



**First meeting of the Advisory Committee of Experts (category VI) for the World
Report on Cultural Diversity**

UNESCO Headquarters, 25-26 September 2006

Report

I. BACKGROUND

At its 160th session (2001), the Executive Board, having examined document 106 EX/45 containing a series of recommendations on a new strategy for preparing the world reports, decided that an intersectoral world report would in future be prepared every two years by the UNESCO Secretariat and would no longer be a collection of articles or individual contributions from authors, as had been the case for the sectoral reports prepared by the Organization in the 1990s, but rather a single text illustrating the Organization's institutional position. Certain authors' texts might however be included in it as boxed inserts or as annexes. Following the publication in November 2005 of the first of those intersectoral reports, *Towards Knowledge Societies*, and in the light of the experience gained, the Director-General decided to introduce new arrangements for the preparation of the UNESCO World Report on Cultural Diversity (Blue Note of 20 May 2006), including the creation of an intersectoral World Reports Unit, assigned for the 2006-2007 biennium to the Assistant Director-General for Culture (CLT/ADG).

To assist in the work of the World Reports Unit and the intersectoral working group it heads, the Director-General set up an Advisory Committee of 15 experts (category VI) representing a wide range of disciplinary approaches and serving in their personal capacity.

II. INTRODUCTION

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee of Experts took place at the Organization's Headquarters in Paris on 25 and 26 September 2006. 10 experts participated in the meeting:

- Mr Neville Alexander, Director of PRAESA (South Africa) and Member of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN)
- Ms Lourdes Arizpe, Professor of Anthropology at the Autonomous National University of Mexico (Mexico)
- Ms Lina Attel, Director of the Queen Noor Foundation Center for Performing Arts, Amman (Jordan)
- Ms Biserka Cvjeticanin, Former Minister (Croatia), Director of the CULTURLINK network
- Mr Philippe Descola, Professor at the Collège de France
- Ms Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Visiting Professor at the New School University (New York) and former Director of the UNDP Human Development Reports
- Mr Jean-Pierre Guingané, Vice-President of the International Theatre Institute
- Mr Luis Enrique Lopez, Principal Adviser to the Intercultural Bilingual Teacher Training Programme in Bolivia
- Mr Tony Pigott, CEO of J. Walter Thompson Advertising Canada
- Ms Benigna Zimba, Head of the Department of History at the Université Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, Mozambique.

Focal points had been designated by the programme sectors to attend this meeting. Five experts sent apologies. As far as possible, their points of view have been represented on the basis of the notes or articles sent by them to the Secretariat, which were distributed to all the members of the Advisory Committee of Experts (contributions by Mr Arjun Appadurai and Mr Tyler Cowen).

The Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, opened the meeting of the Advisory Committee of Experts, accompanied by Mrs Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture, who represented him throughout the two days of discussion. Addressing the experts, Mr Matsuura outlined the framework and objectives of the meeting. Underlining that, since the 1950s, "UNESCO has drawn up no fewer than seven international conventions with a view to preserving the many aspects of cultural diversity, viewed from the perspective of both heritage and contemporary creativity", Mr Matsuura stressed the importance, in the context of globalization, of the topic chosen for the second report, which was a new illustration of UNESCO's mandate for promoting "the fruitful diversity of cultures" and facilitating "the free flow of ideas by word and image" (UNESCO Constitution, Article 1). On the basis of analyses and exchanges of good practices, each report, accompanied by practical recommendations, should contribute to the formulation of new policies adapted to real needs and responsive to ethical, cultural and educational imperatives, including that of sustainable development. Mr Matsuura also considered that the cross-cutting nature of the report should be given prominence: "Issues pertaining to culture in its strict sense must be reflected in the broader context of issues relating to education, science and communication". Inviting the experts to adopt an ambitious approach by exploring the uncharted territory of cultural diversity, he concluded by saying: "we are relying on you, in your respective areas of expertise, in your professional communities and in your regions, to draw on all the intellectual resources and sources of guidance to which you have access".

The Assistant Director-General for Culture (ADG/CLT) informed the experts that, for the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, Mrs Lourdes Arizpe agreed to take the Chair and Mrs Sakiko Fukuda-Parr to act as Rapporteur – proposals that met with the Committee's approval. She then introduced the agenda of the meeting, which was organized around four clusters of issues:

- Possible approaches to cultural diversity: How is cultural diversity expressed? How is it perceived? How can it be inventoried? By what indicators?
- The new challenges of cultural diversity: in the light of recent phenomena, whether they carry challenges, threats or new opportunities, what responses are needed and at what level (public policy, civil society)?
- A multiplicity of forms of cultural diversity that do not all have the same value: can there be a "true" and a "false" diversity? A "good" and a "bad" diversity? How do pluralism and intercultural dialogue contribute to the emergence of new forms of diversity? How do cultures communicate with one another? What were the agents and main vectors of cultural transfers and exchanges?
- A diversity under threat or constantly changing? Is it possible to map out the new forms of cultural diversity towards which we are heading?

Following a preliminary exchange of views that concluded the opening meeting, it was agreed that the Committee should nevertheless remain free to pursue a different line of discussion from that initially recommended, namely the impact of globalisation on cultural diversity and new forms of cultural diversity.

III. SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

III. 1. The notion of "cultural diversity"

The question of the wide variety of approaches to cultural diversity was central to the discussions. The regional and thematic contributions assembled by the UNESCO Secretariat in the first half of 2006 showed the concept to be perceived differently in the various regions of the world. A number of speakers underlined that cultural diversity did not exist in itself but was a construction. The notion of cultural diversity was said to reflect a relatively recent conception, dating from the end of the 19th century, based on a distinction specific to Western thought: the opposition between nature, conceived as obeying immutable laws, and cultures, seen as contingent. Such a distinction could well appear somewhat problematic in other parts of the globe. Did not the notion of "cultural diversity" carry with it the risk of consecrating not only a term but also a particular vision of the world, or cosmology, which was not self-evidently applicable to the cultures of the world as a whole? Greater visibility should therefore be given to alternative visions, such as those illustrated in the cosmologies specific to certain indigenous communities, very

often sidelined. If it was agreed, as one expert proposed, that culture could be likened to a jar that was not visible to the fish living inside it, then the challenge of intercultural dialogue was not simply about getting the fish in the same jar to converse. It must encompass the dialogue between fish in different jars or, indeed, a multidimensional dialogue that included fish that did not belong to any well-defined jar, or even those belonging to several jars at once.

The discussion also focused on the question of cultural identities. We all had multiple identities. Yet everyone was classified in terms of reductive criteria, most frequently those of geographical or ethnic origin ("African", "Asian", "Latino", etc). Such categories were artificial, but they influenced our way of seeing reality. Even the notion of a "dialogue between cultures" and, even more so, a "dialogue of civilisations" reproduced those artificial divisions. Similarly, on the global markets favouring the free flow of ideas by word and image, cultures were too often viewed from the outside (as in the case of tourist guidebooks), which created or reproduced stereotypes. In that way, prejudices were created with the best will in the world, when it would be preferable to place the accent on the role that should be assigned to "intermediaries" originating in the cultures concerned.

Why did we create categories? One of the reasons suggested by the experts was that our ideas about cultures were shaped by a national approach. States engendered the conviction that there existed a national culture that had to be defended, whereas minority cultures were often ignored, not to say marginalised. National cultures were seen as having attained a point of equilibrium that had to be preserved. The flaw in that conception was its failure to take account of the dynamic character of cultural diversity.

The speakers emphasized the need to deconstruct the categories by which we apprehended cultural diversity and adopt a dynamic approach to culture. That implied orienting our values and joint projects towards the future, rather than looking backwards towards a past heritage and authenticity to be defended at any cost. It also meant overcoming the opposition between nature and culture by extending the notion of "culture" to all "living beings" on our planet. One of the key messages of the Report would be to stress, transcending differences and "labels", the cultural unity of human beings.

III. 2. Culture and globalization

Globalization was often accused of having a pernicious effect on cultural diversity. However, that commonplace view had not been scrutinized scientifically. There was a need to examine in depth the latest trends in globalization. An exchange of views threw up a large number of question marks. Was cultural diversity in the process of changing and why? Was it strengthened or weakened by globalisation? What were the effects of the Internet on cultural diversity? Did globalization give rise to new "transnational" forms of culture (such as youth culture)?

III. 3. The different ways in which culture was instrumentalized

The experts also stressed the way in which culture was increasingly instrumentalized, whether by politics (nationalism) or by the market (standardization of cultural contents).

The good or bad use of culture for political ends could be one of the main threads of the World Report. The point was to understand what helped to make cultural diversity a source of conflict and misunderstanding between peoples. Particular attention should be paid to religions. The media stressed the negative aspects of cultural diversity. When speaking of the Arab world, for instance, they tended to focus more on the extremists than on the proponents of a moderate Islam? How could we overcome our prejudices concerning other people? A past inheritance of power relations based on the will to dominate was also at the origin of such prejudices. While the administrative structures of colonial power had disappeared, what some experts called the "decolonization of minds" had yet to be achieved. For a former colony, decolonization did not simply mean dismantling colonial habits and ways of life but also dialoguing with one's colonial past and restructuring the thought that derived from it. The World Report should take stock of all those issues, which were profoundly reshaping the relations between Western and non-Western cultures.

Similarly, an "inclusive" approach to cultural diversity, encompassing new phenomena such as fashions or eating habits, the different "trends" analysed by market studies, might be helpful in exploring the question of the standardisation of cultural contents and the stereotypes that invariably accompanied it.

Another point of discussion concerned the existence of "good" and "bad" forms of cultural diversity. While underlining the importance in the cultural field of being able to adopt the standpoint of those immediately affected and of avoiding a priori judgements, the experts were unanimous in believing that culture could have negative effects and highlighted a number of criteria that should prevail in all circumstances, whatever the cultural practices in question: human rights, respect for democracy, transparency, equity and sustainability. Human rights, in the broadest acceptable sense, were the basic foundation. No cultural expression that was in explicit contradiction with human rights could be defended. The Report should indeed go further and pose the question of the strategies that might be employed to reorient certain cultural practices towards greater respect for human rights (formal education, art education, etc).

The World Report could therefore focus on the following issue? Could culture help people, in their diversity, to live in greater harmony? Was it possible to clarify in what circumstances it could become a factor of rapprochement, with a view to creating a "new sense of togetherness" among the world's inhabitants?

III. 4. The need for new indicators of cultural diversity

The participants also considered the question of cultural indicators. It was necessary in the first place to define the fields that one wished to measure (for example, what new forms of cultural diversity?). Several experts referred to the difficulty they had

experienced previously in measuring cultural diversity. The indicators were not only inadequate but even led to results that were meaningless. One solution might be to employ "negative indicators" (absence of freedom of expression, museums, libraries, etc), which could be equally meaningful.

III. 5. The obstacles to mutual exchanges and intercultural dialogue

The discussion helped to identify a number of barriers to an understanding of cultures. How were those cultural barriers to be identified? It was also necessary to look closely at people's wants. How did those living in a country feel about the protection of cultures? In the language field, for example, the position taken by international organizations often had to contend with various forms of opposition, since individuals reasoned in terms of their own interests. Learning an endangered language was sometimes seen as pointless "I don't want to save my language. I want to speak English". Was it possible to arrive at a consensus on the question?

IV. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

IV. 1. Conclusions of the meeting

ADG/CLT expressed UNESCO's gratitude to the experts who have responded so promptly to the Director-General's invitation and for helping to throw light on the different approaches open to the Secretariat in the preparation of the World Report.

Several key points had emerged from the discussion, which had highlighted a number of topics that could be explored in greater depth to renew the approach to the subject:

- placing greater value on indigenous and autochthonous knowledge
- the question of intellectual rights (particularly indigenous and autochthonous)
- the use of minority languages in cyberspace
- education for cultural diversity (teaching of anthropology in school)
- the use of cultural diversity to improve the political integration of women.

The Committee had however underlined the importance of not falling back on the kind of categories and recommendations traditionally found in international reports. It had therefore considered it too early to define a structure or table of contents for the Report, before reaching agreement on an innovative conceptual framework.

IV. 2. Follow-up to the work of the Advisory Committee of Experts

The World Reports Unit will be responsible for preparing the report of the meeting and drawing the appropriate conclusions on the next stage in the preparation of the World Report on Cultural Diversity.

A provisional version of the conceptual framework, prepared by the Secretariat, is annexed to the present report.

The follow-up work will proceed along two main lines: on the one hand, the preparation of a renewed conceptual framework that will throw light on the question of cultural diversity in all its complexity; and, on the other hand, a continued effort to identify new subjects of enquiry as well as the specialists working in those areas, who will need to be questioned in line with the conceptual framework adopted. A number of personalities could be invited to contribute to this phase of the work.

The Committee could propose the names of specialists they considered most qualified to deal with a particular issue. Apart from the experts who would be involved in establishing the conceptual framework, other specialists could be invited to contribute a baseline study on a given topic or to propose new perspectives in areas that were too little explored.

The World Report Internet site would enable members of the Committee to keep abreast of the work in progress. The Advisory Committee's next meeting was scheduled for the first quarter of 2007.

Annex

Provisional conceptual framework for the World Report on Cultural Diversity

N.B. This provisional conceptual framework is destined to evolve and, likely enough, become more concrete as the issues addressed by the report are clarified and make it possible to deduce *ad hoc* theoretical strategies with a view to untangling their complexity. As stated in the report of the Committee of Experts (IV. 2.), this conceptual framework is intended to serve as the basis for identifying a main theme, which will take account of the suggestions made to the World Reports Unit by colleagues in the intersectoral group.

A. Towards a renewal of perspectives and approaches

We are today witnessing a redefinition of the problems that underlie the interest of the international community in cultural diversity. If the World Report is to bring an innovative viewpoint to the subject, it must take account of the recent contributions of research, not only in anthropology but in the social and human sciences in general, and must draw on them in order to renew the familiar perspectives.

1. What the standard works on cultural diversity do not permit us to think

Until now, it is as if we had taken as our starting point, while continuing to subscribe to the concept of a universal ethic enabling us to avoid the snares of relativism (*Our Creative Diversity*, 1994), the idea that cultural diversity was good in itself and must be preserved as representing the diversity of the world's cultures. Here an important distinction needs to be made, which the World Report should try to take up. For, as emphasized by Claude Lévi-Strauss, what needs to be preserved is not a given state of cultural diversity but rather the *fact* of cultural diversity. This means that the report should resist the tendency to construe everything as "heritage", which can encourage cultures to retreat behind supposedly authentic practices that are never more than the present state of a process of historical evolution rooted in exchanges, cultural transfers, cross-fertilisation, progress, rediscovery or rebirth, which can give rise to "new forms" of diversity.

In view of the coexistence of cultural identities (some majority, others minority) all claiming recognition, some have gone further by placing the accent on cultural freedom (UNDP, 2004) on the grounds that it contributes to human development and that recognition of the rights it embodies reinforces the sense of communal belonging inherent in every collectivity. The remarkable emergence of the local scale as the appropriate level for the supply of collective services (World Bank, 2006) is moreover the mirror image of the globalization process, which cannot be properly understood without taking into account the central role of the media and of communication networks. However, the World Report should underscore that it is only when the coexistence of separate

communities is more productive of mutual interest than it is of incomprehension (caricature of the other), confrontation (radicalization of intercommunal tensions) or stigmatization (persecution of a minority by the majority or of the majority by a minority) that cultural freedom, and the multicultural citizenship that is its corollary, opens up a shared prospect of living together.

2. How politicization of the cultural stakes can lead to simplifications, not to say reductive rejections, which cause us to overlook their complexity

Too often, political pronouncements on cultural diversity serve to perpetuate the irreconcilable nature of divisions, which are exaggerated when they are not pure fabrications motivated by realpolitik. In the post-colonial context, the world has seen a proliferation of nation-states whose time, contrary to the predictions current in the 1990s on the advent of post-national states, is far from being over. Competition between nation-states often serves to justify the instrumentalization of diversity or cultural particularities for political ends, whether because they appear as the *raison d'être* of an independence struggle, whether because in the name of national unity their preservation in a given state serves to legitimate a policy of assimilation or whether because the desire for them to be recognised internationally justifies the adoption of a new exchange regulation designed to promote a more equitable form of sharing. The difficulties of the international community in recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples are an eloquent illustration of the point. In this regard, politics often leads to short cuts and simplifications that can prove dangerous, as the recent history of genocides and other forms of ethnic cleansing have shown. Is it not the denial of the historical flexibility of cultures and ignorance of the fact that they are the product of complex processes of negotiation and interaction that are responsible for the return to centre stage of the old colonial idea of civilization in its most unacceptable form, namely the proposition that civilizations (as a plural concept) are in confrontation, a view that everyone seeks to refute despite the fact that it is enshrined in institutional language at the highest level (“dialogue of civilizations”)?

Now would seem the moment to adopt a new standpoint by rediscovering the ties that unite us in diversity and showing ourselves more attentive to cultures relegated to the margins.

Such a “post-national” perspective would have obvious benefits since it would enable us to understand a number of recent phenomena such as mass migrations or cross-frontier cultures. In this connection, it is also remarkable that the politicization of culture is taking new forms with the rise of transnational groups seeking recognition, whether it be indigenous groups coming together not only at the level of continents but at the international level, youth movements, the gay sub-culture and so on.

Finally, in view of the tragic disappearance of languages and knowledge systems in the name of policies of assimilation, is there not a need to reaffirm very clearly that diversity must be preserved as much intra-nationally as inter-nationally, as part of the diversity of national cultures?

3. Fashioning a “Copernican revolution” in the conceptual framework of cultural diversity

The latest research in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology (Descola, 2005), has shown that the dominant conceptualization of cultural diversity in fact perpetuates a vision of the world (a “cosmology”) specific to the Western world, based on an opposition between nature, conceived as obeying immutable laws, and cultures, seen as contingent.. But is this not precisely in contradiction with the aim pursued, since the other points of view – the very ones that are supposed to be protected – are far from being recognized as having equal dignity or derive little benefit from the exercise.

It would seem that the time has come to elevate our understanding of cultural diversity to a higher level of complexity.

For not only is cultural diversity not reducible to the diversity of multicoloured fish in the same aquarium, since we do not all look at the world in the same way, but the analogy with a multiplicity of aquariums (or visions of the world) is problematic, however dynamic it may be if we entertain the possibility of certain fish leaping from one aquarium to another (interculturality), or even belonging to two aquariums at the same time (transculturality). It suggests, in fact, that there exist immutable entities such as “worldview X” or “worldview Y”, together with pre-eminent *representatives* of those views, whereas an aquarium is always transparent, therefore invisible, and there are no more clearly identifiable aquariums or worldviews than there are, at the global level, civilizations that we would wish to see engaged in dialogue. If it cannot be said that individuals belong to dominant cosmologies, perhaps they should be seen as shaped, as individuals, by multiple influences, more or less diverse, that they encounter or that they seek out. This highlights the importance of context for understanding the issues involved in cultural diversity, which appear very different when viewed from an urban and from a rural perspective. To comprehend cultural diversity, we need then to add a dynamic dimension to our understanding of difference.

Is it possible to arrive at an international consensus on this approach, which would enable us to rethink a question as difficult, for example, as the relationship between cultural diversity and biodiversity? What consequences could that have for our understanding of the universal? Is this not a means of taking on board the perspective of indigenous communities, not by making them the subject of a separate study and marginalizing them in the process, but rather by underlining the benefits of building more bridges between discrete knowledge systems, in this case between so-called “local” knowledge and supposedly “scientific” knowledge?

Moreover, the attempt to bring about greater recognition of the dynamics of cultural change would surely be to renew the traditional definition of culture as heritage, as attached to the past, to inheritances, to cultural capital, by orienting culture towards the future and linking it to the capacity of human societies to plan, imagine, foresee, have projects or desires (A. Appadurai). In a globalized world where central and peripheral modes of life are juxtaposed, the following questions would also need to be answered:

What is a disappearing cultural practice? How does a new state of cultural diversity come into being or take shape? How does it happen that cultural diversity exists? What is the boundary of a cultural viewpoint?

Finally, once we choose to accord equal respect to all cultures so long as they are not in contradiction with human rights, the question of the cultural interpretation of those human rights no longer arises if we refrain from giving precedence to one cultural interpretation over another. And is it not the case that restoring respect for formerly colonized cultures comes down to trying to reforge the broken link between tradition and modernity in those societies that, while they may be decolonized, have not all made the transition towards the “decolonization of minds”, fascinated as they too often are by the prospect of going to the rich countries in search of success? Is it not the case that re-rooting modernization strategies in this way in the historical bedrock of what are very often ancient traditions makes it possible to fashion “tailor-made” development strategies that capitalize on their unique assets? Even in the context of international thinking on best practice or good governance, it should be possible to integrate the standpoint of cultural diversity

4. A new continent ripe for exploration: cultures and lifestyles

The new perspective proposed for the World Report cannot have as its sole intention to “overthrow” the sway of politics and “overturn” a particular view of the world. For a whole new continent remains to be explored if we wish to grasp the new forms of contemporary culture: the cultural consequences of consumer trends worldwide.

Consumer habits are described by market studies, influenced among other things by the media and represent new territories to be explored, such as:

- fashions, not only in clothing or music, but also in the realm of culture (one thinks of the recurrent passee-partout motif in contemporary art) or ethics (the support by large multinationals for some great cause or other);
- the standardization of cultural contents; the mental subjugation of consumers to “brands”;
- the creation of artificial needs;
- etc.

The tools at the disposal of manufacturers operating in this domain would no doubt serve to refine the diagnosis one might be tempted to make of the standardization of lifestyles or of cultural homogenization. In the social sciences, the theories of social capital have likewise opened up new perspectives that might be interesting to explore.

It is also worth noting that the cultural dimension plays an increasingly important role in consumer habits, with the emergence of so-called “equitable” commerce, which overturns the laws of classical economics by offering a bonus to authenticity or to the social quality of product manufacture.

More generally, the World Report provides the opportunity to reflect on our life styles. For cultural diversity does not express itself monolithically in a single domain that should take precedence over the others. Every human action is cultural in character and is expressive of cultural diversity.

The opportunity offered by an intersectoral world report is to expand our understanding of cultural diversity by encompassing fields that might seem surprising at first sight, such as:

- technological innovations, which always appear in a particular cultural context;
- behaviour patterns in natural resource management;
- eating habits,
- the variety of approaches to teaching;
- etc.

B. Worrying trends that need to be checked

To prepare the way for cultural diversity to become a source of openness, mutual enrichment, discovery, exchange, sharing, creativity and development, it will be necessary to expose the mechanisms that frustrate such a dynamic:

- The way in which cultural practices are diverted into the categories of heritage or folklore in the name of so-called "authenticity" is invariably inimical to cultural creativity. This diagnosis should also be extended to indigenous communities that derive their living from handicrafts or the singularity of their cultural practices. Is there not, from this standpoint, a contradiction between the culturalist approach and creativity, as illustrated by the misgivings of contemporary African artists who, having struggled long and hard to gain access to the international art markets, finally find themselves granted a forum but only in the name of their "Africanness"?
- How identities find themselves reduced to stereotypes or categories, whether ethnic or of another nature, which identify individuals with the particular "community" to which they belong, without giving a thought to the many-sided nature of identities, any more than to intermixing and hybridisation. What are the existing cultural frameworks, by who are they created, how are they disseminated, how do they interact among themselves?
- How the global contents markets, while they do not promote a single model as is too often thought, have recourse to a form of cultural standardisation that satisfies the wants of consumers, in search of products that can be consumed with minimum mental effort. This also poses the delicate question of the "recolonization" of minds, which confronts certain countries of the South. It underlines how the question of the cultural consequences of globalisation, even when it is not the immediate subject of debate, still remains important, particularly in view of the unequal vulnerability of groups in that regard.

The fact is that while, on the one hand, everyone is agreed that people's cultural or ethnic origins should not be seen as the determining factors in their existence since they are not chosen, one cannot, on the other hand, pretend that these factors have no impact on everyday life, if only for the reason that the gaze of other people, and the mechanisms of social segregation, exist. What does that have to say about the "plasticity" of identities? In the great bazaar of identities and cultures, are we so free to choose our values as the postmodern outlook would suggest? What is the meaning of the new interest in ethnic ancestry or population genetics?

Increasingly, one of the remarkable consequences of globalisation is that individuals - whether they derive from a minority, from immigration or whether they voluntarily choose a lifestyle distinct from their cultural origin - find themselves exposed to a whole range of influences, not least through their involvement in currents of all sorts, facilitated by access to ICTs, and consequently develop "multiple identities" as a result of the creation, use and diffusion of ideas and products of all kinds. The Report should therefore provide markers to people living in an increasingly "glocalised" world and in some cases living, as individuals, in conflict with the cultural requirements of their group. In view of the significantly enlarged scope of possibilities, individuals should be able to exercise their freedom to choose in all tranquillity.

C. How diversity can be synonymous with unity

The World Report should accordingly seek to place the emphasis in its analyses on what unites us rather than what distinguishes us, and should indicate a path leading to a fuller understanding of difference – for its sake and for our own.

Apart from the need to enquire more deeply into the mechanisms of interculturality or transculturality, cultural change, modernization, etc, we should ponder the question of the springs of mutual understanding and the possibility of converting to another person's viewpoint. In this connection, there are grounds for wondering whether "dialogue" (in the sense given to the word by Greek Platonism) is still the best paradigm for conceiving exchanges between cultures (since it tends to involve fixed positions and the orchestration of confrontations, which, even under the watchful eye of the logos, can become a weapon in the hands of politicians). Are there not other models of cultural interaction, such as "pathways", "explorations", etc? What lessons can we draw from reflection on the role of translation? How well does universalism stand up to the criticisms that may be levelled at it, such as the fact that it is often based on an assent that is merely opportune rather than on a genuinely shared viewpoint? The Report should put forward recommendations aimed at promoting cultural diversity as a factor of peace and cooperation between peoples.

It will doubtless be necessary at this point to clarify what is meant by a respectful relationship to another's culture. A respectful interest in the diversity of another person cannot be satisfied by a colourful song-and-dance folk spectacle torn from its true context. How can one instil a genuine curiosity concerning the real meaning and value of a cultural object and practice within its own setting? Is such a task of mutual

comprehension an easy one? Does it not imply active participation by the cultural communities concerned, based on respect for the choices that could be theirs to share or not to share with others knowledge that ought to be reserved for the select few?

Cultural diversity is often a challenge to coexistence. The globalization of representations, desires and imaginings, particularly as a result of the media, has led to close contact between modes of life and outlooks previously remote from one another. These now see themselves as centre and periphery, creating what some would describe as a "colonization" of minds, giving rise to many difficulties. The report should arguably offer political decision-makers pointers to making informed choices with regard to the new challenges confronting them. In this new context of the intermingling of peoples, cultures and religions displaying an ever higher profile, the relationship between public and private space takes on a new importance. While there must be a dividing line between the freedom to express one's beliefs and the demands of communal existence, how can this line be drawn? The time would seem right to take stock of the wealth of national experience in this regard and of its impact on the management of difference, whether positive or negative.

Respect for other people's cultures also implies restoring to marginalized groups their lost dignity, whether we are talking of poor countries on the international scale or of underprivileged groups within a particular society. The media and ICTs can play an important role in the emancipation and self-realization of the most fragile communities, as well as in the dialogue between differences and in reconciliation processes. We often witness unexpected turnarounds, whereby the culture specific to such a group finds itself revalued and accorded recognition, as illustrated by the phenomenon of rap music, which was confined to the black ghettos of North America before it became a product of the pop culture.

Special attention should be paid, then, to the contexts in which the question of cultural diversity is posed. The concept arguably has a very different meaning in large cities and in the countryside, from the standpoint of cultural industries and that of cultural identities, at the individual level and the collective level?

Finally, particular attention should be given to the question of the leverage we can exert on cultural phenomena. Apart from intercultural education, whose workings need to be clarified, how in practical terms can one change cultural practices rooted in an age-old past (or thought to be) in the name of individual rights that are often very abstract in character?