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Address
by
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(UNESCO)

at the Regional Symposium on
Co-operative Peace in Southeast Asia
organized by UNESCO and ASEAN

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Your Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs,
of the Republic of Indonesia,
The Secretary-General of ASEAN,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today marks the beginning of a new relationship between UNESCO and ASEAN. It is my great pleasure to welcome you all here today. Let me express first of all my warmest gratitude to our hosts and to all those who helped to organize this important event, with special thanks to Mr Severino and ASEAN and to Professor Napitupulu, Executive Chairman, as well as the Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO. Your remarkable support and co-operation have ensured, I am certain, that this Symposium will be a truly successful event.

I am particularly happy that it is taking place in Jakarta. It is here and now that we can be inspired to try the new ways and new approaches that are necessary in order to bring about truly sustainable peace, development and democracy. The current situation in the world makes it clear that we must re-think many aspects of the way in which we address the economy, the environment and security. I like to repeat that big problems need big solutions. So, this morning, as we open this Conference, I call upon everyone taking part to think big, over the next two days. Let us make this Symposium one of opportunities: opportunities identified, opportunities seized.

We are meeting at a time when Southeast Asia is coping with major challenges, as are many other parts of the world. Both ASEAN and UNESCO, in their different and complementary ways, provide excellent frameworks for well-focused support strategies. Routine reflection, routine responses have no place here today. We have much to learn, it is true. But also we have much to unlearn. Together, we can perhaps push back some of the borders of conventional thinking, break new ground and find the resolve and will to embark on the path to new solutions - far-reaching solutions which make the most of each opportunity, great or small.

We need greater far-sightedness. Many of the problems in our world today arise because only short-term perspectives are used. What we have to do is find new approaches, new ways of acting together, new ways of getting involved. As you know, the Commission I set up to study the main trends and possible solutions for education in the twenty-first century, chaired by the then President of the European Commission, Mr Jacques Delors, concluded that we must learn to know, to do, to be and above all, to learn to live together. I may add: learn to think together, to find new solutions, hand in hand. This is indeed what your Organization, as was just emphasized by its Secretary-General, has done since it was founded.

ASEAN's original objective was to promote economic co-operation and development. Its subsequent efforts to foster cooperative peace have broadened and deepened that mandate. First, geography demanded that you find ways to live together. Today, history demands that you act together and UNESCO wants to join you in this action. The new framework we are establishing at this Symposium, can give us a new focus, a new impetus, and a new interconnectedness. More than ever, our global society teaches us that no man is an island. As Albert Einstein said: «The world today is one or none» . That makes interaction indispensable. The problems of other peoples have consequences for us all, be they economic, social, cultural, environmental or political.

But even when we are fully aware that this really is one world, it is very hard, in practice, to change our mind set. It is a struggle to change ingrained habits, to move from the short-term perspective to a long-sighted framework of action. I must emphasize the role of knowledge in this respect. We are submerged in information, but there is an immense difference between information and knowledge, and what we need is knowledge. Often we have the knowledge, but we do not dare to apply it. We have to use our ability to foresee and to anticipate events. We have to do this in order to take early preventive action rather than react after the event. We have to do this in order to set in motion far-sighted, long-term policies which take into account the interests of our own future and that of future generations.

I was very impressed when Professor Long was talking about the need to take preventive measures rather than adaptive ones, because if we simply adjust to events, this means that events prevail, without us being able to anticipate, to forecast and to foresee. The mission of ASEAN, the mission of UNESCO, is, through development, to prevent conflict, violence and intolerance. Foresight and anticipation are the key words for a different future. It is a future where we learn to harness all the abilities of our scientific research base, to help decision-makers at all levels to anticipate. It can be done. The predictive powers of science are improving in such crucial areas as health, environment and climate. We need not only the warning, but the solution and the solution must be applied in good time. A reporting society is a postponing society!

One of the areas of co-operation which UNESCO and ASEAN will examine is the strengthening of regional links in science and technology in order to make the best use of these crucial areas of knowledge. Basic science is needed in order to address concrete problems. I remember when I was Minister of Education and Science in the Spanish Government: often the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry said, «what we need is applied science». I always answered with the saying: «there is no applied science if there is no science to apply». We must help each country build up its own scientific base.

Today we are more conscious than ever of our shared stewardship of this planet and of our shared responsibilities. We are also more aware that successful solutions to contemporary problems are local. Global reflection, global analysis, global guidelines, global ethics and values. But local applications, local adaptations, local know-how and local relevance. The founders of UNESCO made it clear in our own Constitution that there are some democratic ideals to be shared at the universal level. These pillars are very simple: justice, freedom, equality and solidarity. As we are an intellectual Organization, the founders of UNESCO added: intellectual and moral solidarity.

Today, more than ever, we need the guidance of universal values. It is very clear that we cannot be guided by the market. We cannot be guided by interests. Unfortunately, at the worldwide level, we see many asymmetries. There is the gender gap, the wealth gap and the knowledge gap. The keyword now is «endogenous development»: development which allows you to master your own processes and your own destiny, not development which remains neo-colonial, following a blue-print which is handed down from above, not development in the hands of international conglomerates or determined solely by global markets. Development which responds to local needs and corresponds to the realities of the local context. Development which cannot be wiped out by speculators.

The concept of endogenous, sustainable development is one of the most important breakthroughs in thinking on development. But it is only half the picture. There is a second, equally crucial aspect to development which is also far better understood today: economic development cannot be approached as separate and self-contained, divorced from human development and cultural development. A thriving culture is the very foundation of economic development. We have to remember that the goal of economic development is human welfare, not growth for its own sake. Economic development, human development, culture - all these essential dimensions are interlinked. This gives UNESCO a special role to play within the UN family: putting education, culture, communication and science into the development equation; ensuring that all groups in society, especially women and young people, are central to that equation.

It is because we have come to see that all aspects of development are interlinked that we can better understand a further fundamental connection: if development is to succeed, it has to go hand in hand with peace and democracy. Very often, democracy has been presented as a kind of template to be imposed on different countries, on different cultures. No! Democracy cannot be left to specialists! It cannot be imported by overseas experts or picked up from a handbook. By its nature, democracy comes from the people. They determine its characteristics. They

hand it down from one generation to the next. It is a process that starts in the schoolroom. It is to count and not just to be counted at election-time. Democracy fosters justice, freedom of expression, civil rights and human rights, enjoyed by well-informed, active citizens.

Freedom of expression is highly important. The first Article of our Constitution says that UNESCO must guarantee the free flow of ideas through word and image. Why? Because, through the voice of the people, through freedom of expression, legality becomes justice. One talks about «the rule of law». Better still is the rule of true justice, where the voice of the people is heard. Almost three years ago, when addressing the Second International Forum for a Culture of Peace in Manila, in the Philippines, I said: «Neither democratic structures, nor the timetable and pace of electoral reform can be imposed, either from outside or from above. We are challenged to help countries find their own new roads to democracy»

Ladies and gentlemen,

Three years later, it is very encouraging to see so many of the nations of Southeast Asia pursuing their own paths to democracy, sometimes through rough periods. UNESCO has tried to meet the challenge of finding ways to help countries build these paths, with new partnerships, with parliaments and town councils, through the Mayors for Peace awards, women's literacy programmes, training programmes for journalists: all these are examples of ways in which we try to strengthen the fabric of democracy and human rights. Human rights belong to and are the hope of each single human being. Democracy is linked to development, based on sustainability and on better sharing, on the reshaping of our budget priorities.

This implies a new approach to education, one where alongside the effort to provide basic education, lifelong learning allows people to improve their living conditions; one where literacy is not just the theoretical ability to read and write, but allows people to acquire income-generating skills; education without frontiers, that really does reach the unreached and includes the excluded; higher education in which Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is fully applied. This Article says that access to higher education is based on merit. Have we ensured that this is the case in all the countries of the world? No! Then, to pay tribute, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, let us apply those rights.

When we link peace, development and democracy, it is not only our approach to education or citizenship which is affected. It also implies a fundamentally new approach to security.

Security is not only a matter of well-protected frontiers, it includes above all citizens' security and a well-functioning, efficient and rapid justice system. It includes environmental security, where many man-made disasters are prevented, and natural disasters meet with a rapid and well-prepared response.

The approach to security across the world may vary greatly from one country to another but one can detect some general trends. There has been change in the way countries use their military, since the days when ministries of defence were called ministries of war. Now, I am sure that before long they will be called «ministries of peace». Can we not hope for a world where peace-building and peace-keeping will be the essential role of the military? I believe that the more firmly security is placed in the hands of civilian governments elected by, and answerable to, a mature citizenship, the more we will see all these aspects of security developed.

Since its inception, UNESCO has borne a special responsibility for furthering peace, a responsibility made clear in the opening words of its Constitution: «since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed». UNESCO's core mission therefore goes beyond peace-keeping to peace-building. This approach is clearly reflected in UNESCO's concern to build a Culture of Peace. We do not see peace purely in terms of keeping the peace. The peace we are aiming for is not simply the absence of armed conflict. It does not rest on the balance of military power or so-called nuclear dissuasion. A Culture of Peace uniquely combines the concepts of peace and security. It holds the promise of a truly secure peace because it works to ensure the permanent, interactive link between development, peace and democracy. Without this interactive triangle, no peace is secure, no economic development is secure, no political power is secure, no future is secure.

We have to make the transition from a culture of violence, oppression and war to a culture of dialogue, tolerance and non-violence. If we may sum up at this end of the century and of the millennium : we have done really wonderful things for humanity, but, in terms of war, we have paid a terrible price. Millions of young people have given their lives for the peace that we have today but nothing has been solved with violence. This is why we want, together with you, to advance the aims of a culture of peace through co-operation.

You may ask: what relevance UNESCO's concept of a culture of peace has for those countries of Southeast Asia where years of rapid economic growth have come to an abrupt end? When I describe a culture of peace, I do so, knowing that your countries are grappling with many difficulties. It would indeed be wrong to set impossible goals when your priority is to respond to

sudden change and embark on the path to recovery. But let me make this absolutely clear: a culture of peace is not a luxury. It is not an option to be added on at the end of the process of recovery. It has to be built in from the very earliest stages. It is just as essential as credit-ratings and monetary policies. It is structural.

To my mind, the question is not «can we afford to think about a culture of peace at this stage?», but «can we afford not to?». Let me refer you to the brochure that has been prepared for this symposium : «Building a Culture of Peace in Southeast Asia». It gives a very clear idea of just how many areas of activity and just how many types of action are involved when we address the tensions of development and seek to avert those trends which lead to disharmony, conflict and the spread of violence. At the simplest level of all, it comes down to the every-day behaviour of each and every one of us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Southeast Asia has a unique opportunity - an opportunity born of crisis - to set in motion a new approach to recovery, a new approach to development, one which averts the risks of conflict and which, at every stage and at every level, reinforces peace, development, human rights and democracy. The region already has strong foundations for such an approach: its own tradition of co-operative peace, its extraordinarily rich history, values, culture and heritage, its wealth of resources and skills. I believe the region can show the rest of the world the way: a new way! As other regions now face the threat of economic recession, they will look to Southeast Asia to see how the situation is being handled here.

The challenge is to find new methods to deal with the problems triggered by recession, new methods which embody a new approach. UNESCO offers its partnership in every way it may prove to be of use. The foundations are already in place and can be further developed: our school network, the Associated Schools Project, and the Asia-Pacific Network of International Education for Value Education, for example. Our university network, Unitwin and the UNESCO Chairs, our scientific research programmes, whose disciplinary networks reach across the world: an excellent example is the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network: It involves conservation and economic activity in cross-boundary biosphere reserves - a practice that is now spreading through Southeast Asia.

All these and other programmes can be called on to contribute to recovery strategies, to the building of a culture of peace in this region and to the building of secure and lasting development. I hope this symposium will serve as a space for

dialogue, as a testing-ground for new ideas and as a forum from which new proposals, new plans and new perspectives will emerge. I ask you all to bear in mind the absolutely crucial importance of implementation and follow-up. I can assure you that UNESCO will put all its energies into making the outcome of this meeting a concrete and positive reality. It is the best tribute it can pay to the peoples of Southeast Asia, to the decades of untiring efforts they have made to ensure that their children experience a better quality of life. The practical start which we make here is a pledge for their future, and for a new beginning for each and every child in this region.