

**Hundred and fortieth Session**

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**Item 5.4.2 of the provisional agenda**

**Co-operation to promote a culture of peace**

**Summary**

This item was placed on the provisional agenda of the 140th session in accordance with a proposal made by Mr Ahmed SAYYAD (Yemen) in a letter to the Chairperson of the Executive Board dated 17 July 1992. The explanatory note is reproduced below.

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

### I. Introduction

To construct peace in the minds of men - that is the mandate of UNESCO. Never before has our work been needed so much. The world has reached a turning-point in history. It is a moment of opportunity for global co-operation for peace. It is a moment that should not be lost.

It has become clear that military force cannot solve the global problems of violence and injustice. Military force can only continue the vicious cycle.

We need peace-building, not just peace-keeping, as stated by United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali. We need peace culture, not war culture, as stated at Yamoussoukro, and now we should make the ideas operational. We should put the ideas into action. In this framework, I suggest the following four-point plan:

- (1) make an agreement with the United Nations Security Council to fund a Culture of Peace Programme with 1 per cent of the peace-keeping budget;
- (2) carry out this Culture of Peace Programme in the zones where United Nations peace-keeping forces (the blue berets) are already deployed or where a situation has developed that threatens to require such intervention in the future;
- (3) administer this Culture of Peace Programme by an international centre under the joint control of UNESCO and the United Nations Security Council;
- (4) use the talents of all existing United Nations programmes, especially those of UNESCO, on a rotating basis, so as to avoid creating a permanent staff.

### II. Proposed Culture of Peace Programme for United Nations peace-keeping

United Nations peace-keeping, greatly expanded in recent years, needs a strong component programme of peace culture. The blue berets, by themselves, cannot produce peace. This is supported by the recent remarks of the United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Ghali, that: '... we are now moving in the field of peace-keeping from a peace-keeping operation to peace-building. In other words, we are not involved only in maintaining peace but we are also involved in constructing or building peace'.

**Definition of peace culture.** The 1989 International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men in Yamoussoukro called for '... peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men'. This was expanded in the Yamoussoukro proceedings to include '... the possible participation by all, both individuals and groups, in the life and culture of the society to which they belong'. And the UNESCO General Conference at its twenty-sixth session in 1991 noted that '... within the United Nations system, UNESCO has been entrusted with a special ethical mission in the promotion of a democratic culture that is conducive to the effective application of human rights and the establishment of a culture of peace'.

**Programme objectives.** To heal the social wounds of war by local activities of reconciliation and co-operation in countries where Security Council peace-keeping operations are already being implemented or may be anticipated because of developing violence. A formal contractual relationship for the programme in each country would be negotiated, and in those cases where United Nations peace-keeping forces were deployed, written into the initial peace-

keeping accords negotiated by the United Nations Secretary-General. A new kind of partnership would then be developed between the programme and the emerging democratic structures which it would help to develop in that country. The programme would also develop an international centre to direct future activities and to predict and prevent the need for peace-keeping forces elsewhere in the world.

**Funding.** The regular budget would be paid from a 1 per cent contribution from the budget of United Nations Security Council peace-keeping operations. In addition, extra-budgetary sources would be sought to maintain activities for the long term even if peace-keeping operations were reduced in a particular country.

**Structure.** The Culture of Peace Programme would be implemented by an international centre.

**Governance.** A governing board would be appointed by UNESCO and the United Nations Security Council. An international advisory board would also be established to serve as a think-tank and to help co-ordinate relations with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.

**Relation to other organizations.** The programme would take advantage of all existing international intergovernmental organizations which can contribute to the development of a culture of peace, particularly agencies of the United Nations system and other organizations such as the Council of Europe. Direct and continuous contact would be a priority to ensure that there is no overlapping of activities. For example, the programme would draw on the talents of the United Nations volunteers, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, and existing programmes of UNESCO rather than duplicating them.

**General functions.** In addition to local activities, there would be two other components of the programme: research and training, and documentation and information. The centre would implement objective evaluations of all its own local activities and develop general principles and practical approaches to building a culture of peace. In addition, it would co-ordinate the development of a global network of social scientists to serve as an early warning system for violence and its prevention.

**Local activities.** Local activities in a particular country would be planned on the basis of fact-finding missions and consultation with all other agencies involved. While the emphasis would always be on the training and use of local actors and leaders, United Nations volunteers would also be used where feasible.

Notes from the recent mission to El Salvador can be taken as an example of the types of activities that might be envisaged. The mission proposed formal and informal education for peace, development of tolerance, co-operation, and participation at all levels, management of democratic practice and social policies at local levels, alternatives of communication, and programmes of culture with an emphasis on youth. This list could be expanded to include programmes of multicultural co-operation to preserve and develop both environmental and cultural heritages as a symbol of national reconciliation. One might also propose similar programmes of multicultural co-operation in technical and scientific training and research oriented to methods for sustainable economic development.

The emphasis would be on channelling the energies of peoples into a common struggle which would benefit everyone. The guiding principle would be that each person has something to learn from everyone else, and has something to give in return. New communication alternatives would help integrate and make these programmes known to everyone.

**Timetable (October 1992-December 1993)**

- Stage 1     Consultations with the United Nations Secretary-General, and with United Nations Security Council officials.
- Stage 2     Feasibility assessment and elaboration of Stage 2 by a committee of eminent persons. They might be asked to issue a formal declaration to initiate the project publicly.
- Stage 3     Establishment of agreement with the Executive Board of UNESCO and the United Nations Security Council.
- Stage 4     Approval by legislative organs of UNESCO (General Conference) and the United Nations (General Assembly).

**III. Culture of Peace Programme: Some questions and answers**

**Q:** Why concentrate so much on the few places where the blue berets are being deployed or may be needed in the future? Why not instead a global programme of peace culture?

**A:** It is true that Member States are looking to UNESCO to take the lead for a culture of peace, now that the cold war has ended and old ideological conflicts are being superseded by nationalism and ethnic violence. A global programme is needed, but the task is so enormous that it must be approached in several stages. The first stage must be very concrete and must produce measurable results.

Therefore, this proposal would concentrate on those few places where: (1) The nation-state, which is an obstacle to peace because of its long association with the culture of war, has broken down and been replaced temporarily by United Nations intervention and a multilateral peace accord; and (2) the people, who must be the principal actor in the development of any peace culture, are most hungry for that culture because of the pain they suffered from recent violence.

Based on the results of the few initial experiences, the programme would then be improved and extended to more places. By that time, the centre would have experienced staff coming from the countries of the peace-building activity. They would be able to apply the lessons learned in that activity to a more global arena.

**Q:** It is clear that peace culture is the mandate of UNESCO, but why complicate matters by involving the Security Council?

Wouldn't that threaten the independence of UNESCO?

**A:** The new proposal should not threaten or change in any way the ongoing programmes of UNESCO which are very important, even though their results are largely 'invisible'. But the ongoing programmes are not enough. The world needs a dramatic new initiative for peace culture with large-scale funding and political power. Such funding and power are available only with the co-operation of the major industrial nations; for that purpose, the United Nations Security Council is the ideal forum:

- (1) in principle, the Security Council works under the principles of the United Nations Charter and the oversight of the General Assembly;
- (2) there is already the precedent for expenditure of billions of dollars.

Of course, a joint UNESCO-Security Council programme would raise questions of independence and would require co-operation and mutual respect and influence. There are dangers, but at the same time there are opportunities. The Security Council could provide to UNESCO a new source of funding and a political role in the drafting of peace accords which would legitimize a formal UNESCO role in the development of democratic structures in the country concerned. At the same time, UNESCO could provide to the Security Council the opportunity to supplement its role of peace-keeping with a role of peace-building. Without a programme of peace culture integrated with the blue berets, these military forces by themselves may perpetuate rather than provide an alternative to a military solution.

- Q:** Why create yet another programme, when we have so many UNESCO programmes already? Couldn't the job be done by the existing organizational structure of UNESCO?
- A:** Because of the enormous difficulty of the task, especially the later more global stages of the peace culture, this proposal envisions a dramatic change from past practice. The new type of centre would not develop an institutional structure with vested interests of career. Instead, professionals would be borrowed from UNESCO and other international organizations.