

# newsletter

## Foresight – 04 the future in the present

Human rights, democracy and peace are SHS's priorities for this biennium. I would like to share with you some of UNESCO's initiatives that are working towards these objectives.

### **Cities against Racism**

The *International Coalition of Cities United against Racism and Exclusion* is an initiative launched by SHS that seeks to establish a network of cities interested in combining their experience in the fight against racism, discrimination, exclusion and intolerance. The city does not have to be a place where cultural differences lead to irrational fears, intolerant ideologies or discrimination. Instead it can function as a laboratory for learning how to live together and how to benefit from the rich exchange of beliefs, attitudes and ways of life that a city can provide. Seizing upon the positive aspects of city life has the power to transform society by creating a new form of democratic citizenship. So in order to strengthen these positive aspects, cities from different regions of the world will draw up an ethical Charter and plans of action.

### **The Promotion of Democratic Principles**

Byblos (Lebanon), the city that invented the alphabet, is the seat of the International Centre of Human Sciences, a UNESCO institute in charge of coordinating the Sector's work on the promotion of democratic principles and the analysis of the democratization process. The work of the centre will take →

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- the form of three major programmes: an empirical research programme designed to test the hypothesis that democratic aspiration is universal regardless of the religious or cultural context; a conceptual and analytical research programme that aims to support the international dialogue and publications of the International Panel on Democracy and Development (IPDD); and a research programme and plan of action on the democratization process in areas of post-conflict.

### Dialogues between Civil Societies

The third programme I wish to bring to your attention is called “Civil Societies in dialogue”. The first location for the execution of this programme will be in Israel and Palestine. UNESCO’s aim is to engage intellectuals and civil society organizations in charting a vision for the future while using methodologies conducive to having an impact on public opinion. The project has a dual purpose: to establish a permanent dialogue in Israel and Palestine thus allowing representatives of both sides to establish together different types of partnerships and action; and the promotion of cooperation between researchers in Israeli and Palestinian universities so they can approach together policy issues through research and policy advice.

During a ten-day mission in January 2004 to nine cities it became apparent to us that despite difficulties and certain disagreements concerning methods, a number of individuals and groups are trying to rebuild communication between the two societies. Therefore the presence of UNESCO as a third party is both important and welcome.

Tolerance, justice, respect and human dignity are values that UNESCO defends and promotes through its various programmes. In the case of the programmes mentioned above, it is our duty to put the values of the Organization into practice in order to fulfil the objectives of each activity. It is crucial that those who implement these programmes be themselves imbued with these values. As Mahatma Gandhi said: first, we must be the change we wish to see in the world.

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# Palestinian Women

## SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES IN THE PACIFIC

12 December 2003 saw the official launching, by the Samoan Deputy Prime Minister, of the International Council for the Study of Pacific Islands (ICSPI). The event took place in Apia, at the National University of Samoa. The establishment of the Council was approved by all the National Commissions of the Pacific subregion as well as by Pacific Islands scholars. The Council will serve as UNESCO's main partner for implementing Social and Human Sciences in the Pacific. ¶

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## SOCIAL INVESTMENT

The Final Report has just been published of the July 2003 Workshop/Seminar on Social Investment held in El Chaco, Paraguay. Paraguay's Secretary for the Environment had decided to organize this Seminar with UNESCO and the DeSdelChaco Foundation because of the economic, social and environmental impact that drought and flooding has on the region. The papers given, plus the recommendations and conclusion are available in Spanish (*Seminario Taller de Inversión Social en el Chaco Paraguayo*). ¶

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**On 5 and 6 February the meeting *In Support of Palestinian Women* was held in Tunisia. It was attended by representatives of 16 Palestinian women's organizations, including Ms Dalal Salameh, Palestinian Member of Parliament and Ms Neziha Ben Yedder, Minister for Women, the Family and Children, Tunisia.**

The meeting had a dual purpose: identify the strategic needs of Palestinian women in the field of social and human sciences; and reflect on a plan of action by which SHS could contribute to meeting those needs. During the two-day meeting, participants discussed the findings of four focus groups that had held discussions in Gaza and the West Bank in preparation for the meeting. During those discussions, the groups had identified needs in a number of thematic areas including violence against women, political participation and decision-making, women's rights as human rights, and education. Participants also learned about the work of the Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) and the Tunisian Center for research, studies, documentation, and information on women (CREDIF).

### Needs identified

At the conclusion of the meeting there emerged a clear need to establish a specialized, independent, resource centre which would, inter alia, collect and house research and documentation produced on the status and condition of Palestinian women, analyse and disseminate information to policy makers and relevant partners, facilitate training, networking and empowerment for women's organizations. Thematic areas to be targeted include political participation and decision-making, socio-economic rights, policy and legislation, poverty and violence against women.

In the coming months UNESCO, in cooperation with CAWTAR and the Development Studies Programme (DSP), Birzeit University, will prepare and present a project proposal for such a centre to the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs and women's organizations, and undertake a feasibility study before launching the initiative. ¶

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# Ioanna Kuçuradi

President of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (1998-2003) and organizer of the 21<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Philosophy, Turkish philosopher Ioanna Kuçuradi is a leading personality in the world community of contemporary thinkers. She is also known for her efforts to promote human rights and human rights education both in Turkey and internationally.

## When talking about human rights, you often refer to the notion of “evaluation”. Why is this important?

Evaluating is a human phenomenon. We don't do anything without first making an evaluation. The problem is that every day, we encounter different, quite divergent or even opposing evaluations of the same things, the same actions, the same persons, the same events, the same situations.

## What is your approach to this problem?

Evaluations are carried out in at least three different ways. One of them is to impute value to an individual object, action, situation or person, in accordance with a culturally valid judgement which is based on what people in a given group think is good or bad. Another way of evaluating is to ascribe value to the object according to the special connection which the evaluator sees between himself or herself and the object

in question. It is natural that something which happens has different results for different persons. But neither of these modes of evaluation leads the evaluator to the *knowledge* of the value of the object he or she evaluates. A third mode of evaluation is what I call “right evaluation”. This is a cognitive activity, which presupposes different kinds of knowledge on the part of the evaluator and at the same time takes into consideration the specificity of the object. For instance, in the case of an action, the person who evaluates it has to understand why the agent has carried out this given action, i.e. to find out the causes and reasons that led the agent to act as he or she did. This “why” also includes his/her value experiences, beliefs, world-view and so on. This action has subsequently to be compared with other possible actions in the same situation. This allows the evaluator to identify the specificity of the action. And it is precisely this specificity that determines the *value* of the action. One further step is needed to be able to grasp the *ethical* value of this action – its being right, wrong, valuable or valueless. One must relate this case, with its specificity, to the *value of the human being*, to what this action means for the human being, for humanity. Thus the ethical value of an action, I think, lies in its significance for the human species.

## What are the implications of this theory with regard to human rights?

Human rights are first of all *ethical* principles. They are ethical norms for the treatment of individuals. But human rights are also principles for action. For example, when human rights are worded in the passive in international instruments, such as “no one shall be subjected to torture”, this also means that no one should torture. This is where I connect human rights with action, and consequently with the question of evaluation. Looking at human rights in this way has important implications, particularly for the education of human rights. You have to be trained in making “right evaluations”, so that you can find in most concrete situations in which you have to act, what you should or can do for the protection of human rights. This is something that my pupils learn, including policemen who must often decide very quickly – for instance during a non-peaceful demonstration – how to act. There are general rules of course, but the rules are not sufficient. In order to choose and apply the appropriate rule at a given moment, you must also be able to evaluate the development of the events.

Interview

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## “Human Rights are demands to protect our only common identity as human beings”

### **You have introduced the notion of the ethical education of human rights...**

At present human rights education is conceived as teaching human rights instruments and, sometimes, as intercultural education or civic education. But in my view, the aim of human rights education should be first and foremost to awaken in people the sincere will to protect human rights. This can often be achieved by helping them become aware of what human rights are –of what they demand–, by helping them to settle accounts with themselves and look at themselves first of all as human beings, by helping them become conscious of their human identity and the identity or the “sameness” of all human beings, which is also the base of human rights. The second aim of human rights education is to provide people with knowledge of the concepts of human rights, that is, what a human right practically demands and why it demands it. And a third aim is to train people in evaluation, so that they become able to decide, in concrete situations, how to act in order to protect the human rights of those to whom their actions are directed or to avoid damaging others’ rights out of ignorance.

### **You distinguish between directly protected rights and indirectly protected rights. Could you briefly explain this distinction and its implications? Why is this distinction important?**

Human rights are also premises for the deduction of law at all levels. The directly protected rights are rights like the right to life or the right to freedom of thought. To protect them means to put them under the guarantee of law. But indirectly protected rights – such as the right to food, the right to education or the right to health – can be protected only through public institutions and through economic and social rights which are limits delineated by laws. It is important how these limits are delineated and whether a law is produced in accordance with human rights or not. When you enforce an economic or social law, you should take into consideration its foreseeable implications for the citizens in the existing conditions of the country at that moment. There are implications which are foreseeable, if you look at things with clear concepts and you know the conditions of the country. But due to a lack of distinction between different kinds of rights of the individual, the attempt to protect economic rights, or what people call “economic freedom” is spreading at present in a way that only directly protected rights can be protected.

### **Does this mean that you disagree with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which considers all human rights and fundamental freedoms as indivisible, interdependent and interrelated?**

I don’t disagree with the acceptance that all, and all kinds of human rights are indivisible and interrelated. In fact they are. But I strongly disagree with the existing classifications of human rights, their division in “civil and political rights” and “economic, social and cultural rights”. I disagree with their fashionable division in “generations” and also with considering so-called “cultural rights”, in one sense, as human rights. Clearly conceived human rights are rights of the individual and are universal: they bring demands for the treatment of every human being, whatever his or her other specificities might be. But all rights of the individual are not human rights. I may claim that I, like every human being, should not be ill-treated when I am under detention anywhere, but I think that I may not claim, as a university professor in Turkey, that it is my right to get the same salary as a professor in the USA or Germany.

### **Why do you see a problem with cultural rights?**

There is a confusion between two meanings of “culture” which is reflected in the way that “cultural rights” are understood. “Culture” in the singular, denotes activities such as philosophy, the arts and literature, which help people develop their human and humane potentialities. If we understand culture in this sense, access to and participation in culture is a human right. But when people speak of “cultural rights” they often mean certain group rights. Cultures consist of different and changing world views, life-styles, conceptions of what is good or bad and norms in general. And in many cultures there are world views and norms that are in contradiction with human rights. Group rights, or co-called collective rights, are important when they derive from human rights. If they do not, there is a risk of confusing interests with rights.

### **You have even said that the promotion of respect for all cultures is a “trap” for human rights.**

The differences of cultures is a fact. But these differences should not cause discrimination. I have nothing against people living as they like, so long as their world views, ways of living and norms do not prevent themselves and their children from developing their human potentialities. The unconditional promotion of respect for all cultures as an attempt to fight discrimination is well-minded but very problematic. Many cultures have norms that are incompatible with human rights – take as an example polygamy or blood feud. This escapes attention, probably due to the importance of culture in the singular. That is a trap for human rights. What we need to respect are human beings – not cultural norms. Cultural norms must be evaluated.



→ **What is, for instance, your stand on the claim of schoolchildren or employees to carry symbols of religious conscience?**

When I was a student more than 40 years ago, there were no girls wearing a scarf in Turkey, neither in school nor in the university. Today there is a revival, all over the world, of world views and norms that prevent people, and children in particular, from developing as human beings. This revival is closely connected with the promotion of “respect for all cultures”. The best way to solve this problem is through education. The concept of *laïcité* is often misunderstood. It does not simply consist in the separation of religion and the State. *Laïcité* is a negative principle which demands that religious and cultural norms in general do not determine the establishment of social relations and the administration of public affairs. This is why *laïcité* is a precondition for human rights and the reason why it is very important. Those who agree with the claim of schoolchildren to carry religious symbols are probably not aware that they push children to give priority to one of their various collective identities, that they push them to give priority to their cultural identity and not their human identity, and that by doing this they promote discrimination. There is a philosophical problem behind all this. The premises from which universal human rights and cultural norms are deduced are different, and so are the ways in which they are deduced. So to better protect human rights we need a philosophical understanding of their concepts and foundations. Unfortunately, I still see it missing internationally.

**A human rights activist**

Ioanna Kuçuradi was behind the introduction of human rights as an obligatory course at the philosophy department of Hacettepe University in 1981. As a teacher of human rights she became more and more involved in practical human rights work through the 1990s. In 1994, she was elected chair of the newly established High Advisory Council for Human Rights in Turkey. Under her leadership, the Council introduced the teaching of human rights in primary and secondary education and prepared reports, notably concerning the abolition of the death penalty, the fight against torture and ill-treatment, freedom of the press and the protection of journalists. In 1998, she visited many prisons and detention places in different parts of Turkey in her capacity as advisor for the President of the Human Rights Commission of the Parliament. The same year, she succeeded in launching an MA programme for Human Rights at Hacettepe University. It was, and still is, the first of its kind in Turkey. A great number of people from professional life, including police officers, have joined this programme. Ioanna Kuçuradi is also Chair of the Turkish National Committee of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, which was established in 1998. This Committee organizes human rights seminars for vice-governors and district governors who chair the Human Rights Councils established throughout Turkey. It organizes, in collaboration with various ministries and international organizations, human rights courses for police officers, judges and prosecutors, teachers of human rights and members of the media. ¶



**What do you recommend concretely?**

Philosophy can make an important contribution because concepts, and what I call the “cognitively justifiable conceptualization of ideas”, is the job of philosophy. Something else which is missing, is more awareness about ethical relations. Today there is, for example, a tendency to adopt an economic approach to everything... I read some materials for police training prepared by the Council of Europe. And I was astonished to read there that I, as a citizen, am a “client” of the police! This is something that I don’t understand. I am not a client of the police and students are not my clients! For a public officer there is no such thing as clients. This is a mentality that we find in many places and which reduces everything to economic relations. Everyone has become a client because of the promotion of free market. People think that if they are considered as clients, they will be better treated. But what does this really mean? It means that we reduce all kinds of inter-human relations to economic relations, while inter-human relations are basically ethical relations. This is why human rights should be taught as ethical principles first of all.

**You have written about the relationship between the State, the forming of legal norms and Human Rights.****What is your approach to this relationship?**

If human rights as ethical principles are to be the premises for the deduction of law, the constitutions must be based on human rights. It is not enough to enumerate human rights among other principles in a constitution. The constitution as a whole must be based on human rights and for this we need clear knowledge and a different classification of human rights. We also need a different approach to the concept of the State. At present the State is considered as an entity in itself which oppresses the citizens, though in some societies it is almost conceived as a “father”. But the State is a human legal institution consisting of various organs and institutions. Its *raison d’être* is to protect the citizens from each other and to administrate what is public in accordance with justice. The way of doing this is by protecting the human rights of the citizens.

**But in many cases human rights are regarded as a means to protect the citizens from the State...**

Yes, this is a prevailing conception which has to be changed. I’m very happy to bring together in my courses policemen and people from human rights organizations, who become friends. We are all human beings. For a long time ngo people were considered as terrorists and all policemen as terrible beings. These conceptions have to be changed. The State is here in order to protect human rights. You can imagine the difference between public officers who do their work with this consciousness, and those who think that their job is to protect “the State” from the citizens.

**You have criticized the idea of a minimal State. Why?**

I say that free market economy can work among States that are on the same level of economic development, but it is a trap for developing countries, where the State has to offer public services, in particular services related to human rights, such as schools and health services.

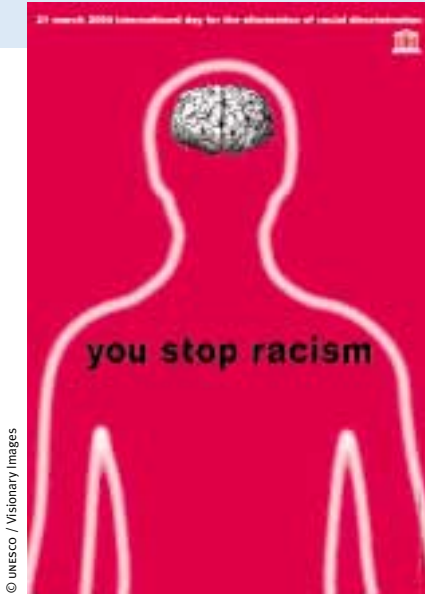
**But developing countries are the ones who can least afford those kinds of services...**

Very often they can afford it to a certain extent. Also, we tend to think of social injustice as unequal distribution of what exists. But social justice also implies that we equally share what does not exist.

**How do you apply this idea of social justice to international relations?**

The way that aid is given to non-affluent and poor countries has to be changed for at least two reasons. First of all, aiding poor countries is not charity. It is above all a humane duty. This implies that it is not enough for us to give what remains or what can be spared in an affluent country, but we must give people what they need. Secondly, we have to change the way in which we give the so-called “development aid”. This aid is given usually as loans on the grounds of political interests. But there has to be a new development policy based on donations for human rights related services – that is, for education, health, etc. – and not loans aimed at promoting the private sector. We need to put human rights as the main objective of all policies, both national and international. ¶

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Poster for International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

### A DAY FOR MOBILIZING AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on Saturday 20 March 2004. The Day was dedicated to the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition (2004). Hundreds of young people took part in a variety of workshops and cultural events organized in partnership with the French National Commission for UNESCO. Young people were also consulted about a new UNESCO project on setting up an International Coalition of Cities Against Racism. ¶

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### A NEW HUMAN RIGHTS DATABASE

Under the supervision of the UNESCO Bangkok office, SHS has set up a new database on human rights instruments in Asia and the Pacific. The aim is to facilitate access to basic information and reference material on human rights provisions in all national constitutions of UNESCO's Asia and Pacific Member States; to inform on the status of core international human rights conventions and publicly stated reservations thereto; and to present nationally-instituted Human Rights Commissions and Committees. The database also contains factual data on countries and a list of human rights organizations in Asia and the Pacific. ¶

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### GENDER STUDIES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

RUSHSAP hosted a regional Gender/Women's Studies meeting from 1 to 3 December last year. Specialists reviewed the current situation of University Gender Studies programmes in the Asia-Pacific region, to see how their teaching and research programmes can help promote gender equality generally and, more specifically, how they can help to achieve the goals of international instruments like CEDAW, Beijing Framework of Action, MDGs, etc. A report including all the presentations is being finalized and some of the meeting's recommendations are already being implemented. ¶

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### CAPACITY-BUILDING IN MONITORING POVERTY REDUCTION

UNESCO and the Namibian NGO !Nara have helped the National Planning Commission (NPC) develop a manual on how to address poverty issues, field methods and formats to be used for Participatory Poverty Assessments. In cooperation with !Nara, UNESCO provided training in participatory field methods to field staff in the Ohangwena

region and conducted field research. This research included providing leadership, organization and expertise to research teams studying seven communities in the region, liaising with local authorities, organizing reporting and feedback to local communities and constituencies on the results of the studies. A regional workshop was held in Ondangwa from 1 to 5 December 2003, tasked with summarizing the raw data. The Regional Poverty Assessment Report for Ohangwena, also called Regional Poverty Profile, is being prepared by a small drafting team of representatives from UNESCO, !Nara and the National Planning Commission. This involves analysing, summarizing, and editing qualitative and quantitative data from the field studies and the workshop as well as integrating data from secondary sources. The Ohangwena Regional Poverty Profile will be presented to policy makers at all levels of government – local, national and regional – in March/April 2004. The preparation of a regional poverty profile for Ohangwena is the first of its kind in Namibia; poverty profiles for other regions will follow in 2004/2005. ¶

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# Tradition and Human Rights: the rise of bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan

**The abduction of women for the purpose of marriage infringes upon three basic human rights: the right to life, the right to personal immunity from violence, and the right to marriage. In order to raise awareness to this fact, UNESCO started a project along with its partners in Kyrgyzstan in October 2002.**

In Kyrgyzstan the practice of bride abduction, the act where a man abducts a girl in order to marry her, has been commonly justified as a ‘tradition’ for centuries. While some women happily endure this situation, it is often the case that those who are abducted unwillingly and refuse the subsequent offer of marriage are being unfairly ‘stigmatized’ by their communities. In extreme examples, bride abduction is practised by men simply as a means to express their masculinity, and can often leave the targets of their advances abandoned shortly thereafter.

The increasing acceptance of all forms of bride abduction in Kyrgyzstan worries many who feel that it promotes gender stereotypes and violent attitudes towards women. The steadily increasing levels of domestic violence that have been directed against these abducted women by their new husbands have validated these fears. Clearly, bride abduction has imposed enormous physical and psychological suffering on women in Kyrgyzstan.

The violation of the rights of women and the implications associated with the gender-based violence involved in bride abduction have not been adequately recognized or addressed. For this reason, UNESCO is working together with the department of Constitutional Rights and Gender Policy at the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University in order to finalize a project called “Human Rights Perspectives in Bride Abduction in Kyrgyzstan”. This project hopes to raise awareness to the fact that bride abduction violates the overall rights of women and that it is actually illegal throughout the country, including the two rural areas targeted by the project (Naryn and Issyk-Kul regions).

## Project results

Within the scope of this project UNESCO and its partners conducted a survey utilizing 500 respondents from the Issyk-Kul and the Naryn regions of Kyrgyzstan. Forty-eight interviews were also conducted including key players from all sides of the bride abduction controversy. Results from the survey and the interviews were analysed for the first time using techniques that address the impacts of gender on an assortment of legal issues. According to the results, in both the Issyk-Kul and the Naryn regions of Kyrgyzstan, only one-third of the bride abduction cases studied showed that the girl consented. In the other two-thirds, it was an undesired abduction with the use of violence on the part of the groom, his friends, and even his relatives. The interview process also confirmed that the abduction of the bride is a well-planned and organized event.

## ➔ Victims of Tradition: Why some rural girls resign themselves to inferior status

### Poverty

- Poverty keeps women from attaining an education that would enable them to compete with men on a professional level. Most girls in rural areas do not continue with their education past high school. Consequently, many are forced to turn to marriage as the only viable way to provide for themselves financially.
- Young women in rural areas have limited access to resources such as health care and higher education. The inferior status of women is exacerbated by the fact that the contributions made by women in the home are undervalued by Kyrgyz society.

### Gender Discrimination

- Young women in rural Kyrgyzstan are the victims of gender stereotypes that have been passed down from generation to generation. Awareness of gender issues has been slow to gain ground in rural areas. However, ideas of gender equality and human rights have emerged into the national consciousness.
- Nonetheless, these women still do not know how to protect themselves and consequently become involuntary victims of cultural discrimination on the part of men. ¶

The results of the project also showed that men and women have contrasting perceptions of bride abduction. Both in Issyk-Kul and Naryn, male respondents stated that they felt that the tradition of bride abduction had not undergone any changes in frequency nor had it changed in any other qualitative sense. On the contrary, female respondents frequently noted the increase in the number of marriages initiated through this tradition and the overall increase in physical violence used against the victims.

Bride abduction is officially illegal in Kyrgyzstan. However, incidences are rarely reported and law enforcement is reluctant to intervene in what is considered by the police to be a domestic dispute. Owing to this lack of enforcement and the overall indifference of the community, the organizers of these abductions are not afraid of punishment and rely on their ability to “settle the case” with money if necessary. The actions of local NGOs have been quite limited regarding this issue. No outside research has been done exploring the probable causes for this startling rise in the number of bride abductions or into the possible ways of reducing its frequency. The role of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan has historically been to deal with the consequences of this tradition, e.g. the violence towards the abducted women. Overall, NGOs have been ineffective in getting their message heard by either the local authorities or the community itself. Parents and relatives of victims are often afraid of condemnation by the local community and will frequently prevent the girl in question from demanding her rights under the law.



## → Changing Societies

Interviews further revealed the powerful position that the local community holds as the main regulator of bride abductions in the countryside. Consequently, an effective means of influencing the rural community is through attempts to change public opinion and its perceptions of bride abduction. Since the fall of the Soviet Union there has been a disturbing and yet unexplained shift in how rural people view this issue. Currently, there is a pervasive belief in the community that the practice is an important cultural tradition of the Kyrgyz people. However, this has not always been the case. Before the Soviet period, single instances of bride abduction often evoked the disapproval of the local community. During the Soviet era the number of bride abductions remained small and was never considered as the main pathway to initiate marriage.

### ↳ Action taken by UNESCO

#### Increasing the communities' understanding of the illegality of bride abduction

- Informing the local communities about the negative aspects and illegal nature of bride abduction.
- Training key people to act as sources of information for the local populace.
- Showing the film, *"Bride Abduction is Punishable"* on local television to an audience of 260,000 people.
- Establishing contracts with local authorities, elements of civil society, and mass media in an effort to reduce the number of bride abduction cases (7 contracts).

#### Training and development of resource materials

- Training was done to increase the familiarity of rural youth with the issues surrounding the tradition of "bride abduction" including those regarding gender and human rights. New teaching techniques increased the functional literacy of the participants regarding these issues by 82%.
- Two resource books were prepared for community use regarding gender and legal issues: *"The Increase of Gender Sensitivity Within Local Communities Towards the Problem of Bride Abduction in Kyrgyzstan"* and *"Legal Aspects of the Cultural Tradition of 'Bride Abduction' by the Kyrgyz People."*<sup>¶</sup>

But in the last decade the rural community's perception of bride abduction has shifted radically. In addition to encouraging the young men to participate in the practice, the rural communities are also active in condemning the women who resist the custom. For example, the local community in Issyk-Kul expressed in the survey open (30.3% of cases) or latent (42.4%) condemnation of girls who wish to oppose this tradition. The local community of Naryn admitted to openly condemning girl victims in 28.0% of the cases, and in 56.0% of all cases the girls are exposed to latent condemnation. This shift in the perspective of the rural population towards bride abductions is indicative of wider problems facing

the women of Kyrgyzstan since the end of the Soviet era. For example, women are gradually being squeezed out of high-income sectors of the economy including the areas of banking, insurance, and pension provision. From 1990 to the year 2000 the employment of women in these key areas fell 21%.\*

### Analysis of gender and the law: the negative results of bride abduction

Addressing specific gender and legal issues during the interview process revealed previously concealed problems related to bride abduction. These research methods were exceptionally adept at uncovering the negative consequences abducted women experience as a result of being forced into marriage. The interviews revealed that victims of bride abduction do in fact suffer severe psychological effects resulting from the trauma of their forced marriages. These effects include long-term reductions in overall self-esteem and severe anxiety related problems. The frequent refusal of the victim's family to defend the girl and the overall indifference of the community at large only exacerbates the trauma of abduction.

Other losses that these women experience occur after the initial abduction and are related mainly to the continuing violence inflicted upon them by their new husbands. The interviews revealed that prolonged domestic violence perpetuated against the brides resulted in men occupying the dominant position within the family. This violence also contributed to the overall social isolation of the female victims, and to a myriad of other missed opportunities from educational losses to financial ones.

### Questions still to be answered

The rapidly increasing practice of bride abduction carried out under the mask of Kyrgyz national tradition is in reality the revival of a very specific form of cultural discrimination against women. Many questions concerning this practice – such as the ones that follow – were not covered by the survey. Answers to these and other questions are vitally important if the problems facing women in Kyrgyzstan are to be adequately dealt with.

- Why do the majority of rural people in Kyrgyzstan increasingly prefer the abduction of unwilling brides versus the abduction of more eager participants?
- What cultural norms and traditions within Kyrgyz culture can be used in order to counter the tradition of bride abduction?
- In what ways can the rights of the victims of bride abduction be protected in the face of the Government's inaction?

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\* UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women 632<sup>nd</sup> and 633<sup>rd</sup> Meetings, [www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/wom1424.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/wom1424.doc.htm)

## HUMAN SECURITY NOW

The French version of the *Human Security Now* Report was launched on 24 November 2003, during a Conference-Debate organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the *Presses de Sciences Po* and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDR1). This Report is the outcome of the work undertaken by the Commission on Human Security, established in January 2001 on the initiative of the Japanese Government. The Commission, chaired by Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and Amartya Sen, winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Economics, worked on two major themes: human insecurity resulting from conflict and violence, and the connection between security and development. The Report sets out clear recommendations in the following areas: protection of people exposed to the violence of conflict and arms proliferation; assistance for the security of migrants and refugees; creation of a fund for human security in post-conflict situations; encouragement of fair trade and markets; efforts to ensure minimum living standards in all regions; priority efforts for universal access to basic health care; and universal access to basic education. ¶

**Claudia Maresia,**  
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The full Report in English and an outline of the Report in Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish is accessible on: [www.humansecurity-chs.org/](http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/)

The publication in French is available from the *Presses de Sciences Po*:  
<http://www.sciences-po.fr/edition/actualites/index.html#vientdeparaitre>

## ADDIS ABABA MEETING ON HUMAN SECURITY

In cooperation with the African Union, SHS is organizing an international conference on “Human Security, Conflict Prevention and Peace in Africa” on 26 and 27 May 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This event, to take place at African Union Headquarters, will have participants from varied backgrounds: Social Development Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs from African countries in conflict and/or post-conflict situations, the Human Security Network (HSN) and Mali, currently chairing the HSN; the Commission on Human Security as well as international specialists, academics, African NGOs, etc. ¶

**Moufida Goucha and Arnaud Drouet,**  
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## INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM: “VIOLENCE AND ITS CAUSES: A STOCKTAKING”

The international symposium entitled “Violence and its causes: a stocktaking”, organized by UNESCO and France’s Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale (IHEDEN), was held at UNESCO Headquarters on 3 November 2003. The aim was to question contemporary forms of violence in a multicultural, multidisciplinary way. This meeting was coordinated by SHS’s Division of Foresight, Philosophy and Human Sciences and fell within the framework of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

The Symposium comprised four sessions: New forms of violence and tentative answers to new challenges; Extreme violence, terrorism and political crisis; Violence, fanaticism and sacrifice; and Violence and corruption.

Proceedings will be published in English and French, with Arabic and Spanish versions available online in due course. ¶

**Moufida Goucha et Claudia Maresia,**  
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## DEMOCRACY: WORK CONTINUES

The meeting entitled “Integrated Strategy on Democracy” was held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 7 to 9 March 2004. SHS organized this meeting jointly with the Scientific Committee of the International Centre for Human Sciences (ICHS) in Byblos, Lebanon.

This was the first in a series of meetings on implementing the recommendations of the International Panel on Democracy and Development (see *Newsletter 01*). Several members of the Panel, its Chairman, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and experts on democracy-building in post-conflict societies, took part in this inaugural meeting, focusing on Afghanistan, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Participants in the meeting reviewed the programmes and activities of ICHS over the past four years and discussed implementation of UNESCO’s new strategy on democracy. ¶

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# Dossier

## Foresight

“Machiavelli said: *‘All prudent princes ought to [...] have to regard not only present troubles, but also future ones, for which they must prepare with every energy, because, when foreseen, it is easy to remedy them; but if you wait until they approach, the medicine is no longer in time because the malady has become incurable’* (*The Prince*, Chapter III). In formulating the principles of modern politics, Machiavelli also invented foresight and posed it as an absolute necessity. Thus, the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be future-oriented: the scope of the challenges that mankind has to deal with is such that long-term vision and action are essential if the future is to have a future.”

Koïchiro Matsuura,

Director-General of UNESCO, 15 may 2001

## Foresight – the future in the present

**The Foresight programme gives strong visibility to anticipating and to the laboratory of ideas function that form part of UNESCO’s essential tasks.**

Because the world has recently experienced upheavals and unprecedented development, and since UNESCO should be able to anticipate the major changes affecting its fields of competence, foresight now has an absolutely essential role to play.

It is in fact the vocation of an organization dedicated to international intellectual cooperation to seek a forward-looking view that can inspire its action. It is more important than ever for UNESCO to be on intellectual watch.

Indeed, the time lapse may be very long between the formulation of an idea and its realization. And the delay can be just as great between long-term, when trends and emerging problems start to take shape, and the reality of decision-making, usually aimed at short-term results. Since short- and medium-terms are already mainly “on the right track”, it is on our capacity to combine the long-term view with present decisions that will depend more and more our ability to work for future generations: any efficient, sustainable action requires us to bring closer forward-looking thinking, strategic action-oriented thinking, decision and prevention.

### A forward-looking discipline

Forecasting contributes to shedding light on our strategic choices. We should perhaps clarify the distinction between *foresight* and *forecasting*. Foresight is clearly not prediction. And indeed – contrary to the generally accepted view – it should not be confused with forecasting. Foresight does not resort to given models, on which we can rely, to foresee a particular state of affairs, the continuation of certain trends, or the almost certain realization of identifiable risks. Foresight is an exercise in questioning, in warning, and in promise. Its particular form is through conditional phrases such as: “this is what would happen if you decided A or if I did B”.

Foresight means to be *far-sighted*. It is concerned with possible futures, or “futuribles”; on principle it ignores all knowledge about the future. As Gaston Berger has emphasized, “the future is neither right nor wrong, but can only be possible”. The future is not a scientific object.

**What is the future for water?**

**Will there be a 21<sup>st</sup> century?**



**Who knows?**

**Which democracy for the future?**

**Ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

**What future for the human species?**



**The future of values**

**Education for all – is it always for tomorrow?**

There lies the paradox of foresight. Foresight looks towards the present. It questions present decisions with regard to their potential consequences and leaves man's free will untouched. It is the management of the unforeseeable in a future primarily marked by uncertainty.

It is from this perspective that foresight must throw light on action, and on medium- and long-term policies, using "upstream" expertise. This expertise must be totally trans-disciplinary since problems – and therefore solutions – are less and less reducible to one given sphere of specialization. The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be a century of *linkers*, of connections and continual setting up of networks: this knowledge revolution puts into perspective the borders between UNESCO's different fields of competence (education, the sciences, culture, communication and information), and reconnects knowledge with culture in one unbroken chain. Nehru said that UNESCO was the conscience of the United Nations system. The foresight programme must contribute to maintaining its openness and its availability regarding the new issues that will be the challenges of tomorrow.

#### **UNESCO's intellectual watch function**

From the outset, this foresight dimension was inscribed in UNESCO's Constitution according to which the Organization is not only entrusted "to contribute to peace and security", but also to "maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge" and to encourage "cooperation among the nations in all branches of intellectual activity". Thus UNESCO's function of ethical watch is part and parcel of its mandate of intellectual cooperation.

In addition, we should remember that this visionary spirit was already present at the time of the Organization's foundation when the Lake Success conference was held in 1949. That conference, devoted to nature conservation, twenty-three years before the 1972 Stockholm conference,

was a pioneering milestone on the way to inscribing protection of the environment on the international agenda. The establishment of a research committee on arid zones, in 1951, was also thoroughly innovative, at a time when the international community was very little concerned with the issues that were to be the basis for sustainable development.

Organizing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues series and the decision to publish the biennial UNESCO World Report, revive the Organization's founding spirit yet with a new outlook.

#### **A forum for future-oriented thinking**

The series of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks and Dialogues shows the Organization's intention to make UNESCO a world forum of future-oriented thinking, encouraging exchange of ideas and views among eminent scientists, researchers, intellectuals, creative artists and international leaders. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks are held in the evening, for little more than two hours, bringing together three or four leading personalities, representing the diversity of ideas, cultures and backgrounds, to discuss issues crucial for our future. For example, "What is the future for the human species?", "What democracy for the future?", "New technologies and knowledge", "Education for all – always tomorrow's concern?" and "What future for water?", etc. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues expand the exchanges into one or two days, moderated by several personalities connected with UNESCO through their publications and commitments.

Over the 24 sessions of Talks and the two sessions of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues ("Will there be a 21<sup>st</sup> century?" in September 1998, and "The Future of Values" in December 2001), no less than a hundred leading lights of science and thinking from all regions of the world came to fuel UNESCO's thinking in terms of foresight. We can name, for example, Arjun Appadurai, Manuel Castells, Jacques Derrida, Souleymane





➔ Bachir Diagne, Stephen Jay Gould, Paul Kennedy, Julia Kristeva, Edgar Morin, Ilya Prigogine, Mary Robinson, Saskia Sassen, Michel Serres, Daryush Shayegan, etc.

All the contributions to the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks* and *Dialogues* have been collected into two publications: *Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (Berghahn Books / UNESCO Publishing, 2001; the French version was published by Éditions du Seuil with UNESCO Publishing in 2000) and *The Future of Values*, whose French version will be published by Albin Michel / UNESCO Publishing in April 2004 and the English edition co-published by Berghahn Books and UNESCO Publishing will appear in Autumn 2004 (see page 19).

In addition, UNESCO's Foresight Programme has created partnerships that have enabled forums of future-oriented thinking to take place in different regions of the world, for example: the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Forum* with the Universal Exhibition EXPO2000 in Hanover, and the *Millennium Agenda* series in Latin America.

### World Reports

The publication of *UNESCO World Reports* is meant to strengthen the Organization's function as a laboratory of ideas and as such must "play a key role in anticipating and defining, in the light of the ethical principles that it champions, the most important emerging problems in its spheres of competence, and in identifying appropriate strategies and policies to deal with them" (UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007). Indeed, the concern to strengthen UNESCO's capacities in the sphere of anticipation and foreseeing gave rise to the publication of the first future-oriented world report, published by the United Nations system, entitled *The World Ahead: our Future in the Making* for the English version and for the French version *Un monde nouveau* (see page 19).

The aim behind the decision to endow UNESCO with a World Report which would be the report of the whole Organization, sets it in a solidly forward-looking transdisciplinary perspective and, as it were, cross-cutting in relation to UNESCO's fields of competence. The theme of the first UNESCO World Report, to be published in the second half of 2004, is *Building Knowledge Societies*. That particular title reflects the interest UNESCO shows in the growing importance of different forms of knowledge in society, and in the emergence – particularly given the revolution of new information and communication technologies – of a new paradigm of societies based on knowledge.

### ➔ Council on the Future

UNESCO has an advisory body on foresight: the Council on the Future. Established in 1999, it is a virtual network designed to collect the opinions and recommendations of the best specialists and groups of experts in the field of foreseeing. Members include twelve Nobel prizewinners, several eminent personalities and experts of world renown, and the principal leaders of main future-oriented NGOs involved in the work of UNESCO's Foresight programme.¶

This reflection is to be linked to the recent World Summit on the Information Society, whose first session was held in Geneva in December 2003. The second session will be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005. It is meaningful that UNESCO should want to reassert the importance of the distinction between information and knowledge in this context: a discussion on the challenges of the information society cannot be held without giving further thought to the economic, social and educational implications of these forms of knowledge, of their production, their use, their appropriation and their transmission. The first UNESCO World Report shows the need for an international effort of reflection to carry out these objectives: knowledge sharing, reduction of the digital divide, capacity-building with regard to scientific research and improving learning opportunities through access to knowledge.

UNESCO's Foresight Programme has created partnerships and cooperated with institutions or networks such as the Universal Academy of Cultures, the Millennium Agenda, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the Club of Rome, Futuribles International, the World Future Studies Federation, the World Future Society, etc. The programme also endeavours to sensitize the media to the major challenges of the future, through the dissemination of articles conveying key messages to more than 100 countries. This means that today, in the alliance of international future-oriented thinking, UNESCO holds a position in its own right.¶

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# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks and Dialogues – perceptions and prospects

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**Edgar Morin,**  
contribution to  
the first meeting of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks,  
“*What future for  
the human species?*”  
9 September 1997

“Today, however, there are no tram lines to the future; no locomotive of history to transport us towards a happy tomorrow: the myth of progress as an historical necessity is dead. This does not mean that progress is impossible, but simply that it is not inevitable. Everything that seemed an undeniable and self-evidently beneficial engine of progress, such as science, technology, the economy and industry, now reveals its ambivalence: the grand promises of a happy future are today in a sorry state.” ¶

## What future for the human species?

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**Stephen Jay Gould,**  
contribution to the  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks  
“*What future  
for the human species?*”,  
9 september 1997

“When talking about the future of humanity, or the future in general, the only honest position is to recognize that it is essentially unpredictable or that those broad things we can predict – such as that the sun will rise tomorrow (to take David Hume’s example) – are really not very interesting.” ¶

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**Boutros Boutros-Ghali,**  
contribution to the third  
meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Talks “*Ready for the  
21<sup>st</sup> century?*”,  
6 April 1998

“These new players [non-governmental organizations] enjoy the benefits of a state of peace but they do not bear the responsibilities of maintaining peace nor, except indirectly, those of development. If we want to try to manage the twentieth century, we have to find a way of involving these non-state players in dealing with international problems; that way we shall obtain a minimum of democracy. Otherwise, globalization could well result in an authoritarian system, with a top level composed either of technocrats, a single government or an extremely limited number of governments, and beneath that, systems claiming to be democratic but having less and less power at their disposal, power being in the hands of forces that are in no way answerable, or answerable only in an extremely indirect way, to public opinion.” ¶

## Will there be a 21<sup>st</sup> century?



**Francisco Sagasti,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks*  
“*Toward a new*  
*global contract?*”,  
6 November 1999

## The future of values



“Bacon’s program succeeded, but in doing so, undermined its own foundations. It is our task to redefine a new program. We have that advantage of being able to learn from the mistakes of the last 400 years. We must enlarge our conception of knowledge generation to include considerations other than pure rationality: ethics and aesthetics are possible choices. Moreover, the Baconian program was a creation of Western civilization. As it unfolded in unison with capitalist expansion throughout the world, the program obliterated or ignored other cultures. It is time to bring these cultures back into the picture. The third point on the agenda for change is a dialogue that involves all civilizations with the objective of redefining, over the next twenty or thirty years, what we mean by ‘development’ and ‘progress’.” ¶



**Paul Kennedy,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks*  
“*Toward a new*  
*global contract?*”,  
6 November 1999

“We speak of ‘education for all’ and of the ‘knowledge society’. Yet we are in the midst of a technology revolution that seems less likely to close the gap between rich and poor countries than to widen the gap even further. Thus far, the Internet has made the differences between the technologically-advanced and the technologically-weak even greater than before. Even within the American society, the computer and e-mail have widened the gap between educated people (chiefly Whites and Asians) and the less-educated (chiefly Black Americans). This gap will be felt in every aspect of life, whether it is in opportunities, potential, education or job-hunting.” ¶



**Arjun Appadurai,**  
contribution to  
the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“*The future of values*”,  
8 December 2001

“In the terrifying attack on the World Trade Center and in the continuing battering of the valleys, cities and caves of Afghanistan by the US-led Alliance we see a state-led extension of these forms of vivisectionist violence which we may call ‘diagnostic wars’. A diagnostic war is one in which major acts of violence are intended to both discover and decimate the enemy. They are part of a world in which violence is not about a known enemy but is an effort to find the enemy. In the wake of September 11, we have entered a world of diagnostic procedures, not just in the bombings and suicide attacks that continue, but also in the response of security states everywhere, which seek to document, classify, isolate and discover terrorists in their midst through various forms of violently invasive and randomized behavior. The hunt for beards, names, accents, etc. is a pathetic and frightening index of the era of diagnostic wars and somatic inquisitions. We have entered a world where every face could be a mask. It is no longer a world in which enemies produce wars, but one in which wars determine and diagnose enemies.” ¶

## Forthcoming meetings

**22 March, UNESCO House, Paris:** a session of Talks devoted to the issue “Should globalization be made more democratic?” With the participation of Arjun Appadurai, Indian anthropologist, based in the United States, Provost of New School University, New York; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chairman of the International Panel on Democracy and Development; Daniel Cohen, member of the Prime Minister’s Economic Analysis Advisory Board (France) and leader writer for *Le Monde*; and Edgar Morin, French sociologist and Emeritus Head of Research at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

**27 and 28 July, Seoul, Republic of Korea:** a session of *21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues* on the subject “Building Knowledge Societies” organized in cooperation with the National Commission of the Republic of Korea, and bringing together around ten contributors to UNESCO’s first *World Report* plus a further ten or so specialists, scientists and decision-makers from East and South Asia. ¶





**Michel Serres,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks*  
“*New technologies and  
knowledge: prospects  
and lines of inquiry*”,  
9 March 2001



“Culture is a word invented by Cicero, who declared that ‘philosophy is the culture of the soul’. Culture as first defined thus formed part of a humanist vision, which the philosophers of the 16th century took up for their own purposes, initiating the tradition of the culture of the ‘honnête homme’. The second sense of ‘culture’ is German. It was used for the first time by Kant, and then taken up by the Kulturkampf, to designate all the acquired processes in a society. In this way, the breeding of pigs (culture des cochons) by the farmers of my childhood was part of the ‘Gascon culture’. Yet this had very little in common with the dancers of the Opera, who rather come under the first definition of culture. I myself define culture as the path that leads from the pig to the Opera, and back again. To my mind, then, a man who is refined in his artistic tastes but knows nothing about culture in the anthropological sense of the term is not cultivated, in the same way as the anthropologist who has no appreciation of artistic culture.” ¶

## New technologies and knowledge: prospects and lines of inquiry

## The new aspects of racism in the age of globalization and the gene revolution



**Elikia M'Bokolo,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks* “*The  
new aspects of racism in  
the age of globalization  
and the gene revolution*”,  
3 September 2001

“Moreover, it is discouraging to note that we do not seem to have learnt the lessons of the past. Over the past two centuries, we have witnessed an explosion of racist practices. In spite of the intellectual, legal and cultural lessons we have learnt, we are still confronted by racism, in old or new guises. Racism in its old form focuses on people in faraway places and takes as its ‘justification’ the individual’s skin color or economic situation. The new racism targets people geographically closer – our neighbors, those with whom we co-exist, as we have seen in the Balkans and some parts of Africa. Why are we unable to profit from the lessons of the past? Or, to put the question another way: have societies, states, intellectuals and activists derived all that they ought to from the historical data available to them?” ¶



**Jacques Derrida,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks*  
“*Toward a new  
global contract?*”,  
6 November 1999

“If a linguistic-cultural hegemony, with the ethical, religious and legal models that it comprises, is both, as integrating homogenization, the positive precondition and the democratic pole of a desired form of globalization, seeing that it gives access to a common language, to interchange, to techno-science and to economic and social progress for communities, whether national or not, that would otherwise be without such access and would therefore be deprived, were it not for the Anglo-American language, of participation in the world forum – then how can one combat such a hegemony without jeopardizing the expansion of exchanges and of sharing? It is on this point that an accommodation must constantly be sought, in every specific circumstance. This is where it has to be invented, or reinvented, without pre-established criteria and without established norms. The very norm itself, i.e. the language of the norm, has to be reinvented for such an accommodation, such being the formidable responsibility of the norm.” ¶

## Toward a new global contract?



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**Ilya Prigogine,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“Will there be a  
21<sup>st</sup> century?”,  
16-19 September 1998

“The Ancient Greeks transmitted to us two ideals: that of the intelligibility of nature or, to paraphrase Whitehead, that of forming a system of general ideas that are necessary, logical and coherent and in terms of which all the elements of our experience can be interpreted; and that of democracy, based on the premise of human freedom, creativity and responsibility. To be sure, we are very far from accomplishing these two ideals, but at least we may now conclude that they are not contradictory. Nature is richer, more unexpected and more complex than had been imagined at the beginning of the century. The century to come will doubtless see the emergence of a new notion of rationality, in which reason will no longer be associated with certainty, nor probability with ignorance. It is in this context that the creativity of nature and of man will find their rightful place.” ¶

## Toward a new global contract?

“It seems to me that the concept of human dignity is self-evident in the Christian world where, from its origins, man has been viewed as different from other living entities. On the other hand, Buddhism is based on a cyclical conception of the life of living beings. A man may have been a dog in a previous life, and a woman may become a bird in a future existence. The life of every being is cyclical, so all lives have the same value. Human dignity, then, cannot be conceived solely in contradistinction to animals and plants. We have to find a concept of dignity applicable to living things as such.” ¶

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**Ryuichi Ida,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Talks*  
“Toward a new  
global contract?”,  
6 November 1999

“To pose the question in the terms of the fable, has our world not mislaid the last seashell of the future? Uncertainty, or rather consciousness of uncertainty and unpredictability, is the main feature of our time as we enter a new century. With this awareness of uncertainty comes also the feeling of being dispossessed and powerless for lack of any leverage on the future. Such leverage is in the hands of the market or of that omnipresent and invisible protagonist called globalization, the interpreter or perhaps the author – we are not sure – of a drama whose scenario is unknown to all.” ¶

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**Souleymane Bachir Diagne,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“Will there be  
a 21<sup>st</sup> century?”,  
16-19 September 1998

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**Gianni Vattimo,**  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“Will there be  
a 21<sup>st</sup> century?”,  
16-19 September 1998

“We do not live in a museum, that is to say, in an economically pacified world, even if we would wish to argue in favor of such a world. In this case, the conflicts would be confined to the cultural sphere, which would favor the 15% of the world that consumes 85% of global resources. For sooner or later the other part of humanity will revolt. Even if, at that time, we have the resources to wage war, we will condemn ourselves to live in a totalitarian state. Only the realization of ‘friendly’ economic conditions will enable us to confine conflict to the cultural sphere.” ¶

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**Eduardo Portella,**  
contribution to the session  
of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“Will there  
be a 21<sup>st</sup> century?”,  
16-19 September 1998

“The fragility of utopia lies in the supposition that the future has preexistence over the present. In satiating itself, the present gobbles up both past and future, while utopia suffers mortal pangs in witnessing the death of the future and in discovering, amid the rubble, the disenchantments of the world and the discontents of civilization. This is what has become of the machine that fashioned the dreams that comforted us so long – disabled and abandoned. To reject the utopian illusion is in no way to join the ranks of the exterminator of the future, an emblematic figure with whom we have become familiar through the special-effects cinema. It is perhaps in reaction to this that Edgar Morin felt justified in saying that one of our urgent tasks is to restore the future.” ¶



**Aziza Bennani**,  
contribution to the  
*21<sup>st</sup> Century Dialogues*  
“*The future of values*”,  
8 December 2001

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“In the past, El Andalus demonstrated – notably in the golden age of the Caliphate of Cordoba – the possibility of basing a splendid culture on a plural identity.

‘Thanks to that great adventure of the spirit’, to borrow a phrase from Jorge Luis Borges, ‘thanks to that unique meeting of minds’ as Hamza Rami wrote, thanks also to the values shared by the different components of that society, values very close to those identified today as characteristic of modernity, the most varied sensibilities found expression and the different cultural traditions profited from the contributions of others, without compromising their own identity.

We should look closely at this example, at a time when we are questioning the values that govern our age. The memory of the different peoples contains many examples of this kind, which could serve as an inspiration for restructuring the relations between individuals and communities. They need to be highlighted, not of course in a nostalgic way but for the purpose of shaping a future project based on shared universal values and giving the greatest possible scope to the human.” ¶

## The future of values



## Further reading

### **The World Ahead: our Future in the Making**

UNESCO Publishing / ZED Books  
2001, ISBN 92-3-103634-3

This UNESCO world report on forecasting looks at the major challenges of the future and puts forward a proposal for refounding the 21<sup>st</sup> century based on four contracts: social, natural, cultural and ethical. The book was first published in English and French with Arabic, Catalan, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese editions published in Spring 2004. *The World Ahead: our Future in the Making* was named one of the “Best Books 2001” by the World Future Society. ¶



### **Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

UNESCO Publishing / Berghahn Books,  
2001, ISBN 92-3-103646-7

*Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* is a carefully thought out guide to the major challenges of the future. From “What Future for the Human Race?” to “What are the new territories of culture and education?”, thirty crucial issues for the future of each one of us are discussed by more than eighty scientists, intellectuals, creative artists and decision-makers of world renown. *Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* was first published in French and in English. In Spring 2004, the publication was translated into Arabic, Portuguese and Spanish. Chinese and Russian editions will be published in Summer 2004. *Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* featured on the World Future Society’s list of “Best Books 2002”. ¶

### **The Future of Values**

The French edition of this second volume (*Où vont les valeurs?*) of *Keys to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will be published in April 2004 (Albin Michel / UNESCO Publishing) and the English edition in Autumn 2004 (Berghahn Books / UNESCO Publishing). ¶



## A changing medina

**One of the major hurdles for urban management in Maghreb medinas is that the sites change so rapidly.**

**Whether providing housing for married children, or making room for new family arrivals from rural areas, adapting to a new family set-up, integrating new building or aesthetic “improvements” – old houses in the medina like those in working-class districts, are continually changing.**

So the Nantes School of Architecture and the National School for Planning and Urban Studies together embarked on a study of the changing medina in Mahdia, Tunisia. The “living” plans, designed by students of these Schools, give a cross-section of the layers of building and adjustments between living styles and ways of creating space, sometimes on the same plot of land holding constructions of all different kinds, really old buildings as well as modern ones. The inspiration for these “living” plans, first devised in 1990 by D. Pinson, professor at the Nantes School of Architecture, came from ethno-architecture and was adapted to workers’

housing. It is a method which deliberately centres on an architectural, urban approach and sociological analysis. The plans were published by UNESCO in October 2003 in the series: *Établissements humains et environnement socio-culturel*.

### A “laboratory house”

The practical results of the study undertaken between July 2000 and 2002 by the School of Nantes, then from 2003 onwards by the School of Tunis, were carried out on an experimental site: the “laboratory house”. This renovation site is a house in the Mahdia medina where experiments and discussions on traditional materials and their use take place. But most of all it is a place for dialogue among building professionals, students and local residents on ways of using and transforming Mahdia’s historical districts. ¶

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**View of the medina in Mahdia, Tunisia, from sqifa el Kahla.**



© Agnès Deboulet

### EVALUATION MEETING OF SMALL COASTAL CITIES NETWORK

How to restore and preserve the historical heart of small coastal cities, without driving away their inhabitants, while respecting traditional building criteria as well as modern norms, with the participation of local craftsmen and the support of local and governmental authorities? That is the multiple challenge the project “Urban Development and Freshwater Resources: Small Historical Mediterranean Cities” is designed to meet. UNESCO has been developing the project since 1997 in five pilot cities – Essaouira (Morocco), Mahdia (Tunisia), Omišalj (Croatia), Saïda (Lebanon) and Jableh (Syria). The project’s main objective is to encourage alternative solutions of sustainable, sociocultural and environmental development to the municipalities and ministries concerned. From 30 November to 2 December 2003, all those involved in the project – architects, urban planners, geologists, hydrologists, local officials and UNESCO experts – attended the evaluation meeting in Essaouira. The results of that evaluation will be published in the next *Newsletter*. ¶

**Monique Perrot-Lanaud**, journalist



# Bridge Initiative

**Bridge Initiative was founded by a French telecommunications agency and an American NGO to bridge the gap between Davos and the World Social Forum. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Social Forum held in Paris on 10 and 11 November 2003, the Division of Social Sciences Research and Policy and the Division for Relations with National Commissions and New Partnerships organized a meeting with the Bridge Initiative team.**

Among the participants were representatives from multilateral organizations, civil society and the French Government. This was a follow-up activity to a series of meetings Bridge Initiative has held since 2001. Their first meeting focused on building trust and the 2002 meeting revealed points of agreement on five major problems of globalization. In this third meeting, participants were invited to take the process further on two major issues: how to redefine and strengthen multilateralism; and how to reduce social inequity.

Discussions focused on the fact that globalization has changed the roles of the various agents, and on the need to redefine multilateralism. Institutions, governments and civil society are now being called upon to interact in a democratic and interdependent manner, therefore new partnerships are needed for today's global civil society. Institutional ethical values together with new global polity and global ethical values were put forward as the basis for such reconstruction. The unexpected outcome of the meetings in Cancún, Mexico, and Doha, Qatar (World Trade Organization) and Monterrey, Mexico (Financing for Development), clearly called for rethinking the current international decision-making process and moving towards a more inclusive social agenda with an ethical dimension. Issues such as democratic governance and social justice were discussed with a view to building new relationships and linking these different actors.



© UNESCO / W. Tochtenmann

Discussions continued in two workshops: one centred on redefining multilateralism and the other on the role of subsidies and intergovernmental organizations. There was a divergence of views but both groups stressed the importance of organizing another meeting in 2004 – a year that promises a strong definition agenda, and 2005 which is expected to be a year for reviews. With more reflection on the new role of multilateralism, the human development goals can be reached. The full report is accessible on Internet. ¶

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## ON THE WEB: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The results of the Seminar “Education for Social Transformations: questioning our practices” which took place at UNESCO from 17 to 19 November 2003 (see *Newsletter* 03) can now be consulted on the Education Sector website by clicking on the “Results” heading under “Seminars”. ¶

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## IT'S CITY TIME

Nearly 80 participants from different countries of Latin America and Europe took part in the seminar *El tiempo de las ciudades 3 – living in the cities: urban rehabilitation policies*.\* The seminar was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 26 to 28 November 2003. Six round tables discussed urban policy issues in the region, particularly social and economic instability when revitalization plans appear to be long-term; the reappropriation and gentrification of town centres; and social cohabitation. The seminar, organized with MOST Programme support and the participation of UNESCO's Montevideo Office, took place in Montevideo City Hall.

It is hoped the discussions at this seminar will give rise to a publication analysing the socio-political aspects of the rehabilitation plans and the launching of a network to study these issues in greater depth through fieldwork in Argentina (Buenos Aires), Brazil (São Paulo, Recife, Rio, Porto Alegre), in Mexico (Mexico and Merida) and in Uruguay (Montevideo). ¶

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\* *El tiempo de las ciudades 3. Habitar la ciudad, políticas de rehabilitación urbana.*

# Migration and Human Rights: towards a world without borders?

**Can we envisage a world without borders in which freedom of movement constitutes a fundamental right, giving every human being the right to feel at home anywhere in the world?**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (Article 13,2). In today’s world, most people are free to leave their country. But only a minority have the right to enter another country of their choice. The right to *emigration* will remain incomplete as long as considerable restrictions on *immigration* prevent people migrating, or even travelling, to other countries. The right to emigrate and immigrate is very unevenly distributed: citizens of First World countries enjoy substantial freedom of movement, while people from less developed countries are blocked by border controls and visa systems. Access to international mobility is an important source of inequality between peoples.

Furthermore, migrants are very vulnerable to human rights violations. “Illegal” migrants – those with no identity papers – have few rights or legal protection. Those with identity papers – “legal” migrants – are better protected, but, as foreigners, they have fewer rights than nationals and remain subject to discriminatory measures such as expulsion. Even those who become citizens of the receiving country often come up against racism and xenophobia.

The United Nations has acknowledged this state of affairs by adopting a Convention on Migrant Workers’ Rights which entered into force in 2003 and, to date, has been ratified by 25 countries. But the main receiving countries, including those in Western Europe and North America, have not ratified it.\*

An in-depth rethinking of migration policies and practices is needed to improve this situation. A world without borders, in which freedom of movement would constitute a fundamental right, may be one of the most comprehensive answers to human rights challenges in this era of globalization.

## What issues are involved?

- Migrants form human ties between different regions of the world. They bring with them their values, beliefs, culture and languages, thereby introducing new elements to the societies in which they settle. This plays a crucial role in fostering tolerance of cultural diversity. But all too often, migrants have a negative image. Border controls fuel the idea that ‘insiders’ (national citizens) should be protected from ‘outsiders’ (migrants). Under these conditions, migrants cannot play the positive role that could be theirs in a world without borders.
- In our globalized world, goods, information, money and ideas can circulate widely. But for people, borders still constitute major barriers. Globalization will only become a truly positive and emancipatory process when people – the main source of wealth and prosperity – are allowed to travel freely as well.
- Migrants constitute not only human but also economic ties between countries. For example, most of them send money home: this transfer of funds from rich

to poorer countries helps to reduce inequalities and foster development. Another example is that, in order to protect themselves from the arrival of “illegal” immigrants, developed countries spend huge amounts of money that could more fruitfully be spent in development aid.

A world without borders is a challenging idea that requires radical changes in States’ practices and in people’s minds. It may at first seem unrealistic. But prediction can serve as a useful guide towards greater respect for human rights. UNESCO intends to encourage analysis and debate on this subject, as one of the possible scenarios for a better future. In this context, the Section on International Migration and Multicultural Policies is collecting articles on different aspects of the ‘Migration Without Borders’ issue, covering its economic, human rights, social and political angles.

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\* See SHS Newsletter 02

# Linking Art with Research and Action

## UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF MIGRATION

“It is time to take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue, which now involves hundreds of millions of people and affects countries of origin, transit and destination. We need to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development.” ¶

Kofi Annan, 9 September 2002

## SOUTH AMERICAN DECLARATION ON MIGRATION

At the 4<sup>th</sup> South American Conference on Migration which took place from 5 to 7 November 2003 in Montevideo, Uruguay, the following ten countries signed a Declaration on Migration: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. The full text of the Declaration can be consulted on the web (address below). ¶

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**Fifteen Chinese artists from China's major cities exhibited work on the theme of rural labour migration poverty and social exclusion.**

The exhibition, held in Beijing's "Today" art gallery (22-30 November 2003), featured photographs, videos and live "performance artwork" with 200 migrant workers taking part in the art performance. This art exhibition *Together with Migrants* concluded the first stage and opened onto the second stage of UNESCO's research-action project: *Urban Poverty Alleviation Among Young Female Migrants in China/2002-2005*. The event was organized by UNESCO Beijing with its local partners.

The aim was to draw attention to the plight of migrant workers by linking artistic expression with research and practical work. Researchers analyse a situation, reflect on the issues, conceive and test solutions, and make recommendations to policy makers, whereas artists create emotions, affect, shock, move and upset. And that is precisely the challenge facing us: to change mentalities and break the discrimination gap between rural migrants and urban dwellers. We wanted to reach the public and shake up opinions – and it worked! Through photos and videos, the stark reality of migrant workers was exposed.



© Wang Jin

“100%, 1999, performance”.  
Poster by the artist Wang Jin  
for the “Together with Migrants”  
exhibition.

Broad media coverage placed the theme of rural labour migration on front pages of the national press – for the first time prompted by an artistic event which bridged the gap between art expression and social reality. Researchers, artists, media, and policy makers all have a role to play in social transformations. Only by combining our efforts can we work out a better society for everyone, the whole of society *Together with Migrants*.

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1.

### DEBATES ON BIOETHICS PUBLISHED

1.

The texts of the debates of the Interparliamentary Seminar on Bioethics – *Seminario Interparlamentario de Bioética* (see SHS Newsletter 02) which took place in Montevideo in May 2003 have now been published in Spanish. The recommendations and conclusion of the discussions are in French. ¶

For more information:  
[www.unesco.org.uy](http://www.unesco.org.uy)



2.

2.

Uruguay's House of Representatives together with the UNESCO Montevideo Office have just published (in Spanish) the debates of the Regional Interparliamentary Seminar on Bioethics that took place in September 2001. The participants tackled questions such as: Should we put limits on scientific research, and if so, which ones? Are scientific developments compatible with human rights? ¶

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The document is also accessible online:  
[www.unesco.org.uy/shs/publicaciones.html](http://www.unesco.org.uy/shs/publicaciones.html)

### ETHICS, BIOETHICS, NANOTECHNOLOGY

The Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP) hosted a meeting of experts (November 2003) to discuss Ethics of Science and Technology issues of concern in the region and to identify those that UNESCO could address. The reports of the proceedings, including the four main papers on Bioethics, Ethics of Development, Ethics of ICT and Ethics of Nanotechnology, are being finalized. Further information can be found on the Ethics website. ¶

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### ETHICS DATABASE FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

A new database on bioethics and the ethics of science and technology in the Asia-Pacific area is in preparation. It will contain individuals and institutions working or researching in these areas, existing literature and current research, professional and academic organizations, governmental and non-governmental bodies collaborating on these areas, international instruments and national legislations. ¶

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### BIOETHICS: FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A DECLARATION

In January 2004 UNESCO launched its consultation with Member States on a declaration on universal norms in bioethics by sending out a concise questionnaire on the scope and structure of the future declaration. Further consultations will be undertaken during the Extraordinary Session of the International Bioethics Committee "Towards a declaration on universal norms on bioethics", which will be held in Paris from 27 to 30 April 2004. On this occasion, hearings will be held of international intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and national bioethics committees. ¶

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# South American Ministers' Declaration

**The third session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) was held in Rio de Janeiro from 1 to 4 December 2003.**

The successful Third Session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), held in Rio de Janeiro from 1 to 4 December last, brought together more than 600 participants, including students, policy makers, members of the scientific community, IGOs and NGOs, to discuss themes such as ethics of nanotechnology, education of ethics, code of conduct for scientists, ethical implications of research on human beings in developing countries, development of science and technology, and sustainability.

The occasion also provided an international platform for two other important political events: the *First Regional Ministerial Meeting of South American Science and Technology Ministers and High Officials*; and the *Second Ministerial Science and Technology Meeting of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP)*. The Regional Meeting led to the signature of the Ministerial Declaration on Ethics of Science and Technology, an instrument that will undoubtedly strengthen the active collaboration of governments in the region. As shown in the extracts below, the Declaration – fully endorsed by the Ministers of Science and Technology of the CPLP – carries a strong message of commitment from the interested countries to ethical considerations in science and technology, and calls upon UNESCO and COMEST to take an active role in promoting these issues in the region. The complete text of the Declaration (in English and Portuguese) is on the following website:

[www.unesco.org.br/comest/en/declaration.html](http://www.unesco.org.br/comest/en/declaration.html)

Simone Scholze, [s.scholze@unesco.org](mailto:s.scholze@unesco.org)

## ➔ Extracts of the Declaration on the Ethics of Science and Technology

“[...] that the essential role of the United Nations System's specialized agencies, particularly UNESCO, be recognized in supporting the elaboration of effective policies and guidelines in the field of ethics of Science and Technology and in technical cooperation [...];

-

that UNESCO's work in the field of Ethics of Science and Technology and its role as focal point and legitimate participant in the worldwide debate over this issue be recognized and supported;

-

that the establishment, by UNESCO, of a mechanism that integrates and proposes dialogue on issues related to the Ethics of Science and Technology among our Governments be supported in order to promote the creation of programs for the teaching of ethics in basic, secondary and higher education and teacher training

programs in this area; and the establishment of a network of governmental and non-governmental institutions in this area be supported;

-

that the independent work of COMEST [...] be recognized and that participation in this Commission be improved by the continued inclusion of representatives from all continents;

-

that the recommendations set forth by COMEST [...] be examined, in order to reinforce and to incorporate where necessary this ethical reflection in national and regional policies, in strategies, and in projects;

-

that States, organizations and other institutions interested in promoting and deepening reflection on the ethics of science be encouraged to create national and institutional commissions on scientific ethics;

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that States be urged to implement, within the shortest time possible, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, approved in 1997 at the United Nations General Assembly;

-

and that the *International Declaration on Human Genetic Data*, approved at the 32<sup>nd</sup> UNESCO General Conference, be supported.

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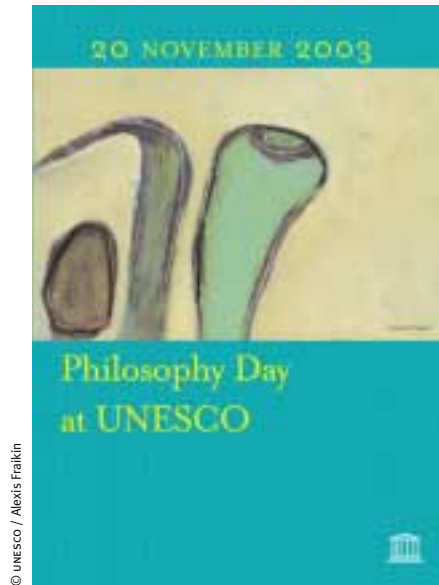
Thus, the Ministers and Higher Authorities of Science and Technology of South America, gathered in Rio de Janeiro, request the Heads of State and Government to confirm the growing importance of the ethical dimension of Science and Technology for the promotion of sustainable and equitable development, supporting the strengthening of cooperation in Science and Technology, above all with respect to their ethical implications, among the countries of South America, under the terms of the present Declaration. [...]

**Signatories of the Declaration:** the Minister of Science and Technology of Brazil; the Secretary of Science and Technology of Argentina; the President of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONCYT) of Paraguay; the Director of the Colombian Institute for Development of Science and Technology (CONCIENCIAS); the President of the National Council of Science and Technology (CONCYTEC) of Peru.

**The Declaration was also endorsed by Ministers of four Portuguese-speaking countries:** Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal. ¶



# Philosophy Day



© UNESCO / Alexis Fraikin

Poster created for the Philosophy Day. Oil painting by Alexis Fraikin.

The second Philosophy Day was held at UNESCO Headquarters on 20 November 2003. The general public reflected on contemporary problems with over 100 philosophers specially invited for the event.

## Taking a walk through UNESCO on Philosophy Day

Small groups of young people were filing into Conference Room II. Some of them appeared intimidated by UNESCO's imposing building, despite Pierre Sané's encouraging words: "Philosophy Day is when everyone can speak freely". Some tried to show self-confidence, quietly suggesting a subject the organizers had not thought of: "Opening speech, speaking openly". Most of them seemed very hesitant but readied themselves to plunge into the unknown.

## ➔ Why a Philosophy Day?

It has been said by many thinkers that the heart of Philosophy is "l'étonnement" – *astonishment*. Indeed, Philosophy is born out of the natural tendency of human beings to wonder about themselves and the world in which they live. As a discipline of "wisdom", it teaches us to think about thinking, to question established "truths", to test assumptions and to search for one's own conclusions. For centuries, in all cultures, Philosophy has given birth to concepts, ideas and analysis, and has stood as the basis for critical, independent and creative thinking.

Philosophy Day at UNESCO is a way for the Organization to celebrate the importance of philosophical reflection, and to encourage people all over the world to share their philosophical heritage with each other. For UNESCO, Philosophy gives the conceptual grounding to the principles and values which govern world peace – democracy, human rights, justice and equality. It contributes to fostering the authentic foundation for peaceful coexistence.

Over seventy countries – twenty-five of them in Africa – celebrated the Day. This was an opportunity for people of all cultures to: reflect on who we are, as individuals and as a world community; to question the state of the world and determine whether it is up to par with our ideals of justice and equality; to ask ourselves if we, as a global society, are living up to the moral and ethical norms established in Declarations. It gave us the occasion to ask questions often forgotten: what do we overlook? What have we become accustomed to? What do we tolerate? ¶

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## Young people getting to grips with philosophy

Narges and Virginie, in their last year at the Lycée Paul Robert des Lilas thought they would probably prefer the round table on *Philosophy and present-day problems* – but only if it was open to everyone and "no microphones and stuff". They huddled in quiet groups at the back of the room although their teachers kept telling them to go up to the front. The topic *Order and disorders* started off in the tone of great philosophical debate and some readily admitted to feeling out of place. However, most appreciated the mix of speakers, what the debate held in store and, of course, the possibility of meeting other young people. Late arrivals drifted in, a few philosophy students and some actual philosophers.

After making it clear this was not an extra philosophy class but a real debate, Marc Patard asked the room: "Will today's disorder be the order of tomorrow? Isn't order merely assimilated disorder?" Silence. Like a teacher, he suggested we "stop being shy: can someone give me an example of what disorder is?" No reaction. "If the teachers could just set an example...". Anne-Sophie, in her last year at the Rennes Lycée Jeanne d'Arc, put an end to the awkwardness with a question on Iraq.

In Room III, *The City and Philosophy*, the atmosphere was muffled, more professional and quieter, more exclusive somehow. From the outset, Etienne Tassin called on Heidegger and concluded with a description of the contemporary model of a "rhizoidal, transitory city, neither civitas, nor urbs, nor polis". The precision of his remarks and his analysis were acknowledged by an obviously well informed audience.

In Room IV, *Art and Aesthetics Today*, any chattering was out of the question: Carole Talon-Hugon philosophized so quietly, it was almost a whisper.



One of the twelve round tables held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.



© UNESCO / Anoline Meyssonnier

## ➔ Philosophy Day in Namibia

The topic “*Philosophy and Africa’s Struggle for Economic Independence*” was the theme of the round table organized in Windhoek to celebrate UNESCO’s Philosophy Day 2003. South African and Namibian philosophers focused on issues such as “Why is philosophy important in our daily lives? Does philosophical reflection serve as a basis for democracy, human rights and a just society? Is there any link between Philosophy and Africa’s Struggle for Economic Independence?” The presentations and discussions allowed the approximately one hundred participants to critically reflect on the causes of many injustices in the southern Africa region and other parts of the world.

Inspired by the celebrations of the 2002 and 2003 Philosophy Days, a Socratic Society has been established in Namibia and the University of Namibia has approached UNESCO about the possibility of creating a UNESCO Philosophy Chair within the framework of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Programme.

This year’s round table was organized by the UNESCO Windhoek Office, together with the Human Rights and Documentation Centre, Faculty of Law (UNAM), and the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights and Democracy. ¶

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Several pupils slipped out of the different Rooms without their teachers’ noticing. Perhaps it hadn’t come up to their expectations. Alice and Carole from the Lycée Paul Robert, were “interested basically, but it’s too dense, too complicated. The idea is great but it’s a bit off-putting”. However, after wandering for a while through the painting exhibitions of Alexis Fraikin and Max Blumberg – praised by everyone – they consulted the programme again and succumbed to the temptation of a new philosophical experience: “Hey, how about this one, it looks good: *Art and Aesthetics*”. “No, not that, let’s try *Body Wakening*, sounds more sexy”. There was general agreement. Maud, in her last year at the Lycée Victor Duruy, although she disliked the lengthy introduction, was enjoying that round table because “it deals with things affect us”. Laura, in her last year at the Lycée Paul Robert explained: “the problem is, we can’t be in more than one place at the same time. This Philosophy Day is a fantastic opportunity for learning new things and actually being with intellectuals and talking to them”. She blushed with pride when she said she’d spoken to Italian philosopher Patricia d’Alessio who was “very nice and straightforward”.

The idea of teaching was never far away: Brigitte Turmel teaches economics and social science at the Lycée Paul Robert. She took part in the *Philosophy and present-day problems* discussion. Apart from taking a personal interest in the debate, she was already planning how to use the analyses of notions of equality and equity in her teaching programme. Constance and Amaury, doing political science at the Lycée Victor Duruy, were busily taking notes not just because it interested them – they were also going to use the notes for their philosophy essays. On Philosophy Day, even teaching could be questioned: when the documentary *Philosophy on the rostrum* was over, Clémence, from the Rennes Lycée Jeanne d’Arc, suggested the subject should be studied a year earlier and there should be “several philosophy teachers so as to get several views”. During the debate, teachers felt they should give their points of view in order to guide their students, whereas according to Clémence: “the role of the philosophy teacher is to open minds”. Magalie wanted the whole image of philosophy to evolve: “I didn’t realize philosophy wasn’t boring. This has made me want to learn more”. And Sarah added with a smile: “Philosophy is just vital!”.



© Tjauri Hiiiko, National Planning Commission, Namibia



### → Discussions to understand (oneself) better

Philosophy Day helped people to look at things differently. One of UNESCO's security guards remarked: "Philosophy Day is a splendid occasion because it turns UNESCO into an open house". He listened at the doors to the Rooms, eagerly catching snatches of debates (but without neglecting his duties at all). Diana and Alexandru, both Romanian doctorate students in contemporary French literature at the School for Higher Education in Social Sciences (EHESS), took part in the *Philosophy and present-day problems* round table. They felt the discussions were very open compared with those of traditional university symposiums: "With this event, philosophy is more like a contest of beliefs using discussions and ideas".

There was meditation and militancy but also recognition. Throughout the Day discussions grew in intensity. The prizewinners of the International Philosophy Olympiads\* raised the level of debate, at times with an air of superiority. But their enthusiasm was infectious. Gabriel Abelof (Argentina, 3<sup>rd</sup> prize) stressed how pleased and proud he was to be there: "It's such an achievement. It would be really difficult to go beyond this". Sergio Barberis (Argentina, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize) thought Philosophy Day very important, particularly because "it brings together people from all countries, young people". Mete Tuzcu (Turkey, 5<sup>th</sup> prize) added: "Here, it's even more interactive than the Olympiads. Everyone has the opportunity to say something. And if you don't, well, just the fact of being here makes you think". And Andrei Poama (Romania, prizewinner of the best essay in French) praised this "great idea". He unhesitatingly inserted it into the history of communication between philosophers: "in Descartes' day, they wrote letters. But now assemblies bring people together and make them realize their reality". As a climax he forcibly advanced the view: "To say that philosophy is dead, is to produce apophthegms out of context: this kind of encounter contradicts such crazy logorrhoea". As though to prove him right, everyone chimed in – in German, English and French, the discussion on *Order and disorders* picked up again among the enthusiastic prizewinners who became the centre of attention.

The *Philosophy Café* – as its organizers Nadia Tiourtite and Arnaud Champremier Trigano readily admitted – was more café than philosophy. Words were pretty strong and views seemed to be totally conflicting. Here was blunt philosophy. Yet the discussion on *The Public Space and Difference*, showed how philosophy – at least as far as religions and politics are concerned – can provide answers to contemporary fears and reduce some prejudices.

\*The Philosophy Olympiads first took place in May 1993, in Bulgaria. In 1995, within the framework of its "Philosophy and Democracy in the World" programme, UNESCO decided to support this initiative. The aim is "to promote the practice of philosophical and

critical thinking, and through student competitions stimulate the interest of young people in philosophy". The Olympiads take place each year and the ninth such event was in May 2003, in Buenos Aires (Argentina).



© J. Bourton

"Whatever we do, it's up to us, in our own way, to beautify our souls and the world, giving a sparkle to everything.

Even in the darkest times we can make a light shine" said Frieda Mouroum, artist who worked on a painting throughout the philosophy day in Paris.

### ➔ Ethics and citizenship

At 12.30 local time (Uruguay) on 21 November 2003, the videoconference entitled "Ethics and Citizenship in the 21st century" started. It lasted two hours with 18 speakers from almost as many countries.

Such was the multicultural approach taken to celebrate the UNESCO Philosophy Day. The Philosophy Association of Uruguay (AFU), the UNESCO Offices in Montevideo and Mexico, the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), the Philosophy Association of Mexico, Paris-VIII University, and the Philosophy Olympiads of Argentina – all worked together to organize the event.

The videoconference, which was coordinated from Mexico (UNAM), opened with Ms Alya Saada of UNESCO's Mexico Office as the first speaker. This was followed by three Argentine participants. Then came three participants in Mexico City, two in Montevideo, and nine in Paris.

After the papers had been delivered, questions were asked and the debate was opened to all those present in the conference rooms and philosophy cafés in the four participating cities.

A videotape of the Day's events is currently being edited. A publication is being prepared of a selection of the papers presented during the 2002 videoconference, co-organized by UNESCO-Montevideo and the Philosophy Association of Uruguay, together with papers from the 2003 event.

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There were many young people present at the philosophy dialogues in Paris.



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### Philosophical compositions

In the philosophy dialogues directed by Roger-Pol Droit towards the end of the Day's events, he said he considered "the foundations of UNESCO to be solidly and utterly philosophical". Paul Audi stated: "the philosopher who thinks totality, displays tremendous impudence. But this madness is tempered by a critical use of reason which allows for self-adjustment". The impact of the philosopher eradicating false problems was, however, almost imperceptible. Nietzsche put it far better: "thoughts move along like doves". Julia Kristeva assigned UNESCO the role of promoting the transversal, bold thinking of those who are at the crossroads of philosophy and the cities. When his turn came, Jean-Godefroy Bidima suggested studying not multiculturalism but 'trans-culturalism'. "We must let ourselves be shaken up and enriched by the other".

Then professional philosophy made way for the word of the artist. Before beginning his two-hour concert, Herbie Hancock calmly stated: "I am not what I do; I do what I am". Dee Dee Bridgewater emphasized "the right, so often ridiculed, of exercising one's freedom of thought and speech". These strong voices laid great emphasis on concepts. Their words became music and the audience was given a different dimension of philosophical composition to appreciate.

The tone swayed to meaning. And the corridors of UNESCO resounded again to the music of Philosophy Day. ¶

Jérôme Bouron



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Philosophers, students, journalists and the general public gathered together for several hours to celebrate the second Philosophy Day in Beijing.

### ➔ Why Educate? Or: How to educate?

The UNESCO Montevideo Office took part in the Fifth National Philosophy Olympiads in Paysandú on 26 September 2003. Though the title of the debate was "Why Educate?" discussions centred on the education crisis in Uruguay and its reform process.

Teachers and students, particularly new teachers, stressed the fact that, from the perspective of UNESCO's programme, education reform in Uruguay was not making progress. They put that down to centralization and "vertical" management which left little room for effective participation and dialogue. ¶

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## Emerging humanisms

What is humanism or humanisms in an era when human beings often have difficulty recognizing themselves in the world they have created? Such was the question posed at the international UNESCO Symposium on “Emerging Humanisms”, held on 9 and 10 December 2003.

The Symposium, which comes under the “Pathways of Thought” programme, was held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Egypt, and was organized in cooperation with ORDEC (Organização para o desenvolvimento da ciência e da cultura, Brazil). Around twenty eminent philosophers and researchers in the social and human sciences represented almost every region of the world. Multidisciplinary round tables discussed global problems linked to humanism and diversity, both at the level of Western and Arab-Islamic philosophical traditions, and post-colonial reflection as at the level of the emergence of transformations brought about by information and globalization. The diversity of the participants’ views was punctuated by consensus every now and then: that identitarian and cultural diversity paradoxically goes through the development process of a whole ensemble of common reference points. In no way was this Symposium trying to erase differences nor define or limit them, even though the philosophical problem of the right of those who refuse the right was the subject of lively debate. ¶

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### The International Social Science Journal (Issue 178 – December 2003)

NGOs in the Governance of Biodiversity  
Editorial adviser for the issue: Marie Roué

Since the traditional ecological knowledge of local and indigenous peoples was written into Agenda 21 and the Convention on Biodiversity, their role in management of their natural resources has achieved international recognition. However, it is as difficult for people far removed from centres of power to be heard in national and international arenas as it is for the arenas themselves to relate to them and to grasp their knowledge. The role of environmental NGOs and some of their power as mediators of local knowledge derive, no doubt, from precisely this paradoxical situation: recognition by national and international bodies of a knowledge that lies beyond their direct reach.

However, mediation in the exchange of traditional knowledge also reveals the tensions and ambiguities in the relation between the interests of biodiversity and of indigenous peoples. When they share a place with NGOs, developers and other interested parties, profoundly different views and practices with respect to nature are deployed. The governance of biodiversity raises difficult and inescapable issues of participation and accountability. This issue sketches some paths for future research by comparing encounters between the indigenous and the ecological that have taken place in a wide range of countries and contexts over the past thirty years. ¶

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### On m’appelle à régner : mondialisation, pouvoirs et rapports de genre,

DDC-UNESCO-IUED, Geneva, 2003, 258 p.

In order to guarantee proper conditions for work opportunities and income, it has become increasingly important to be able to influence the political structures and procedures that create certain economic situations. What are the structures and mechanisms of decision-making? Where do the centres of power lie and have they shifted under the influence of globalization? Given this context, how should the gender issue be integrated and how should we persevere with the struggle for gender equality? On globalization, power and gender relations – the varying views of the authors help shed some light on the complex link between globalization, gender and decision-making in public management. ¶

The publication is accessible online:

[www.iued.unige.ch/information/publications/pub\\_col-preiswerk.html](http://www.iued.unige.ch/information/publications/pub_col-preiswerk.html)

(Published in French)



**Démocratie et gouvernance mondiale –  
quelles régulations pour le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle ?**

Eds. Carlos Milani, Carlos Arturi, Germán Solinís. Khartala-UNESCO, 2003, 303 p.  
ISBN UNESCO: 92-3-203902-8

“Democracy and global governance – what controls are there going to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” This is the first in a series of four publications on the challenges facing contemporary society: urbanization, democratic management in multicultural societies, sustainable development and biodiversity, and globalization of the economy and its effect on society and politics. Since the early 1990s, global democracy issues have been the subject of increasingly intense debate on the part of civil society. Is a global society being forged? Will this mean more democracy? The publication attempts to answer these questions, discussing civil society participation and its efforts to control global governance. ¶

(Published in French)

**Italy, Working Paper N° 5, “City Words”**

MOST-UNESCO-CNRS, 2003, 156 p.

The “City Words” programme was initiated in 1995 by the PIR-Villes, with the support of UNESCO (MOST), the MHS Foundation (Paris), the MMSH (Aix-en-Provence) and the CNRS. The subject of this programme is to study the lexical systems used in various language registers to denominate the city and its territories. It tackles different linguistic areas and takes into account a long period of time. Because of its angle of approach – the city through its words – various disciplines are mobilized: those

which specifically deal with the city, in its multiple dimensions, but also language sciences. *The City Words Working Papers* are conceived as an instrument of reflection and exchange within the framework of this programme.

(Published in English/French/Italian) ¶



**Bioética - compromiso de todos.**

Ediciones Trilce, Montevideo, 2003,  
ISBN 9974-32-346-0

Bioethics – philosophical reflection on the tremendous scientific advances in biology, medicine and the environment; bioethics and a new world where science and new technologies are potentially capable of changing human nature and even life; bioethics and existential reflection on how this new progress has affected human existence and the meaning of life.

The fact that Bioethics is now everyone’s concern was the theme of a Conference held in Montevideo in November 2002 (see *Newsletter* 01). The papers given at the Conference have now been published. ¶

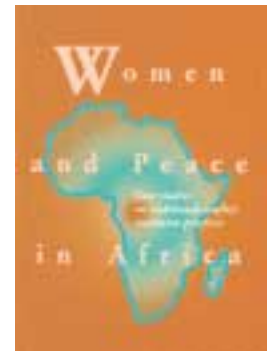
(Published in Spanish)

**“Fetichismo” da Participação Popular –  
Novas práticas de planejamento, gestão e  
governança democrática no Recife, Brasil,**

Suely Leal. Brazil. ISBN 85-903913-1-0

In this book, commissioned by UNESCO’s MOST Programme, the author puts forward arguments in favour of public participation in local government, setting out in detail how to achieve the collective desire for social change, a change that will unite people’s interest in their towns and cities and help to build citizenship and democracy. ¶

(Published in Portuguese)



**Women and Peace in Africa – Case studies  
on traditional conflict resolution practices,**

UNESCO, Paris, 2003.

The case studies confirm the different and essential roles women from Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Namibia, Tanzania and Somalia have played and can play in preventing and resolving conflicts and promoting a culture of peace using traditional methods of conflict resolution and peace building. ¶

## A FIRST FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**The World Forum on Human Rights will take place in Nantes, France, from 16 to 19 May 2004.** For the first time, all the different categories of people working for the promotion and in defence of human rights will be brought together on an equal footing – local authorities, national and international representatives, civil society actors, non-governmental organizations, academics and experts in the human rights and legal fields. This Forum will be a new departure. The aim is to give all participants the opportunity for discussion in order to strengthen the links between research and action in the field of human rights. The Forum's three main subjects for debate are central to today's primary concerns:

- Human Rights and Terrorism
- The fight against all forms of discrimination and exclusion
- Poverty – a violation of Human Rights

### Strengthening the links between research and action

It is clear that different kinds of actors are working for the protection of human rights – national or local authorities and NGOs on the one hand and researchers on the other – but they rarely meet for discussion.

The world of research and the world of action cannot continue to function in parallel, they must find new synergies. All too often, researchers communicate only with other academics and through specialist journals or seminars. If it is difficult for the world of research to open up to the world of action, this is in part because the decision-makers – elected representatives, State representatives, local authorities and NGOs – do not often approach the researchers. This puts everyone at a disadvantage.

The World Forum on Human Rights aims to bridge that gap by bringing these different categories of players together, at the same time and in the same place.



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By strengthening the link between the world of research and the decision-makers, and between theory and practice, the Forum should help strengthen the global movement for human rights. Under the patronage of Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, the Forum is being organized by the City of Nantes in cooperation with UNESCO and the French National Commission and with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Labour Office (ILO). ¶

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### For more information

Participation in the Forum is free, but participants must register beforehand. Registration forms are available on the web.

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[www.forum-humanrights.org](http://www.forum-humanrights.org)  
[www.unesco.org/shs/humanrightsforum](http://www.unesco.org/shs/humanrightsforum)

## MARCH

**7-10 March:** Joint Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Centre for Human Sciences at Byblos and the International Panel on Democracy and Development. Beirut, Lebanon.  
([a.boundytraore@unesco.org](mailto:a.boundytraore@unesco.org))

**10-12 March:** International Conference "Migration & Social and Intercultural Aspects of Sustainable Development" organized by the State University of Management of the Russian Federation under the auspices of UNESCO.  
([e.saliagina@unesco.org](mailto:e.saliagina@unesco.org))

**18 March:** First meeting in the Netherlands within the framework of the rotating conference "Ethics around the World". The Hague, Netherlands.  
([h.tenhave@unesco.org](mailto:h.tenhave@unesco.org))

**20 March:** Celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) at UNESCO House, Paris, France. Activities will be organized around the world by UNESCO Field Offices and National Commissions.  
([21mars@unesco.org](mailto:21mars@unesco.org))

**22 March:** 21st Century Talks: "Should Globalization be Made More Democratic?" Paris, France.  
([j.binde@unesco.org](mailto:j.binde@unesco.org))

## APRIL

**1-3 April:** Fourth Annual Seminar of the Network of Latin American "City Professionals". 9 de Julio, Argentina.  
([g.solinis@unesco.org](mailto:g.solinis@unesco.org))

**26-27 April:** Meeting of the International Jury of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 2004 (private meeting). Paris, France.  
([peace&security@unesco.org](mailto:peace&security@unesco.org))

**27-29 April:** Extraordinary Session of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) entitled: "Towards a Declaration on Universal Norms in Bioethics". Paris, France.  
([s.colombo@unesco.org](mailto:s.colombo@unesco.org))

## MAY

**5-7 May:** The Urban Development Research Programme's (PRUD) International Symposium of Closure: "Governing the Cities of the South: Challenges for Research and Action". Paris, France.  
([g.solinis@unesco.org](mailto:g.solinis@unesco.org))

**14-15 May:** Extraordinary Session of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). Paris, France.  
([h.tenhave@unesco.org](mailto:h.tenhave@unesco.org))

**16-19 May:** World Forum on Human Rights, organized by the City of Nantes on the initiative and with the support of UNESCO, and in cooperation with the French National Commission for UNESCO. Nantes, France.  
([c.allan@unesco.org](mailto:c.allan@unesco.org), [franck.barrau@communaute-urbaine-nantes.fr](mailto:franck.barrau@communaute-urbaine-nantes.fr))

**26-27 May:** International Conference on Human Security, Conflict Prevention and Peace in Africa, organized in cooperation with the African Union and the UNESCO Office in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.  
([peace&security@unesco.org](mailto:peace&security@unesco.org))

## JUNE

**24-25 June:** Third meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics. Paris, France.  
([s.colombo@unesco.org](mailto:s.colombo@unesco.org))