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showing
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picture.

roadmap

the rapprochement of cultures



2013-2022



INTERNATIONAL DECADE
for the RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES
DÉCENNIE INTERNATIONALE
du RAPPROCHEMENT DES CULTURES

particulière
d'un monde
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s'imaginer
l'ici,
représenter
l'ailleurs
et parfois
le tout.

2013
2022
International
decade
for the rapprochement of
cultures

roadmap

**the rapprochement
of cultures**

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Division of Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue

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SHS-2016/WS/02

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introduction

BACKGROUND TO THE DECADE

The International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures was born of the need for new articulations between cultural diversity and universal values. The United Nations General Assembly adopted in December 2012 resolution 67/104, proclaiming the period 2013-2022 as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (IDRC) and which reinforced Member States' commitment to furthering interreligious and intercultural dialogue and the promotion of mutual understanding and cooperation for peace. UNESCO was designated as lead agency for the Decade in the United Nations system. An Action Plan for the Decade was adopted by UNESCO's Executive Board (Decision 194 EX/10) and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in resolution 69/140 in 2014.

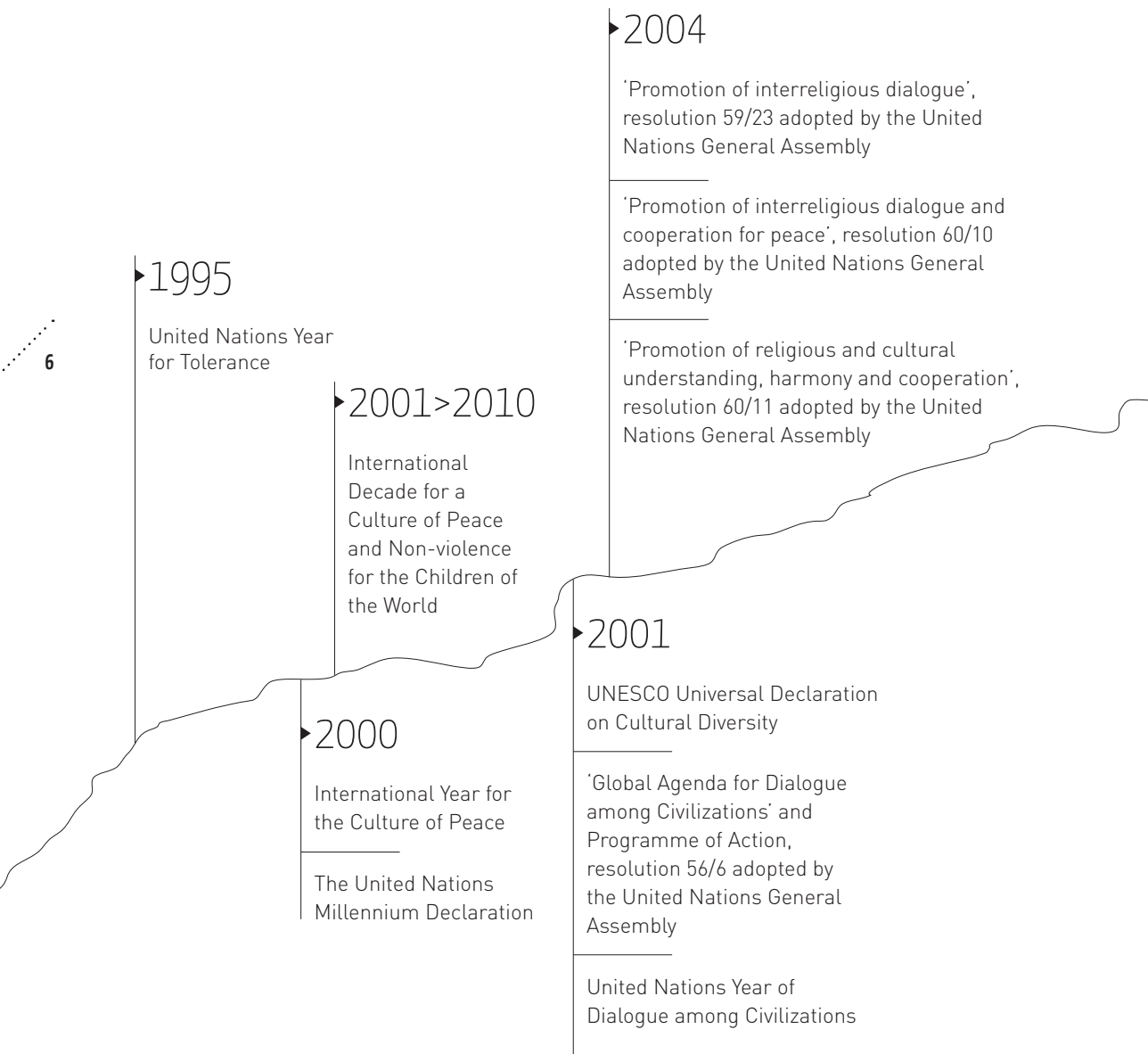
Today, the sheer compression of the world is bringing people and their cultures into the same space with intense speed, rendering new levels and forms of human interaction and interdependence. Population growth and migration are increasing in scale and complexity, and technology and media are bringing people together in ways never before thought possible. As a result, new creative expressions, innovation and immense opportunities have been generated and developed. While these phenomena have brought people together across geographic spaces, it has concurrently exposed a widening moral gap in our societies and the extent to which our societies are ill-equipped to effectively manage and overcome the challenges that continue to arise.

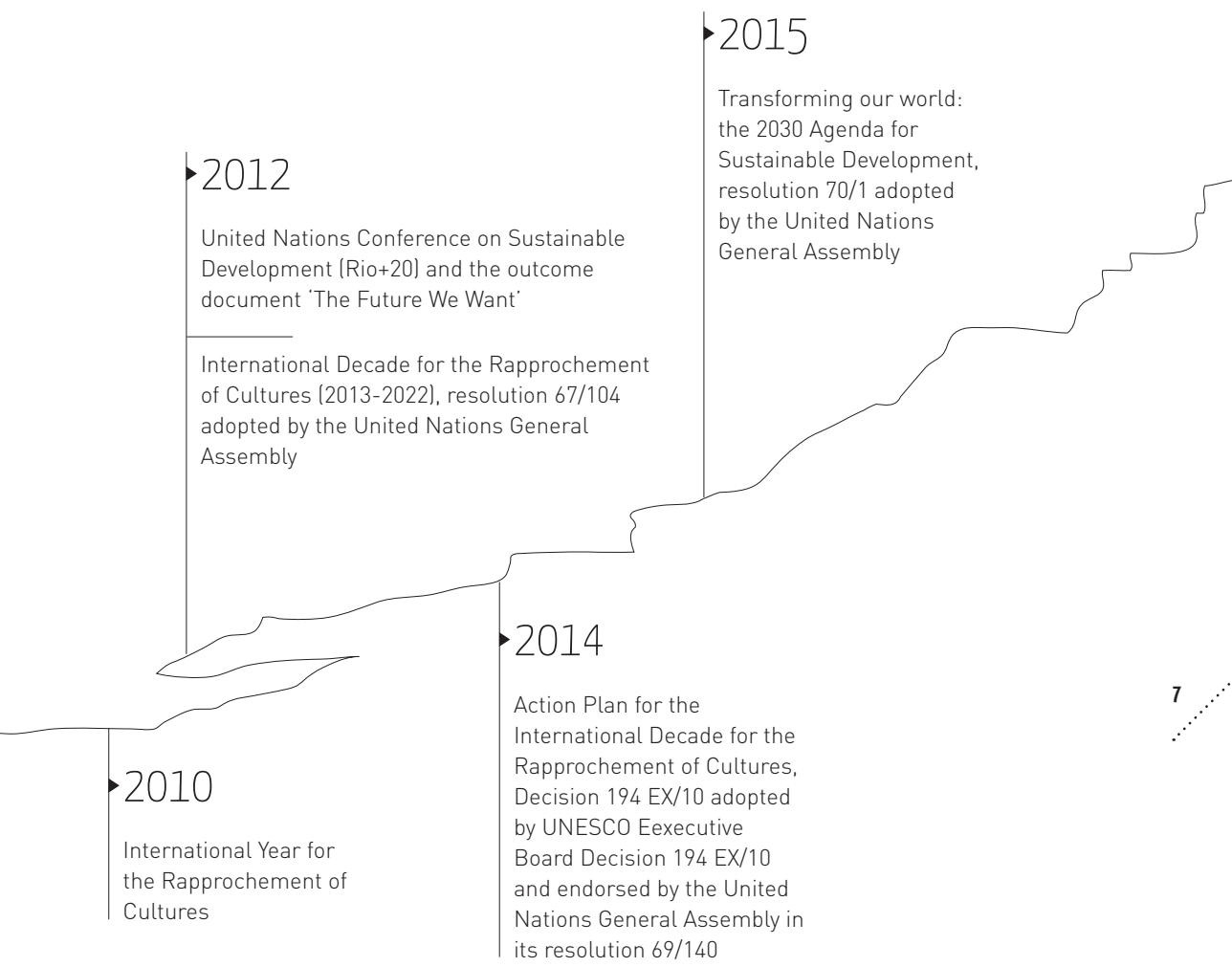
Often in parallel with developmental progress, retrogressive patterns have emerged that present persistent threats to peace-building and social cohesion. Recurrent cycles of deadlock and conflict undermine governance and legislation at international, national and local levels preventing long-term peace and development. The litany of polarization within our societies often defined along the lines of 'identity' – religious, cultural, ethnic, or otherwise – are increasingly manifested in prejudice, intolerance, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, radicalization and extreme violence. The challenges are often

multidimensional and interrelated, and their impacts cross conventional borders, thus revealing a pervading vulnerability at global level and the accompanying need for a global response. From a policy and governance perspective, this has rendered new levels of complexity in addressing challenges. It has also reinforced the need for a more inclusive and participatory notion of development, including integrated approaches that tackle the issues at hand as well as their foundations. The Decade has come into being in an era marked by increased divisiveness, and learning to live together in the 21st century presents a new frontier for managing cultural diversity.

Respect for the inherent dignity of all persons underpins the values of the Decade and is one of the core pillars of the UN system, to ensure that all people have equal rights and opportunities to shape their future. These principles are reflected in the values of many cultures around the world. Intercultural dialogue denotes an open process of exchange and respect between individuals and groups of different cultures, points of view and aspirations. In such a way, the respect for and exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms are not only key inroads to dialogue, but they are integral to its process. Ultimately they are crucial to sustaining the rapprochement of cultures as the central aspiration of the Decade.

MAJOR MILESTONES





TAKING THE DECADE FORWARD

Since the launch of the Decade, deep fissures in social justice and surges of radicalization and violent extremism have escalated to alarming levels. In the current environment marked by frequent and rapid dissension, the necessity for timely intervention and response has also become a priority. The escalation of violence has clearly demonstrated that aspirations to pluralism and tolerance and building a culture of peace in our societies have not proved sufficient, that existing mechanisms must be reviewed, and addressing the deficits in social justice around the world have been at best handled with a reticent hand.

The implementation of the Decade will be guided by a move beyond conceptual deliberations towards concrete and practical strategies. This will be coupled with a broadened engagement and ownership of the Decade to ensure that all women, men, boys and girls can participate in dialogue and have access to the necessary tools and resources to make proactive and responsible choices in shaping their future. Targeted initiatives will also be pursued that widen the geographic scope and engagement in the Decade. Such channels will provide opportunities to address local challenges and priorities, and support specific regional objectives, such as strengthening dialogue frameworks and platforms in Africa. Commitments must be rigorously transformed into clear, active, strategic and widely-shared efforts. Similarly, the successes of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies through tolerance, understanding and human rights principles must be more visible.

Following the adoption of the Action Plan for the IDRC, several activities have served to guide the formulation of the Roadmap. An International Expert Meeting on the IDRC

held at UNESCO Headquarters in March 2015 helped define key conceptual and operational orientations of the Decade and resulted in a series of recommendations. Key documents such as the Report on the Implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, 2013-2022 (197 EX/9) will be used as a lever for fine-tuning and adapting approaches. Similarly, conclusions and recommendations of related meetings and United Nations General Assembly reports and resolutions have served to underline several major trends and challenges.

The recently agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has also given fresh impetus and orientations within the scope of the Decade, as well as contributing to its upstream perspective. Grounded on a universal, integrated and human rights-based approach, the Agenda underscores the importance of managing cultural diversity and achieving a rapprochement of cultures as a prerequisite to creating and sustaining peace. In particular, Sustainable Development Goal 16 on the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies provides for specific targets to reduce violence, strengthen institutions and improve decision-making processes. Since the adoption of the Agenda, the focus has shifted to bridging these pledges to deeds, thus placing high expectations on UNESCO and the larger UN system to scale-up actions to not only achieve these globally-agreed outcomes by 2030, but to do so within a context of constant flux and vulnerability.

roadmap

VISION

The International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) embodies a global vision and commitment to unification in diversity. Achieving a true rapprochement of cultures, must be generated and nourished by a culture of peace and non-violence and sustained through human rights and universal values, such as openness, respect, tolerance, a willingness to engage in dialogue, and the ability to solve conflicts through peaceful means and recognize other's point of view. Achieving peace through dialogue constitutes a necessary foundation for the stability of our societies which, in turn, enables them to thrive.

The Decade envisages:

- **a world** that is free of fear and violence, that respects the fundamental freedoms of all its citizens without distinction, and that provides equitable and universal access to the opportunities that it pledges.
- **an environment** of stronger institutions, structures and mechanisms to promote peace, thus enabling human potential to flourish.
- **societies and communities** where the richness and potential of cultural diversity is better understood and recognized for its vital contribution to improving and shaping development outcomes.
- **individuals** who are equipped with the competences and tools to operate in a diverse and rapidly-changing world, and who are driven by shared human values in living and working together as custodians of the same planet.

strategy

The Roadmap provides a guide for the implementation of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), and works in tandem with its Action Plan¹.

UNESCO and its partners will catalyze their commitment to non-violence, social justice and human rights through actions that are strategic and transformative. These actions will be grounded on a solid knowledge basis and guided by an upstream perspective to ensure that they benefit present and future generations. In turn, the strategy entails promoting the necessary competences and acumen to effectively drive forward the actions.

The strategy aims to promote new ways of understanding and connecting with one another, tackling challenges at their root, broadening the education offer adapted to current realities, and enhancing a broader understanding, contribution and ownership of the Decade. It will empower present and future generations to be better equipped with the necessary knowledge, competences, skills and tools to exchange, communicate and cooperate across cultural, religious and national boundaries as responsible global citizens. These actions will be prioritized in education, arts and heritage initiatives and projects, as well as science and information and communication technologies (ICTs), including the Internet and social media.

The Roadmap benefits from the complementarities and synergies between UNESCO's five programme sectors (education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information) in performing normative and operational work. In line with the global reach and multi-disciplinary nature of the Decade, the strategy deepens engagement with a wide cross-section of stakeholders including United Nations entities, Member States, and academic and civil society actors. It will make full use of the rich expertise of its partners across all regions to ensure that change is felt on the ground where it is needed the most.

The main strategic actions of the Roadmap offer flexibility to adapt to new opportunities and challenges as the Decade progresses. In such a way, it is a rolling strategy that will be updated on a quadrennial basis in alignment with the priorities and programme of activities of the UNESCO Programme and Budget (C/5). The Roadmap outlines expected outcomes that will be achieved in the immediate biennium 2016-2017.

All action lines will be guided by a five-pronged strategy:

Priority Action Areas

1. Mapping
2. Research
3. Capacity-building and knowledge-sharing
4. Advocacy
5. Coordination

¹ See: Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/decade_actionplan.pdf



Mapping

building a solid knowledge
base to inform policy
and future actions

CENTRAL TO MOVING FORWARD WITH THE DECADE IS TO ENSURE THAT ACTIONS ARE ANCHORED ON A SOLID KNOWLEDGE BASIS TO ADVANCE POLICY AND ORIENT PROGRAMMING

While intercultural dialogue is broadly recognized for its instrumental role in peace-building and achieving development objectives, to date rigorous data on intercultural dialogue has remained obscure, creating barriers to informed policy-making, measuring progress and promoting a broader engagement and investment in the Decade.

As a first step, a survey will be distributed to all UNESCO Member States to take stock of the current status of existing tools and methodologies in promoting intercultural competences and cultural literacy at national level. The outcomes will serve to establish baseline data and benchmark progress to date, identify key gaps and challenges, highlight good practices, as well as tap into opportunities for future programming and initiatives. From a policy perspective, the data will help Member States in shaping strategies to better counter and anticipate the challenges they face in managing cultural diversity.

Establishing such evidence-based data will form an integral part of a broader evaluation

framework in trend monitoring, identifying problems, priority-setting and the assessment of programmes and policies. Drawing on this corpus of globally-comparable data, UNESCO will explore the scope of a set of indicators that can be used as a practical tool to measure and evaluate intercultural dialogue. In this regard it will explore different qualitative and quantitative indicators within certain thematic areas, focused on 'dialogue capacity' and 'dialogue options'. More broadly, the proposed index will serve to track global progress in intercultural and interreligious dialogue for the purposes of the Decade and feed into broader development processes and targets.

The Organization will support these actions through knowledge and data collection rolled out across all regions through a series of consultations in conjunction with research partners, UNESCO Field Offices and other stakeholders. These activities aim to gauge regional, national and local nuances in the intercultural dialogue domain, as well as promote resonance in local policy frameworks and actions.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2016-2017)

→ **Intercultural competences mapped at national level amongst Member States**

→ **Feasibility study on the development of an intercultural index launched**



research

broadening AND enriching
the research scope

THROUGH INNOVATIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVES, UNESCO WILL SHARPEN THE CENTRAL QUESTIONS AROUND THE DECADE AND STRENGTHEN THE LINKS BETWEEN RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE IN COOPERATION WITH NEW AND EXISTING PARTNER ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Research informs our past and is an investment in our future. Research can be a pathway to promoting tolerance and establishing common ground across boundaries through deepening awareness and understanding of humanity's diversity. As humanity's greatest source of creativity and innovation, cultural diversity has become a valuable resource in sustainable human development. Recent global trends marked by globalization and competing ideologies have demonstrated the need for a more visible paradigm of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in comparable research. Enhancing research can be a key asset in achieving development outcomes by demonstrating what has been learned, what research is needed, and how it can be better applied to effectively prevent conflict and promote peace and social cohesion. A developed awareness of cultural differences, norms and values is fundamental for establishing a well-founded basis for effective dialogue.

UNESCO will scale-up its research activities, taking advantage of its range of knowledge networks and launching initiatives that emphasize practical solutions. It will utilize its

convening power to bring together research expertise from diverse regions to share their knowledge on cutting-edge issues around the Decade. A research pool will be developed to position UNESCO at the forefront of research on intercultural competences and cultural literacy. Expert meetings will assemble research centres, UNESCO Chairs on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue and other stakeholders to share current research, lessons learned and best practices, which will contribute to publications to advance outreach and knowledge-sharing of the Decade.

Certain research initiatives will focus on target areas of the Decade. While the nexus between peace and security, human rights and sustainable development has been broadly accepted, it has yet to be fully explored in terms of its conceptual evolution and practical application across the UN system. The Organization will work with research partners to examine the progress and challenges of the peace agenda as set forth in the UN Charter. These activities will analyze experiences across the UN system and will serve to shed light on the capacities of international human rights mechanisms in addressing peace.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2016-2017)

→ **Joint publication of outcomes of the research project on the UN Peace Agenda and the Rapprochement of Cultures (UNESCO/Abat Oliba University)**

→ **Publication of proceedings of international expert meetings**



CAPACITY- BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE- SHARING

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UNESCO WILL BUILD ON ITS ROLE AS THE INTELLECTUAL ARM OF THE UN SYSTEM TO PROVIDE A TRUSTED PLATFORM FOR KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION AROUND THE DECADE. AS PART OF THIS OBJECTIVE IT WILL BUILD A GLOBAL ONLINE HUB FOR ENHANCING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES AND CULTURAL LITERACY THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO GLOBAL TRENDS

In the current global landscape, increased social tensions among and within societies have called on the need for greater intercultural competences and cultural literacy. It is vital that citizens are equipped with adequate tools to assess and respond to today's realities in proactive, constructive and holistic ways.

These competences consist of a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills to enable effective interaction and communication, and positive and constructive relationships. They promote an understanding of 'self' through encounters with cultural 'difference'. UNESCO will take an intersectoral approach to utilize its expertise in education, the sciences, culture and communication and information to ensure that intercultural competences are developed and applied at various levels, which will further contribute to establishing the Organization as a global hub in this domain.

The unprecedented growth of communication and information technologies has provided vast opportunities to access and exchange information and to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The media, Internet and new ICTs will be supported as platforms for positive engagement, peace, promoting respect for human rights and dignity, enabling dialogue and mutual understanding, addressing stereotypes, and in exploring effective tools to combat violent extremism.

Similarly, formal and non-formal education settings will be explored to strengthen positive values and help prevent negative ideologies taking root. New educational modules and avenues for capacity-building and knowledge exchange will advance skills development and foster wider engagement. An e-learning platform for intercultural and interreligious dialogue will be developed and made available to a wide range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, educational institutions, civil society and targeted network groups.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2016-2017)

→ **E-learning platform for promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding developed and presented at the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2017**

→ **Good practices collected at policy level and within schools and higher education (ASPNet)**



Advocacy

expanding awareness-raising,
communication and outreach

UNESCO WILL HARNESS NEW ADVOCACY AVENUES TO INCREASE VISIBILITY, MOBILIZE ENGAGEMENT, STIMULATE DIALOGUE, AND BROADEN THE REACH OF THE DECADE'S KEY MESSAGES

Peace, as an approach and an active choice, must be accessible, recognized and owned by a wide range of stakeholders as paramount to the sustainability of our societies. UNESCO will work to engage individuals and communities in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, bringing to light the positive voices and good practices that demonstrate that peace and social cohesion is not only a viable option but has lasting benefits.

Advocacy will be carried out in a range of forums and platforms, from launching a global communications strategy to volunteering. Positive values will be strengthened amongst communities through an inclusive approach that combats divisiveness and brings people into the discussions around the Decade. A broad-based global communication strategy will be developed around the Decade, including launching social media initiatives and spearheading branding, awareness-raising and public engagement through a variety of channels: arts, architecture, heritage, creativity, music, film, etc.

As target beneficiaries and active stakeholders in the Decade, young women and men will be a focus of advocacy activities. UNESCO aims

to enhance their role through generating new initiatives for engagement and promoting their voices in the Decade. A global campaign will be launched to mobilize youth around the world through various initiatives, channels and platforms (i.e. Contests, UNESCO Youth Peace Ambassadors, etc.). , thus UNESCO will work to foster an enabling environment and promote skills development to stimulate youth-led grassroots initiatives, thus contributing to forging a stronger civil society equipped with the opportunities, tools and knowledge to make responsible decisions based on positive values. During the regional consultations undertaken in the Field Offices, a special segment will be dedicated to advancing the youth-orientated campaign, which will further support UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021).

Highlighting positive voices within communities and nurturing their engagement in dialogue will be part of these efforts. UNESCO will explore mechanisms and channels to assist all women and men as empowered citizens to speak out against discrimination, inequalities, racism and violent extremism and prevent negative behaviour from gaining ground within their communities.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2016-2017)

→ **Regional workshops held with stakeholders**

→ **Global campaign for youth engagement in the Decade launched**



coordination

scaling-up coherent and
integrated coordination
of the decade

UNESCO REMAINS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING AN EXTENSIVE WORLDWIDE NETWORK TO UNDERPIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECADE. IN DOING SO IT WILL ENHANCE ITS NETWORKS AT INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS TO PROMOTE A MORE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE DECADE

In its role as the lead agency for the Decade in the UN system, UNESCO will work to forge even stronger synergies across the UN system. It will bring together the breadth of specialized mandates of sister UN entities promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue to share positive practices and approaches to address key challenges and emerging trends, and ensure coherent responses. As part of these efforts, UNESCO will pursue new joint-programming with relevant UN entities. UNESCO will consolidate this work through drafting the annual UN Secretary-General's report to the UN General Assembly on the implementation of the resolutions on 'Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace' and 'Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence'. The foreseen indicator will further strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the Decade.

UNESCO will continue to promote synergies in its intersectoral work across its fields of expertise in education, natural, social and human sciences, culture and communication and information to bolster existing and build new platforms in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. In its role as the lead UN agency for education for sustainable development (ESD), UNESCO will support learners to take informed and responsible decisions for environmental, societal and economic development, and through Global Citizenship Education (GCED). It will work

to empower learners with practical skills and lifelong critical thinking. Through the Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) programme, UNESCO will leverage media, information and technology to encourage positive human values in support of peace. In response to the deliberate attacks on cultural heritage, initiatives such as the #Unite4Heritage campaign will drive forward advocacy efforts in the protection of heritage at risk, which will further reinforce rehabilitation activities on the ground. The new integrated Framework of Action – Empowering Youth to Build Peace will join together the powers of media, culture and education in countering radicalization and violent extremism amongst young people. UNESCO will also seek to develop dialogue initiatives to facilitate rapprochement and cooperation around shared common historic, cultural and educational interests and values, such as the Euro-Arab Dialogue.

New initiatives in the implementation of the Action Plan for the IDRC will be developed across all regions and sub-regions. In this work, UNESCO's Field Offices will pilot several projects in cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO, UNESCO Chairs and relevant organizations in their respective contexts. UNESCO will also work together with relevant stakeholders in developing regional flagship initiatives focused on key issues in interreligious and intercultural dialogue that are applicable to local concerns and priorities and/or specific groups.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2016-2017)

→ UN General Assembly reports on related resolutions (2016 and 2017)

→ Annual UN interagency coordination meetings on the Decade

partnerships AND resources mobilization

Partnerships have been instrumental in ensuring the core actions of the Decade. As the Decade progresses, UNESCO aims to strengthen these fruitful alliances and broker new partnerships and resource mobilization to broaden commitment and engagement in the Decade.

UNESCO will therefore continue to explore bilateral cooperation options with Member States, so as to encourage more direct engagement in the Decade and ensure dissemination of results achieved on the ground. In parallel, ongoing strategic frameworks for cooperation will be strengthened, such as the Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the 'Baku Process' and its World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, as driven forward by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions promoted by the Republic of Kazakhstan will remain among the focus and key feature of UNESCO's work in this domain.

The Decade will also further benefit from collaboration established by UNESCO with

partners institutions, intergovernmental and international organizations and foundations such as the United Nations Alliance on Civilizations (UNAOC), the Council of Europe (CoE), the African Union (AU), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Nations, the International Organisation Internationale of La Francophonie (OIF), the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEIE), the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), the National Commissions for UNESCO, namely through the Euro-Arab Dialogue Initiative, the Al Mesbar Studies and Research Center, UNESCO Chairs and Centres, and civil society organizations such as NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO.

Funds mobilization will also be engaged for targeted initiatives envisaged under this Roadmap, with a view to ensuring maximum

impact at the local, national and regional levels, and to accelerate progress, as well as a widerfor thebroaden dissemination and enhance visibility.

Achieving the full realization of the goals of the Decade is contingent on the commitment and engagement of a wide range of stakeholders across all sectors and at different levels of

governance, and the provision of resources that are commensurate to the task. Faced with the pertinent challenges of an ever-increasing diverse and multi-cultural world, the Decade serves as a crucial opportunity for the international community to come together in a joint effort to meet the key achievements foreseen.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

→ **2 new partnerships established to provide support across main action lines**

→ **2 new collaboration packages secured for targeted initiatives of the Roadmap**

ANNEX

Decision adopted by the Executive Board on April 2014

194 EX/10, ACTION PLAN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES (2013-2022)

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The Executive Board,

1. Recalling UNESCO's General Conference Resolutions 34 C/Resolution 46, 35 C/Resolution 47, 36 C/Resolution 40, 37 C/Resolution 1 (II) and the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 62/90, 63/22, 66/226, 67/104 and 68/126;
2. Having examined document 194 EX/10 and its annexes;
3. Reaffirming the imperative need to consolidate and intensify dialogue among cultures in order to create, at the national, regional and global levels an environment conducive to respect for cultural diversity, human rights and mutual understanding, in line with the principles inscribed at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO;
4. Further recalling UNESCO's long and rich experience in developing and increasing the links between peoples, cultures and civilizations in order to build peace in the minds of men and women;
5. Expresses its appreciation for the draft Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) presented by the Director-General, after consultation with Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other relevant partners in official relations with UNESCO;
6. Approves the draft Action Plan elaborated by the Director-General and invites her to finalize it in the light of the comments made by the Executive Board;

7. Welcomes the creation of a Special Account for the Decade and urges the Director-General to pursue her efforts to build awareness among all partners and to mobilize extrabudgetary funding in order to attain the goals of the International Decade;
8. Invites all Member States and relevant organizations and institutions, when developing their own agenda, to draw on this Action Plan and its principles, with a view to furthering their commitment to intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;
9. Requests the Director-General to present a report on the implementation of this Decade at its 197th session.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 17 DECEMBER 2012

67/104.

Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,² in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

Recalling its resolution 66/226 of 23 December 2011 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and its other related resolutions,

Recalling also its resolution 64/14 of 10 November 2009, on the Alliance of Civilizations, in which it welcomed efforts to promote greater understanding and respect among people from different civilizations, cultures and religions,

Bearing in mind the valuable contribution that interreligious and intercultural dialogue can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Noting that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, tolerance and respect, as well as to the promotion of a culture of peace and an improvement of overall relations

among people from different cultural and religious backgrounds and among nations,

Recognizing that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

Bearing in mind that tolerance of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversities contributes towards peace, mutual understanding and friendship among people of different cultures and nations and that these diversities should be made part of intercultural and interreligious dialogue efforts, as appropriate,

Emphasizing the importance of culture for development and its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and in this regard noting the close links between cultural diversity, dialogue and development,

Noting the various initiatives at the local, national, regional and international levels for enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

Welcoming the inauguration of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue

² Resolution 217 A (III).

in Vienna, initiated by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, established on the basis of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and acknowledging the important role that the Centre is expected to play as a platform for the enhancement of interreligious and intercultural dialogue,

Acknowledging the tenth anniversary of the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity,³ and welcoming the commemoration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010 and the adoption by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-sixth session of resolution 40, entitled "Proclamation of an international decade for the rapprochement of cultures (2013–2022)",⁴

Encouraging activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect in diverse communities and to create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

Recognizing the contributions of the media and of new information and communications technology to changing peoples' perceptions of different cultures and religions, including through the promotion of dialogue,

Reaffirming the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders, including young men and women as relevant actors, in interreligious and intercultural dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at various levels

3 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October–3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum: *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

4 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-sixth Session, Paris, 25 October–10 November 2011*, vol. 1 and corrigenda: *Resolutions*, chap. V.

which aims to challenge preconceived ideas and improve mutual understanding,

Recognizing the commitment of all religions to peace and the need for voices of moderation from all religions and beliefs to work together in order to build a more secure and peaceful world,

1. *Reaffirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious and intercultural dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;
2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on intercultural and interreligious dialogue;⁵
3. *Notes* the continuing work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and its efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, as well as activities related to a culture of peace, and welcomes in particular the adoption of its new programme of action for a culture of peace and non-violence and its focus on concrete actions at the global, regional and subregional levels;
4. *Takes note* of the positive outcomes of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010, which contributed towards an environment conducive to harmonious coexistence and congenial interaction within and among diversified societies;
5. *Proclaims* the period 2013–2022 the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, calls upon Member States to utilize this opportunity to enhance their activities relating to interreligious and intercultural dialogue, promoting tolerance and mutual

5 A/67/283.

understanding, and invites the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in this context to be the lead agency in the United Nations system;

6. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for and observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;
7. *Welcomes* the outcome of the Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting Interfaith Dialogue, on harnessing the benefits and addressing the challenges of migration through interfaith and intercultural dialogue, held in the Philippines on 13 and 14 October 2011;
8. *Underlines* the importance of moderation as a value within societies for countering extremism in all its aspects and for further contributing to the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation;
9. *Welcomes* the efforts by the media to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, encourages the further promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but that these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;
10. *Also welcomes* the efforts to use information and communications technology, including the Internet, to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and in this regard acknowledges with appreciation the establishment by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries of the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal pursuant to commitments made during the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, held in Manila from 16 to 18 March 2010, and encourages relevant stakeholders to utilize the opportunity to disseminate their best practices and experiences on interreligious and intercultural dialogue by contributing to the Interfaith Dialogue e-Portal;
11. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held in New York on 4 and 5 October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions;
12. *Recognizes* the importance of interreligious dialogue and its valuable contribution to promoting social cohesion, peace and development, and calls upon Member States to consider, as appropriate and where applicable, interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals;
13. *Also recognizes* the efforts by relevant stakeholders to foster peaceful and harmonious coexistence within societies

by promoting respect for religious and cultural diversity, including by engendering sustained and robust interaction among various segments of society;

14. *Acknowledges* the active engagement of the United Nations system with faith-based organizations in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in bringing together people of different faiths to discuss common issues and objectives;

15. *Also acknowledges* the important role of civil society, including academia, in fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and encourages support for practical measures that mobilize civil society, including building capacities, opportunities and frameworks for cooperation;

16. *Invites* Member States to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure durable peace and sustained development, including through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals;

17. *Recognizes* that the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat plays a valuable role as focal point within the Secretariat on the issue, and encourages it to continue to interact and coordinate with the relevant entities of the United Nations system and coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process aimed at promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*58th plenary meeting
17 December 2012*

5-tier strategy



MAPPING

State-of-the-art mapping of the latest research and practice in intercultural dialogue to advance policy and inform future action



RESEARCH

Innovative research implemented in partnership with academic institutions, sharpening central questions around the Decade



CAPACITY-BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

A global online hub created, promoting skills development that responds to global trends



ADVOCACY

Awareness-raising and communication harnessed to mobilize engagement, stimulate dialogue and expand outreach



COORDINATION

A worldwide network developed to implement the Decade and promote more inclusive participation



INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE SECTION

Division of Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue
Social and Human Sciences Sector
UNESCO

Contact us: idrc@unesco.org

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