

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Speech by
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Admiral,
General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The new dialogue between civilians and the military that we are pursuing today was able to begin the day the Berlin Wall came down. Its collapse created for society in general vast spaces of power, life and dignity to be regained, spaces where we live, institutions, whether scientific or not, and citizens, whether in the armed forces or not.

I am very pleased to know that you have already made provision for a follow-up to today's event, thus allowing co-operation between IHEDN and the intellectual organization of the United Nations system to develop. UNESCO contributes within its fields of competence education, science, culture and communication - to the making of a full citizen and an active citizen out of each individual. As Descartes said: 'Cogito, ergo sum': 'I think, therefore I am'. We could paraphrase him and say, for citizenship, 'I participate, therefore I am'. To fully participate, citizens must have access to knowledge.

Let us go back to those liberated spaces that I spoke about at the start. There is the space of culture, not only in the aesthetic acceptation of the term but also and most importantly in its broader sense where culture is the sum of our experiences, thoughts, values, traditions, convictions, and lifestyles, a sum that finds expression in our daily actions. In this sense, what would a culture of peace be? One that would permit the construction and defence of peace in the minds of men. Let us remember in this regard the beginning of the United Nations Charter which proclaims- transcending the concept of the Nation State- 'We the peoples of the United Nations...'. With their hearts and eyes filled still with horror and barbarity, the founders expressed their determination to spare their children and our children the scourge of war. UNESCO was created, within this framework, to promote peace in the minds of men, where, as the poet Archibald MacLeish expressed it so well, wars begin; and also to defend people's dignity and to contribute, along with the other institutions of the system, to development, a factor of peace.

According to Article I of its Constitution, 'The purpose of (UNESCO) is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations'.

Through different approaches, IHEDN and UNESCO are striving for the same goal: the protection of peace and the universal respect of justice. As the world grows more global, we are increasingly aware of our social, cultural and biological diversities. Not only is each one of us different from everyone else, but each one of us is changing at every moment of our

DG/95/27 - page 2

existence. It is this constant changing, this mobility- so well perceived by Heraclitus- that allows human beings to be free and to face the inevitable. We are simultaneously different and united around universally accepted values and this allows us, in spite of our diversity, to coexist in harmony.

In the excerpt from UNESCO's Constitution that I have cited, the sequence in which the principles are enumerated (justice, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms) is also important. Justice comes first, followed by the rule of law, human rights and freedoms. First the essential rights then equality and solidarity ('without distinction of race, sex, language or religion').

During the Cold War period only two superpowers existed, while the rest of the countries were mere onlookers. When this period ended, everyone understood that a page in human history had been turned.

The title of my last book is, precisely, 'La nouvelle page' (The new page). In it I strive to reflect upon the symbolism developed since October 1988, a real turning-point when Mr Gorbachev and Mr Reagan signed that well-known agreement. Clearly the world was not ready for such a new situation. None of us was ready for it and none of us was ready to assume, in economic, political and social life, the new, active role required by the new parameters.

From political independence, a formidable achievement of the sixties and seventies, we have passed to a progressive interdependence for which, again, we were ill prepared. An economic, commercial and technological dependence has followed political independence. This has taken place in a framework in which the United Nations system, carrying out the wishes of the Member States, was attempting, often without success, to foster a policy of development. What was the cause of this failure? Why did countries, that benefited through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund from resources earmarked for their development, generally fail to blossom or develop? Why are these countries so often today entirely technologically dependent and incapable of meeting international competition? Although politically independent, they are reliant on the knowledge and ingenuity of more advanced countries, which is a more subtle form of servitude. They have lost all hope, considering that they are carrying the weight of an enormous external debt without having been able to enjoy its fruits or attain their development objectives. Once again, we see emerging models, 'sponsor' s conditions', a uniform treatment applied to very different development situations, 'recipes' for economic organization, administrative rationalization, etc. In certain countries these methods have produced good, or at least acceptable, results; in others the results are catastrophic. This has led to lack of hope, a factor that studies of the future cannot ignore.

How successful have we been until now at maintaining peace in the world? Failures and successes exist side by side. When we think of Bosnia, Rwanda or Somalia, we see quite clearly that these have been failures - we were incapable of reacting. However, there are also successes and we must not forget South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, El Salvador and Guatemala. There is no shortage of examples. These are simply less newsworthy than the others. Only conflicts, bloodshed and violence make the headlines; peace, just like health and happiness, is invisible. It is important, however, for decision-makers, planners and strategists civilian or military- to see the invisible, to touch the untouchable and to go beyond

appearances. They will in this way be able to better inform the public, and by restoring balance to a distorted picture, bring the image closer to reality.

Peace is built primarily in a triangular relationship with development and democracy. As I mentioned, help intended for development has often failed, largely on account of serious conceptual flaws at the outset. The concept of development has evolved slowly. It has been refined, emerging today as a complex ensemble that undoubtedly expresses much better the intertwining and interdependencies of reality. The links between the development process and the fields of health and the environment have been clarified. In the field of education, UNESCO along with the World Bank, UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme, organized in 1990 an important Conference on Education for All.

In the field of population, the nine most populous countries in the world have recently signed an extremely important agreement that marks a historic turning-point. At the moment, 250,000 children are being born every day in the world. What can we do? The earth is very populated already. We must none the less welcome these children and make every effort to preserve for them an inhabitable planet and allow them to become active citizens. This worrying issue of population can be addressed only within a setting of freedom of choice for each individual. Regardless of the religious or social context, whether the traditions be Christian, Moslem, Jewish, Buddhist, Animist, Hindu, Confucianist, etc., one correlation is inescapable: the more educated the population the lower the birth-rate. Consequently we have the means to control the demographic curve: education. Education encompasses more than the sum of instruction and information. The concept of education includes the enlightenment of the individual. Information and knowledge are extremely important but the key resides in their assimilation, in the capacity of the individual to link them to values and behaviour patterns, aware of their relevance today and their relevance tomorrow.

In New Delhi, the nine countries that I alluded to made the commitment to double- by the end of the century- their present investment in education. This commitment represents hope for all of us and could translate within 15 years into a definite slowing down of demographic growth.

Also under the auspices of the United Nations, important meetings have taken place in Copenhagen on social development, and on world population again in Cairo. A conference on women is planned for next autumn in Beijing, and in 1996 another conference on human settlements will take place in Istanbul: In this way, the different aspects of the United Nations' new approach to development are becoming clearer.

The third angle of the triangle that I referred to is democracy. Democracy is the only possible setting for authentic development and true peace between real citizens. It is only when the principles of justice, equity, solidarity and freedom are present that human beings can participate in the life of their communities. Only then can they act like fully committed citizens and contribute to an enhanced security at the personal level and at local, national and international levels.

All this demands new partnerships. Partnerships that only a few years ago did not exist. I am thinking for instance about the parliaments of the Eastern European countries. No matter how difficult the democratic transition in these countries may be, it remains an invaluable step forward. In 1989, the finest celebration of the bicentenary of the French Revolution was probably the victory of freedom over an oppressive system that presided over 60 per cent of

DG/95/27 - page 4

the world's countries. Unquestionably, there is often still a long way to go and democracy cannot be improvised. However, the affluent countries, the seasoned democracies, cannot forget that economic development and material ease are not enough for happiness. Often the model of the consumer society and ignorance of the value of things leads to confusion or even to hopelessness. This is unfortunately confirmed by the dejectedness of a not inconsiderable proportion of our youth, often gilded, but ignorant of the 'price' of what they possess and devoid of the affection and recognition to which they are entitled. It is not the law of the market that we must investigate, but, much rather, solidarity and sharing.

'Intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind', justice, freedom, equality and the dignity of man: all the principles enumerated in the UNESCO Constitution should form the foundation of the new partnerships that must be entered into with civil society. By 'civil society' I mean civilians and military personnel, since those who are responsible for defence belong to society, being 'social players', just as much as those in charge of sport, health, education, etc. The target is a common one: to contribute to the well-being of society while maintaining dialogue and harmony and resolving conflicts in ways that correspond to a culture of world peace.

I believe that the anecdote that I am about to relate illustrates quite well the attitude that should be ours today. Not so long ago I was visiting, in the company of its director, a large hospital in Jerusalem. Given my professional background I was interested primarily in the brain pathology department. During the visit, somebody pointed in the direction of a female patient and said: 'That woman is a Palestinian'. With sobriety and dignity the director replied: 'I do not know, it's quite possible. Here, they are all just patients'.

Leonardo da Vinci expresses the same view of the world when he speaks of the passengers on board a ship caught in a storm, in peril of sinking. At that moment of great danger there are no rich or poor on board any longer, nor men or women, nor young or old, neither blacks nor whites, only passengers facing the same fate. All of them have to pool their knowledge, their expertise and their imagination if they want to have a chance of survival.

We are those passengers, the vessel in danger is our planet, and we must realize that inexorably we all share the same fate. This fate depends on two parameters: complexity and globalism. Globalism is patent and is increasingly obvious as communications develop. Even when we are attempting to develop 'local' solutions, globalism should never be lost from view. The same can be said for complexity. From a scientific point of view, to simplify complexity is inconceivable. We must accept complexity as it is and be able to present it as it is. If we only have simplified perceptions of complexity we will perhaps be able to modify the perception, but not the reality.

Undeniably, we are facing today tremendous transnational challenges that the Nation-State is powerless to face. This is another of the aspects which I feel we should all ponder. What is the use of turning towards the State or towards government agencies when the problems to be solved transcend boundaries? I am thinking in particular today of all the issues related to health, information, financial flows and the economy; I am thinking about the drug problem, terrorism, the illicit arms trade, etc. Which country can brag about controlling any one of these issues? Besides, with the development of electronics and computer science, an increasing number of all manner of operations escapes the control of States. Just as we must face new dangers such as overpopulation and the dangers looming over the environment, threatened today not only by natural disasters but also by the consequences of human activities,

so we must be aware of the new 'superstructures' that mock traditional structures and mechanisms.

Exclusions in the field of knowledge have had dramatic repercussions, particularly exclusions due to sex discrimination. Two-thirds of the 800 million adult illiterates that exist today are females. Whereas an illiterate mother means illiterate children, a literate father does not guarantee literate children. Consequently it is vital to encourage the education of girls and women, potential and actual mothers. The traditional education system contributes to this exclusion by leaving behind all those who failed to achieve, during their 'school age', a normal career path. To stop this exclusion UNESCO now puts the emphasis on the means for a 'permanent education for all'; everyone must have a new opportunity, regardless of age or level, to go back to study.

Why is it necessary for us to break (even though we may be cynical, selfish and pragmatic) the vicious circle of illiteracy, poverty and overpopulation? The reason is a simple one; this vicious circle represents a menace to collective security, more specifically through the phenomenon of massive migrations. As you know, the prognosis on population movements is very alarming. Illicit immigration into the northern countries has risen considerably. However, the present numbers are negligible when compared to the evolution that will take place if an international effort is not made to maintain in their countries the ones next tempted by exodus and exile. If this flow goes uncontrolled and massive migrations increase, if we do not attack the roots of the problems of exclusion and extreme poverty, world security will be increasingly at risk.

Through education, science, culture and communication, by way of specific programmes- in Somalia, Rwanda, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mozambique and elsewhere UNESCO is making an effort to act on the actual causes of this menace. As I said earlier, UNESCO is striving to slow down demographic growth by giving each woman and man a free choice, and trying to remedy the current injustice through a better sharing of wealth. Twenty per cent of the population have 80 per cent of the world resources. Eighty per cent of the world's population must be content with 20 per cent of the resources left. This is an untenable state of affairs. More than a billion people today live below the poverty line, and in increasing numbers the impoverished are adding to the poverty-stricken population of the cities. In this domain as well, co-operation with the military and the use of their present skills is, in my opinion, one of our great hopes. If this rural exodus keeps increasing, the situation will deteriorate dramatically in a few years. In a rural setting, poverty invites mutual assistance. Not so in the shanty towns, where destitution takes root without the structures of the rural regions, and a vicious circle of frustrations, radicalization and violence then sets in. We must therefore go into the villages and approach those who have remained out of reach. What about the communication 'superhighways'? Yes, of course we will contribute to them. However next to the 'info-routes' also exists a communication 'subway', the trails and paths that lead to the roughly 600,000 villages in the world that still do not have electricity today. Exclusion always favours instability. It is therefore important to 'include' the rural areas, to better their quality of life to ensure their access to primary services.

To conclude, I would like to go back to institutions. The functions of our institutions must change, beginning with the functions of the United Nations. As you know, peacekeeping operations account today, unhappily, for nearly 80 per cent of the United Nations' activities. In 1988 there were only five with a budget of \$230 million; in 1994 there were 16 with a budget of \$3,600,000. From 6,500 blue helmets, the force has been increased to almost

DG/95/27 - page 6

83,000 men. We are wrong in associating the arrival of freedom with the explosion of intercultural or inter-ethnic conflicts. If these conflicts are exploding, it is because of previous oppression under a political system that was particularly hidebound for years if not decades.

Peace-keeping is only one aspect of the activities so brilliantly depicted in 'An agenda for peace', published in early 1992 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Another aspect, a decisive aspect at that, is the construction of peace. To the extent that we are successful at building peace, we will be able to diminish the peace-keeping activities and those to re-establish peace, which come after the realization of failure, after the suffering, after the conflict.

Rwanda had received more than a billion dollars of international aid before the massacres started. That proves that it was not lack of financial resources that was the root of the tragedy, but rather a poor assessment of the situation. The international community's ways of acting are no longer suited to contemporary situations. The United Nations must have at its disposal an observation mechanism, a mechanism of anticipation and alert to be able to identify the factors of instability and insecurity - these being understood as at the level of the citizen. Such a mechanism would enable us to react, on both a civilian and military scale, to rapidly overcome obstacles that often provoke extremely fast chain reactions. The United Nation's reaction capacity must be faster; the Security Council must re-evaluate its composition and functions. I do not want to go into details that are beyond the competence of UNESCO. However let us repeat once again: a system is a system in which globalism is superior to the sum of its parts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our certainties are shrinking and our doubts are multiplying at the rate of the transitions that we are experiencing. We can no longer live separately, isolated at the heart of our questioning. Even our fears are to be shared as well as our joys and our energies. The culture of peace is not utopia. On the contrary, our future lies inescapably along that path. I invite you to work at this with us, to create the interaction and outward-looking attitude that it demands and that will be our salvation. Thank you.