must be on an equal footing with formal education. We request UNESCO's assistance in:

- Facilitating the development of educational curriculum to be undertaken to cover the value and importance of local, traditional and indigenous knowledge and take into account the formulation of sustainable development projects.

- Developing communication channels (e.g. television programmes) for local, traditional and indigenous knowledge.
- Facilitating a youth-generated magazine, sharing youth experiences of integrating local, traditional and indigenous knowledge into all forms of education.

### **Sustaining youth: support of youth-led initiatives for our sustainable future**

We recommend:

- The development of knowledge and skills through informal, non-formal, extra-curricular and voluntary activity. UNESCO should encourage its Member States to officially recognize such personal development within their education systems.
- The development of indicators for the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of youth-led sustainable development programmes, including those aimed at climate control.
- UNESCO should facilitate a youth-generated tool kit containing helpful information about possibilities for youth organizations to develop and source funding for youth-led projects.

### **III. Learning to live together: promoting dialogue for peace and reconciliation**

WE need to understand and respect each other, live peacefully together and live up to the best of our respective traditions. Remembering our own words, “WE are all different but equal”; different in terms of cultural diversity but, as human beings, WE are the same.

We attach great importance to the values of solidarity, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism, which constitute the moral ground and provide inspiration for our struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, with a view to producing more inclusive societies.

Considering all the above-mentioned issues “WE” as the group working on promoting dialogue for peace and reconciliation, recognize that young women and girls can play a major role in peace-building and reconciliation activities.

#### **EDUCATION**

1. The commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) should be re-affirmed by all the countries and this, together with human rights/civic education should be an integrated part of the school curriculum. Education for a culture of peace in all forms of education.
2. The creation of opportunities for exchange, allowing people from conflicting parties to get to know each other and define their commonalities, should be encouraged and a database of best practice in conflict resolution and conflict transformation should be created and made available to schools and NGOs and youth parliaments in order to exchange information and evaluate actions.
3. WE should promote the dissemination of information on international conventions, declarations and United Nations decades at the level of schools, student organizations and at the community level.
4. Specific programmes and initiatives aimed at preventing and countering the phenomenon of youth violence (such as the “pandillas” and “maras” in Latin America) should be developed.

5. We call upon Member States to sponsor “Peace Studies” and create a fellowship scheme for young people in peace studies and to strengthen the role of youth NGOs.

#### COMMUNICATION

1. NGO-driven media which is independent, free and objective should be supported and the training of young journalists should convey the values of freedom of expression and ethics of independent and objective media coverage.
2. WE should promote youth-specific media content and the participation of young people in media production, e.g. youth radio and community radio in local languages - as an excellent means to foster young people’s expression.
3. “WE have to be the change we want to see in the world” : young people should develop a global campaign for a culture of peace through their organizations and networks and use all forms of the Media to promote human rights and the respect for human dignity as fundamental values of the dialogue and establish a joint project of “MEDIA FOR YOUTH”.
4. The study of media should be included in history lessons where youth can learn about the influence media has on all of us and how WE can all avoid stereotyping as a result of media work (e.g. 3 news items on the same subject from three different countries and the analysis of how they differ).
5. We should encourage, via UNESCO, different media (both public and private) around the world to commit themselves to transmitting true and fair information about the reality in different countries, respecting cultural diversity and human rights, and UNESCO should facilitate the creation of media standards and guidelines.

#### SCIENCE/CULTURE

1. National Theatre Competitions – WE should stimulate work on themes such as tolerance, cultural diversity and non-violence from the local to the international level. Promote and exchange these forms of expression and their impacts; International museums and “Arts Promoting Peace” should be used as a way of transmitting cultural heritage from generation to generation and from one nation to another.
2. Other forms of expression popular with young people should be used as a tool to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue; a UNESCO conference specifically addressing inter-faith dialogue among young people. WE should support activities at the regional and subregional level, in order to foster understanding and the integration of youth.
3. WE should support student forums and associations connecting students of the same subject from different countries, which promote peace and cultural diversity from different scientific angles by distinct approaches.
4. WE should create a permanent Council of Young Scientists linked to the WAYS (World Academy of Young Scientists) structures and actively promote the exchange of information and knowledge between local knowledge holders and scientists.
5. The programme “Coalition of Cities against Racism” should comprise a specific youth component; whereas the development of “sister-cities” should be considered by UNESCO as a way to strengthen intercultural and interreligious dialogue among youth.

6. We urge UNESCO to intensify appropriate measures in cooperation and coordination with authorities of Member States and/or United Nations bodies, for the protection and preservation of objects and sites that have deteriorated over time and are on the World Cultural Heritage list and are endangered due to ethnic and cultural conflicts.

We condemn all forms of violence existing in today's world. Crime and violence is facilitated by the relatively easy availability of guns and ammunition. Religion and spirituality may and can contribute to the promotion of the inherent dignity and worth of the human being and the eradication of racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. WE trust that, by remembering history, lessons can be learned to avert future tragedies. WE have a duty, a responsibility to take care of YOUTH in all parts of the world and to build a better future of understanding and justice.

**WE = young people in cooperation with UNESCO.**

## **Addendum**

### **Proposals for future UNESCO Youth Forums**

- Organization of regional, national, local forums run by UNESCO National Commissions to identify regional issues and recommendations prior to the UNESCO Youth Forum, supported by UNESCO Headquarters.
- Promotion of further interaction via a specific and permanent UNESCO Youth Forum website and discussion forum, where the youth can actively participate in debates and channel their input and which can also act as a basis for the evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations.
- Delegations of Members States, Associate Members and Observer States to the General Conference must comprise young people selected on a basis of commitment to the Youth Forum and to the values of UNESCO. The youth delegates should be ready to take follow-up action in their own countries.
- Rotation for the positions of Youth Forum Chairperson and Rapporteur based on the geographical repartition according to the UNESCO regional categorization.
- Identification of the UNESCO Youth Forum by the creation of a unique logo.
- Need to receive background documents further in advance of the Forum and have an extra day to discuss them so that more concrete recommendations may be made.
- The duration of the Youth Forum must be increased, in order to allow time to make concrete recommendations and to come up with a consensus on the Youth Forum report.
- UNESCO commits itself to respecting the six official languages of the United Nations for all working documents and working groups.

We should be actively involved in the implementation of the above statements.

President of the Youth Forum	Kenya
General Rapporteurs	Indonesia
	The Netherlands

Drafting Committee:

President of Working Group I  
Rapporteurs

Jamaica  
Germany  
Cuba

President of Working Group II  
Rapporteurs

South Africa  
Saint Kitts and Nevis  
Republic of Korea

President of Working Group III  
Rapporteurs

Guinea  
Sudan  
Azerbaijan