

Dialogue among Civilizations

The Round Table
on the Eve of the United Nations
Millennium Summit



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United Nations
Year of Dialogue
among Civilizations



2001

Dialogue among Civilizations

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Dialogue among Civilizations

The Round Table on the Eve of
the United Nations Millennium Summit

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the United Nations
with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Foreword

The United Nations, indeed the entire global community, is observing the year 2001 as United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations. This book captures the essence of what was an important starting point for the year in stimulating global discussions on this challenging subject.

On 5 September 2000, on the eve of the historic United Nations Millennium Summit in New York, leaders from all continents assembled to share their views, experience and visions for a world at peace, buoyed by tolerance, dialogue, mutual understanding and commitment. The political perspectives advanced at the New York event were complemented by contributions from personalities drawn from literature, the media, academia, diplomacy and international organizations.

In presenting the various contributions, this book sets out a frame for dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world, one of intensifying globalization encompassing and affecting all societal activities, yet also one of growing and troubling disparities and divisions. The underlying message of this book is that the community of nations must strive for better and more equitable ways of addressing the multiple challenges of globalization. It is our mission, indeed our vocation, to work for globalization with a human face.

This quest must be based on universally shared values while safeguarding the diversity of individuals and cultures, and it must be targeted at the urgent needs of the disadvantaged and excluded groups or geographical regions. Solidly anchored in democracy, human rights and

fundamental freedoms, dialogue is the key, because dialogue alone can lead to long-term understanding, reconciliation and peace.

Globalization offers great opportunities, but for many, it means marginalization. A number of developing countries are experiencing enormous pressures as they struggle to cope, to shape their destinies and to attain growth with equity. The new information and communication technologies hold the promise that many of the problems confronting human societies could be significantly alleviated if only the requisite information and expertise were systematically and equitably employed, disseminated and shared.

In several regions of the world, peace remains fragile and tenuous. Poverty and conflict put human security at risk and endanger human dignity and social justice. Helping to preserve peace in all its dimensions is an abiding challenge for the international community, especially in conditions of globalization.

We need a renewed commitment to dialogue. We must build trust and understanding through dialogue. Globalization must be made to work for all.



Koïchiro Matsuura

*Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)*

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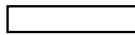
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P r e f a c e

In November 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The resolution, sponsored by Iran and supported by a large number of countries, invited

Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization . . . to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject. . .¹

The celebration, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations provides an opportunity to emphasize that the globalization currently under way is not only an economic, financial and technological process, but also constitutes a profoundly human challenge, one that invites us to take cognizance of the interdependence of humankind and of its rich diversity. Because it gives rise to unprecedented encounters between individuals, societies and cultures, because it disrupts lifestyles and patterns of behaviour, ways of making decisions and methods of governance, creativity and forms of

1. Resolution A/RES/53/22 of 16 November 1998.

expression, globalization calls for a renewed commitment to promote and develop international co-operation on the basis of the recognition of the equal dignity of individuals and of societies.

The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations was launched with a Round Table, organized by UNESCO and the United Nations with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which took place at the United Nations in New York on 5 September 2000.

Promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures is a key component of UNESCO's mission and activities. The Organization's Constitution provides that peace must be founded 'upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind', and that UNESCO has been created 'for the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the United Nations Organization was established and which its Charter proclaims'. UNESCO, motivated by its ethical and intellectual mandate, seeks to stimulate a fruitful debate on the key issue of the 'dialogue among civilizations', which should contribute to the emergence of a universal dispensation that reconciles the recognition of shared values and respect for specificities.

The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations is a logical sequel to the celebration, in 2000, of the 'International Year for the Culture of Peace', for which UNESCO served as lead agency, and for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010). UNESCO is thus duty bound to mobilize the vital resources of the international community in the service of a true dialogue among cultures.

In order to strengthen the dialogue among cultures, UNESCO is endeavouring to analyse the interactions that have taken place between them. The aim is to acquire a better understanding of the long-term processes that are the mainsprings of the memory of peoples – and that can either fuel prejudice and incomprehension or lay the foundations for renewing dialogue between different civilizations, cultures, religions and spiritual traditions – by going beyond the traditional, reductive approach to intercultural dialogue considered solely as the mutual knowledge of cultures and civilizations. It will thus be possible to analyse the basic concepts of heritage, identity and creativity as they take shape, in order to highlight their composite nature. The Organization is therefore seeking to strengthen the processes, both historical and contemporary, that are conducive to a favourable convergence between cultures through the discovery of a common heritage and shared values.

The ideas put forward during the Round Table of 5 September 2000, as well as the moral commitments made by the participating Heads of State, show that a 'dialogue among civilizations' is an essential stage in the process of founding a form of human development that is both sustainable and equitable, humanizing globalization and laying the bases of an enduring peace.

This publication consists of two parts. Part one contains the addresses by the Heads of State and Foreign Ministers who participated in the Round Table, introduced by Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, and Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Part two captures the exchanges among intellectual, cultural and media personalities, moderated by Giandomenico Picco, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001.

Part I

Introduction to the Round Table

Koïchiro Matsuura

*Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)*

We are assembled here because in November 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations, in a resolution sponsored by the Islamic Republic of Iran, proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

Active, mutually enriching exchange between cultures is essential to furthering peace between nations and peoples. It lies at the very core of the mandate given to the United Nations and to UNESCO, which is dedicated 'to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among 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. . . '.

In today's world, the need for dialogue is increasingly relevant and acute, both at the national and international levels. Both the internal and the external focus are equally important, as civilizations and their impact have often transcended the borders of nation states.

It is therefore particularly fitting that the launch event for the observance of the Year be held at such a symbolic time, on the eve of the United Nations Millennium Summit: not only to explore one another's

legacies, but to reflect on what future may lie in store for our diverse civilizations, values and creeds – which form the fabric of humanity.

I wish to thank all of those who have made such a meeting possible; I wish to pay particular tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan; I thank President Mohamed Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his initiative and contribution to this event; and the distinguished Heads of State and Ministers gathered here today.

I am convinced that getting to know the cultures of others, listening to what they have to say, dispels hatred, ignorance and mistrust, and helps to build peace. We must learn to recognize what each culture owes to all other cultures. We know that civilizations endlessly change, as they redefine themselves in light of new surroundings.

Many nations and peoples nurse long-standing memories of historic grievances and cultural slights. Only dialogue stands a chance to resolve them – never war or aggressive behaviour. Dialogue alone can lead to long-term understanding, reconciliation, and peace. Dialogue alone brings these clearly into the open, where they may be assessed with full intellectual honesty and deep concern for one another's merits. Cultural dialogue thus helps to sow the seeds of peace.

UNESCO is one of the world's principal forums for such dialogue. The dialogue it fosters is predicated upon universal acceptance and observance of basic human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, to which all the Organization's members are committed. Within this broad moral framework, each culture knows that its voice is heard, weighed, and respected.

Dialogue, in itself, means exposing – certainly not blanketing over – different ways of thought. Cultures, while borrowing from one another, have too often conflicted violently. Cultural tolerance and open-mindedness are called for, in order to learn from others. This is what I hope we can do at this special event, involving both political leaders occupying the highest office in their countries, as well as distinguished scholars, thinkers and intellectuals.



Left to right, Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami and Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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Kofi Annan

Secretary-General of the United Nations

First, I should like to express my gratitude to President Khatami, under whose initiative the Dialogue among Civilizations has become a reality within the Organization and throughout the world. The presence of so many Heads of State at this event is an eloquent tribute to President Khatami's ideal of a world society based on compassion and tolerance. I also thank the Director-General of UNESCO and his staff for having organized this event.

I am honoured and pleased to join this important conference on the day before the opening of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations. Indeed, I can think of no better moral and spiritual foundation for the Summit than a meeting devoted to dialogue among civilizations. The United Nations itself was created in the belief that dialogue can triumph over discord, that diversity is a universal virtue, and that the peoples of the world are far more united by common fate than they are divided by their separate identities. The United Nations, at its best, can be the true home of the dialogue among civilizations – the forum where such dialogue can flourish and bear fruit in every field of human endeavour. That is why I have warmly welcomed the proclamation of the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Without this dialogue, taking place every day among all nations, within and between civilizations, cultures and groups, no peace can be lasting and no prosperity can be secure. That is the lesson of the United Nations' first half-century. It is a lesson that we ignore at our peril.

What that history should teach us also is that alongside an infinite diversity of cultures there does exist one global civilization in which humanity's ideas and beliefs meet and develop peacefully and productively. It is a civilization that must be defined by its tolerance of dissent, its celebration of cultural diversity, its insistence on fundamental, universal human rights, and its belief in the right of people everywhere to have a say in how they are governed. It is a civilization that we are called on to defend and promote as we embark on a new century.

Our own specific efforts to advance the dialogue among civilizations are led by my Personal Envoy, Giandomenico Picco. As part of his responsibilities, he has assembled a group of eminent persons to help frame the issues in a forthcoming report, which will be presented to me in summer 2001. In turn, I intend to present it to the General Assembly as our contribution to the dialogue. Those reflections will start from the

realization that we have to use diversity as an asset in an increasingly interconnected world. Indeed, the perception of diversity as a threat is the very seed of war. Diversity is not only the basis for the dialogue among civilizations, but also the reality that makes dialogue necessary. I am confident that this meeting will contribute greatly to the report and to our common efforts to advance this vital dialogue for humanity. It will no doubt also offer guidance and inspiration to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in South Africa in August 2001.

I know that you all have important contributions to make on this vital subject, and I will close with the thought that I hope that we can engage in a genuine and fruitful exchange of views on this question and thereby ensure that we display the value of a true dialogue among civilizations.

P r e s e n t a t i o n

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The General Assembly of the United Nations has only recently endorsed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran for dialogue among civilizations and cultures. Nevertheless, this proposal is attracting, day after day, increased support from numerous academic institutions and political organizations. In order to comprehend the grounds for this encouraging reception, it is imperative to take into account the prevailing situation in our world and to ponder the reasons for widespread discontent with it. It is, of course, only natural for justice-seeking and altruistic human beings to feel discontented with the *status quo*. The Millennium Summit of the United Nations will provide the international community with a unique and unprecedented opportunity to discuss political aspects of the calamities that afflict humanity in our day and age. In this esteemed gathering, allow me instead to begin with certain historical, theoretical, and, for the most part, non-political grounds for the call to a dialogue among civilizations.

One reason is the exceptional geographical location of Iran, connecting various cultural and civilizational domains of Asia to Europe. This remarkable situation has placed Iran on a route of political hurricanes as well as pleasant breezes, of cultural exchange and also venues for international trade.

One of the unintended, if only natural, consequences of this strategic geographical location has been the fostering of a certain cultural sense which has become a primary attribute of the Persian soul during its historical evolution. Should we try to view this primary attribute from the vantage point of social psychology and then attempt to scrutinize the constituent elements of the Persian or Iranian spirit, we would recognize a remarkable capacity that we could call a 'capacity to integrate'. It comprises a reflective contemplation of the methods and achievements of various cultures and civilizations in order to augment and enrich one's own cultural repertoire. The spiritual wisdom of Sohrevardi, which elegantly synthesizes and integrates ancient Persian wisdom, Greek rationalism and Islamic intuitive knowledge, presents us with a brilliant example of the Persian 'capacity to integrate'.

We should also note that Persian thought and culture owes an immense debt to Islam as one of its primary springs of efflorescence. Islam embodies a universal wisdom. Each and every human individual, living in each and every corner of time and place, is potentially included in the purview of Islam. Islam emphasizes essential human equality and disdains such elements as birth and blood. This conquered the hearts of those people yearning for justice and freedom. On the other hand, the prominent position accorded to rational thought in Islam, and the rejection of an allegedly strict separation between human thought and divine revelation, also helped Islam to overcome dualism in both latent and manifest forms.

Islamic civilization is indeed one of only a few world civilizations that have become consolidated and have taken shape around a sacred text, namely the noble Koran. The essential unity of the Islamic civilization stems from the unique call that reached all Islamic peoples and nations. Its plurality derives from the diversity of responses evoked after Islam reached various nations. Herein lies the crux of diversity and plurality that we observe in achievements of the Islamic civilization: a single message, interpreted and understood in a variety of ways.

What we ought to consider in earnest today is the emergence of a global culture. Global culture cannot and ought not overlook the characteristics and requirements of native local cultures with the aim of imposing itself upon them. Cultures and civilizations that have naturally evolved among various nations in the course of history are constituted from elements that have gradually adapted to collective souls and to historical and traditional characteristics. As such, these elements have become cohesive and are consolidated within an appropriate network of

relationships. In spite of all existing plurality and diversity, a unique and harmonious form can be abstracted from the collection.

On the other hand, the notion of 'world culture' presumes an exchange emanating from cultural agents belonging to disparate geographical locations. Compared to local and national cultures, a world culture is a selective culture deliberately formed and abstracted from a natural set. This culture is therefore intrinsically non-uniform and non-monolithic both in form and in content. It also lacks any primary or essential elements and as such, there can exist no cross-composition between primary and secondary elements.

In order to provide natural unity and harmony in form and content for global culture and to prevent anarchy and chaos, all the parties concerned should engage in a dialogue in which they can exchange knowledge, experience and understanding in diverse areas of culture and civilization. Today it is impossible to bar ideas from freely travelling between cultures and civilizations in disparate parts of the world far away from each other. However, in the absence of a dialogue among thinkers, scholars, intellectuals and artists from various cultures and civilizations, the danger of cultural homelessness seems imminent. Such a state of cultural homelessness runs the risk of depriving people of solace both in their own culture and in the vast open horizon of global culture.

Examination of social and political aspects of the past century has fortunately gone beyond a mere critique of political activities of superpowers in the world. Regarding social theories and political ideologies as mere 'narratives' has helped to tone down the excessively flamboyant claims of some twentieth-century political philosophies and social theories. It is now aptly agreed that the exclusive claim of such ideologies to being 'scientific' and 'true' has indeed been arbitrary.

The notion and proposal of dialogue among civilizations undoubtedly raises numerous theoretical questions. In particular, when we attempt to redress this proposal in an academic context for philosophical, anthropological, sociological and linguistic analysis, the problems become more acute. I do not mean to belittle such intellectual and academic undertakings. Rather, I want to stress that, in formulating this proposal, the Government of Iran has attempted to present an alternative paradigm for international relationships. This should become clearer when we take comparative notice of already existing and prevailing paradigms that underlie international relations today. It is incumbent upon us to radically examine the prevalent master paradigm and to examine the grounds for replacing the paradigm with a new one.

In order to call on the governments and peoples of the world to follow a new paradigm of dialogue among cultures and civilizations, we ought to learn from the world's past experience, especially from the tremendous human catastrophes that took place in the twentieth century. We ought to critically examine the prevalent master paradigm in international relations based on the discourse of power and the glorification of might.

From an ethical perspective, the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations requires that we give up the will for power and instead appeal to the will for empathy and compassion. Without the will for empathy, compassion and understanding there would be no hope for the prevalence of order in our world. We ought to gallantly combat the dearth of compassion and empathy in our world. The ultimate goal of dialogue among civilizations is not dialogue in and of itself, but dialogue towards attaining empathy and compassion.

There are two ways to realize a dialogue among civilizations. First an interaction and interpenetration of cultures and civilizations with each other, involving a variety of factors, is one way in which this dialogue takes place. This mode of interaction is clearly involuntary and optional and occurs in an unpremeditated fashion, driven primarily by vagaries of social events, geographical situation and historical contingency.

Second, a dialogue among civilizations could also mean a deliberate dialogue among representative members of various civilizations such as scholars, artists and philosophers from disparate civilizational domains. Here, dialogue entails a deliberate act based upon premeditated indulgence, unaffected by historical or geographical contingency.

Even though human beings inevitably inhabit a certain historical horizon, we could still aim at 'meta-historical' discourse. Indeed, a meta-historical discussion of eternal human questions – such as the ultimate meaning of life and death or good and evil – ought to substantiate and enlighten any dialogue on political and social issues. Without a discussion of fundamental questions, and by simply confining attention to superficial issues, dialogue will not get us far from where we currently stand. When superficial issues masquerade as 'real', 'urgent' and 'essential', and where no agreement, or at least mutual understanding, obtains among parties to dialogue concerning what is truly fundamental, in all likelihood misunderstanding and confusion will proliferate instead of any sense of empathy and compassion.

The movement of ideas and cultural interaction and interpenetration recur in human history as naturally and persistently as the emigration of

birds in nature. Even the abhorrent waging of war has sometimes led to the enrichment and strengthening of the cultures and civilizations involved. For instance, as a consequence of war, great literary masterpieces of various civilizations, such as primary philosophical literary and sacred books, have become available to other civilizations.

Translation and interpretation have always proved to be one of the prime venues for the movement of ideas. Today also, scholars, artists and all concerned should embark on a methodical re-reading and a deeply reflective re-interpretation of great books of various cultures and civilizations.

Translation does not necessarily mean translating from a certain source language into a target language with a different vocabulary and linguistic structure. There are times when a text needs to be translated within the same source language. This happens when the original language has undergone radical semantic change over time. The subtlety lies in cases where the language under translation or interpretation sounds the same as the one we use today, whereas the world, or universe of discourse to which the two languages belong, has changed over time. Sacred and spiritual language is essentially and structurally different from everyday language rooted in utterly terrestrial and temporal needs. It is difficult to make a transition from one to the other. Particular difficulty arises when one of the parties to the dialogue attempts to communicate with another by employing a basically secularist language in an essentially sacred and spiritual discourse. By secularism, I mean the general rejection of any intuitive spiritual experience and faith in the unseen. The true essence of humanity is more inclusive than language, and this more encompassing nature of the existential essence of humanity makes it meaningful to hope for fruitful dialogue.

What may be termed the 'Cartesian-Faustian' narrative of Western civilization should now give way by listening to other narratives, proposed by other human cultural domains. Today the unstoppable destruction of nature stemming from ill-founded preconceptions of recent centuries threatens human livelihood. Should there be no other philosophical, social, political and human grounds necessitating dialogue but this pitiable relationship between humans and nature, then all selflessly peace-seeking intellectuals should endeavour to promote dialogue as urgently as they can.

Another goal of dialogue among cultures and civilizations is to recognize and to understand not only the cultures and civilizations of others, but also one's own. One ought to take a step back in order to get an enhanced perspective on oneself. Seeing in essence requires taking distance

in perspective, and distance provides the grounds for immersion into another existential dimension.

Dialogue among cultures and civilizations rests upon a rational and ethically normative commitment of parties to the dialogue. In order to exchange understanding instead of proliferating misunderstanding we need special moral and ethical training as well as a special rational and logical methodology. Dialogue is a bilateral or even multi-lateral process in which the end result is not manifest from the beginning. We ought to prepare ourselves for surprising outcomes, since every dialogue can provide grounds for human creativity to flourish.

In a dialogue among cultures and civilizations, great artists should undoubtedly be given due recognition together with philosophers, scholars and theologians. For artists do not see the sea, mountain and forest as mere mines and sources of energy, oil and fuel. For the artist, the sea embodies the waving music of a heavenly dance, the mountain is not just a mass of dirt and boulders, and the forest is not merely an inanimate collection of timber to cut and use. By excluding the artist's 'innocent' understanding from the political and social realm, human beings descend to the level of the tool-making 'working' animal. Such a being would surely look with disdain at the possibility of dialogue and the empathy or compassion that could result. A world so thoroughly controlled by political, military and economic conditions today inevitably begets the ultimate devastation of the environment and the eradication of all spiritual, artistic and intuitive activity. This would result in a dreary world where the human soul will find no solace or refuge. The inevitable fate of such a world is nihilism. The rational thinking of the philosopher, the learned language of the scholar, and the earnest efforts of the social engineer cannot suffice to remedy this nihilism. To alleviate this crisis we need the magical touch and spell of the enchanted artist and the inspired poet to rescue life – at least part of it – from the iron clasp of death and to make possible the continuation of life.

Poets and artists engage in dialogue within and through the sacred language of spirit and morality. That language has remained safe from the poisonous winds of time, and in the very cold and merciless season of faithlessness, it still brings us the good news of original human ideals. It still calls people to persist on the path of hope and faith.

So far as the present relationship between man and nature is concerned, we are living in tragic times. The sense of solitude and monologue and the anxiety rooted within this situation embody this tragic world. Our call to dialogue aims at soothing this sense of tragedy. We do not, of course, wish to trivialize deep-rooted and genuine human pains, or

to propose a superficial panacea for profound human questions concerning the meaning of life and death. However, in the course of dialogue, the way in which various cultures and civilizations embrace and encounter grounds for tragedy should be discussed beneficially.

In addition to poetic and artistic experience, mysticism also provides us with a graceful, profound and universal language for dialogue. Mystical experience, constituted of the revelation and countenance of the sacred in the heart and soul of the mystic, opens new existential pathways on to the human spirit. A study of mystical achievements of various nations reveals to us the deepest layers of their experience in the most universal sense. The unified mystical meaning and content across cultures and the linguistic parallelism among mystics, despite vast cultural, historical and geographical distances, is indeed perplexing. Promoting a dialogue in the arena of culture in disparate societies should constitute one of the bedrock of understanding between cultures and civilizations.

The proposal for a dialogue among civilizations builds upon the study of cultural geography of various fields of civilization. Yet the unique and irreplaceable role of governments should never be overlooked in this process.

In the absence of governmental commitment to an affirmative vote on the resolution on dialogue among civilizations, we cannot maintain high hopes for the political consequences of this proposal. The Member States of the United Nations should endeavour to remove barriers standing in the way of dialogue among cultures and civilizations and should abide by the basic precondition of dialogue. This fundamental principle rejects any imposition and builds upon the premise that all parties to dialogue stand on essentially equal footing.

The symbolic representation of Themis, goddess of divine law and justice, has already gained virtually global acceptance as its statue appears on judiciary courts in many nations. It is now time to ask Themis to remove her blindfold. Let us ask her to set aside the lofty scale that currently weighs political and economic might as the sole measure. Instead, she should call all parties to an open discussion in various domains of thought, culture and civilization. She ought to look observantly at the evidence with open eyes and, by freeing herself from any prior obligations, she should then finally charge citizens of the world with the task of making political, economic and cultural decisions.

At the very same time that political organizations and academic institutions consider and discuss various aspects of the proposal for dialogue among civilizations, this dialogue takes place day after day as a

matter of fact. In the domains of economics, politics and culture, problems and issues rarely remain local and indigenous. We all deeply engage in making use of each other's social, cultural and spiritual findings. The penetration of Eastern religions into the West, repercussions of Western political, cultural and economic developments in the East, and most significantly the expansion of global electronic communication have all rendered dialogue among civilizations a reality closer to home.

The escalating development of information technologies will continue to penetrate deeper layers of our lives far beyond the realm of social relationships and will form common underlying interconnections between disparate cultural and geographical regions. The science of semiotics provides us with tools to excavate such common underlying links and would form the common language we need for any dialogue. We should listen in earnest to what other cultures offer, since relying on profound human experiences we can seek new ways for human life.

Dialogue is not easy. It is even more difficult to prepare and open up vistas upon one's inner existence to others. A belief in dialogue paves the way for vivacious hope: the hope of living in a world permeated by virtue, humility and love, and not merely by the reign of economic indices and destructive weapons. Should the spirit of dialogue prevail, humanity, culture and civilization will prevail. We should all have faith in this triumph and we should all hope that all citizens of the world will be prepared to listen to the divine call enshrined in the Holy Koran:

So Announce the Good News to My Servants – Those who listen to the Word, and follow the best (meaning) in it.(Koran, XXXIX: 17–18)

Let us hope that enmity and oppression will end and that the clamour of love for truth, justice and human dignity will prevail. Let us hope that all human beings will sing along with Hafez of Shiraz, that divinely inspired spirit:

No ineffable clamour reverberates in the grand heavenly dome more sweetly than the sound of love.

Statements

Abdelaziz Bouteflika

President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

If we ask ourselves why the year 2001 has been proclaimed as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, my answer would be that if the lives of men can be measured in terms of years, ideologies in decades, and nations in centuries, then the unit for measuring civilizations, born of the interaction among peoples, would be the millennium.

During several millennia, seven or eight major civilizations of the world were moulded in the form of the major religion that constituted their cradle. As temporal ambitions, demography or economy allowed, a constant interaction among these civilizations led to a fluctuation between dialogue and confrontation in a continuously renewed movement of ebb and flow.

Today, we reiterate our legitimate determination to regulate these fluctuations throughout the world to favour dialogue over conflict, and to further ensure the promotion of peace.

Otherwise, and having emerged in the second half of the twentieth century from an ideological conflict that might well have triggered disastrous consequences, we run the risk of moving straight into an even more dangerous explosion of violence stemming from the polarization of differences between civilizations. Yet history has shown that while force can defeat some ideologies, it cannot obliterate a civilization without destabilizing the entire planet.

Today's nations, which have forged their independence and become aware of their national identity, belong to cultural groupings that have durably marked their historical evolution and shaped their cultural being. The concept of 'nation' in its modern definition does not imply a break with this basic heritage of civilization and the characteristics of a people. On the contrary, a nation must be embraced, conceived and expressed as a tangible sign of human creativity and as an integral element of humanity's heritage.

Without going too far back in history, the colonial expansion in the nineteenth century – and I mention only the Muslim civilization to which my country belongs – led to attempts to obliterate that civilization perceived as lifeless remnants, a fertile field for anthropologists, scientists and ethnographers seeking the exotic. There were and are today orientalists and islamologists, as we now call them, who are above suspicion, but notwithstanding, the general usefulness of their work has often been distorted or even biased. Their work contrasts with preconceived notions of ideologies that are no longer acceptable because they reflect a vision that disfigures the socio-historic realities, set in stone because the predominant ideology had decided that it was to be so.

The West claimed to be the bearer of a civilizing mission, as if the rest of the world, the object of envy, was peopled by 'barbarians'. Ernest Renan, the renowned author of an authoritative work on Even Rochard, *Averrois and Averroisme*, and who along with Djamal-Eddine Al-Afghani was a well-known figure, described history in China as 'boring' because nothing happened there, and wrote that the Koran was a yoke binding the human spirit: the last of the sons of Ishmael should be pursued to the far reaches of the desert! Meiji Japan did not escape this kind of ideological 'lynching' either: it was said that the Japanese, unable to be creative, were good only at imitation.

Western ethnocentrism – this unilateral way of looking at others as inferior when they are only different, or deeming that the other's historical problems were permanent, or kind of a congenital defect – has for a long time been a stumbling-block for non-western civilizations. The West, taking on the lion's share of scientific and cultural development in the world from the time of the 'Greek miracle' until now, has tended to reduce everything that was not part of itself to a marginalized fate, eternally destined to lag behind.

This attitude claimed universality; in fact it is not this. The danger is that it may bring into question the unity of the human spirit by setting aside for the West technology, philosophy and rational thinking in general,



General view of the participants in the Round Table.
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Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
addressing the Round Table.
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while relegating the Other to the gloomy fate of being excluded from human progress.

Proclaiming the year 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations was a welcome initiative taken by my brother, Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is a particularly timely proclamation, and comes at a time when we are questioning the possibility of sustaining a fruitful and balanced dialogue among nations with varying degrees of material development and, furthermore, it comes within the common reductive context of globalization.

Countries poor in resources but rich in culture could quite rightly fear that some of the ethical and social values to which they are most committed have already suffered from the colonial confiscation of the past, and that they might be further eroded or even truncated by the universalization of a one-dimensional model stemming from materially wealthy or prosperous countries. This model does not take into account all of humankind's dimensions. It does not enable one individual to see the human in another individual. It is a one-way model that transforms genuine and warm societies into what I would call 'schizophrenic societies'.

It is from the industrialized countries that warnings arise about the irrational fear of a supposed 'Green peril', which is replacing the 'Red' or 'Yellow' peril and which could become the prime danger for the survival of Western civilization. We find in the arsenal of concepts used to justify an inevitable clash between the Western civilization and the Islamic civilization a reference to stereotypes based on racial prejudice, which would give rise to indignation were they applied to other ethnic groups. While abandoning the traditional, condescending clichés regarding privacy in Islam, these stereotypes now equate Islamic civilization with violence, terrorism and fanaticism, in order to fight Islam better.

A dialogue among civilizations can be seen as a dialogue between the individual and the universal. Great significance is given to this classical dialogue in the Koran when God, addressing men, tells them: *O Men! We created males and females and We made peoples and tribes so that you may know each other!* By transcending national and tribal groupings, the Koran has a specific purpose and reason for Man to recognize Man. To the motto on the Temple of Delphi, 'Know thyself', we could add 'by knowing the Other', or recognizing the particular identity of the Other. Cultures and civilizations, like individuals, can recognize their identities and originality only when they compare them to other cultures or civilizations.

That is why proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations could be a timely opportunity to leave

behind extremists from the West, who invoke the final confrontation between the two civilizations, and those in the Muslim world, who call for the Manichaeic division of the world into the 'realm of Islam' and the 'realm of war', as between good and evil.

This proclamation is timely because it follows conflicts in Eastern Europe which have left atrocities in their wake, and conflicts which have set civilization against civilization using divergences as a pretext. It will promote throughout the world the active and positive coexistence of the great religions in pluralistic societies, rich in their diversity but experiencing tensions and hardships today.

In order to ensure a successful dialogue among civilizations it seems to me that the following prerequisites must be met:

- First, the countries participating in this dialogue must themselves be democratic countries. Otherwise, how can they seek to reconcile their disputes with others if they cannot even ensure that dialogue at home?
- The second prerequisite would be that these countries must recognize that there is neither a 'pure' nor *sui generis* civilization, but that each civilization is a river with other civilizations as its tributaries and thus it must be open to the universal, otherwise they are doomed to fall into decay. In this context, an alleged opposition between the Judeo-Christian culture and the Islamic culture ignores the harmonious coexistence of these three 'religions of the Book' – in Andalusia, for example, where they gave birth to a highly civilized society. Western civilization today is no less Islamo-Christian than it is Judeo-Christian, if one takes into account the contribution made by Muslim thinkers and scholars to the emergence of Western societies from the darkness of the Middle Ages, and later in the blossoming of the Renaissance.
- Furthermore, this dialogue must take place among nations. By that I mean that the various components of society, its different levels and different age groups, must be involved. Dialogue should not be confined to states alone. We must ensure that a state's political power does not usurp the role of the nation as a whole.
- Finally, the dialogue must be multifaceted. It must encompass the various areas of life, with dialogue among religions as an integral part of life.

It is time to break with the narrow concept only takes only international relations and economic aspects into account, while ignoring the problem of values which play a central role in the imagination of peoples today. Peoples who have historically known the grandeur of their nation through previous civilizational achievements will not rest in today's

world until they are recognized and reintegrated within the so-called 'civilized' nations. Otherwise they become marginalized, excluded or condemned to misunderstanding, which is as unfair as it is demeaning.

It goes without saying that they should strive to overcome archaic practices, and choose dialogue. In so doing they will become more approachable in the critical eye of the Other, and will therefore be more open to the requirements of modern societies.

This dialogue can be seen as a therapy of choice. It acknowledges differences but does not aim to abolish them. It is not a question of falling into an insipid cosmopolitanism by sacrificing fundamental elements in each civilization. Karl Jaspers defined dialogue as a lovers' quarrel, that is, a kind of arm-wrestling match between two equally defensible types of logic, but moderated and guided by the awareness of working towards a common cause, namely the destiny of mankind.

The starting point could be the recognition by each regional grouping of the contribution of their diverse civilizations, recognizing that each civilization has its own sense of belonging and identity. But the underlying culture must be an open one seeking harmony and not a culture of 'us' and 'them', which tends to alienate the Other. That is why the proportions should be defined as basic elements in civilization: for example, an understanding between individuals and groups; between individualism and others; between a place of consensus, of participation, and competition; a distinction between the use of law, wise men and elders; between material and non-material values; between solidarity and charity; and an understanding of the place of history and the future, of tradition and progress.

Such proportions differ from one civilization to another. They should be explicit and made known. Civilizations do not stand still, they move forward, they evolve. This assessment will help each nation individually to bring the balance to this dialogue that is considered to be a necessary component of its civilization. It could also participate through dialogue in a collective effort that would lead towards defining a substratum of shared values which could truly be called a universal civilization, based not on individual truths and justices, but on Truth and Justice.

The value of dialogue among civilizations lies in Man's quest for his universality with the numerous cultural expressions he has given himself throughout time and space. This is a genuine antidote and remedy for racism and discrimination in all its forms. In this regard I pay tribute to the initiative taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Mary

Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for the year 2001, an undertaking to know oneself better by knowing the Other. It is an opportunity to deepen our humanity by fully understanding it.

International ethics will benefit from this endeavour as will, inevitably, the cause of peace.

Eduard A. Shevardnadze

President of Georgia

I believe that it is appropriate and even symbolic that we have gathered today to talk about culture, tolerance and a global dialogue as humankind enters an entirely new epoch.

The problems that we are discussing are no less relevant today than they were a thousand years ago. While we can deplore the existing reality we must first recognize it for what it is and work out a contract for our dialogue.

In this sense I very much appreciate the efforts of the initiators and organizers of this event – the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, and President Khatami. They have precisely captured the essence of the global problem at the dawn of the third millennium. This is an epoch of the Internet and the mapping of the human genome. Today, we must ask ourselves whether after several millennia of human existence, we might not avail ourselves of humankind's accumulated experience and make the universal dream of peaceful coexistence and the mutual complementarity of cultures finally come true. Can we ensure that new technologies will serve only the goal of mutual enrichment, and not the development of misanthropic theories on the innate inferiority of particular cultures?

History has proven that there are no inferior cultures. A human being, by virtue of his or her ability to think and feel, is naturally predisposed to ideals of goodness and justice that are inherent in all religions and civilizations.

I represent a small country with the grand traditions of multi-ethnicity, multi-confessionality and tolerance. Throughout Georgia's multi-century history, there has been no epoch when our country's Orthodox Christian culture was not enriched by the presence of others – including the Islamic culture. The Muslims of Georgia have always felt themselves equal citizens, as did the sons and daughters of Israel.

In this sense, the notions and traditions that later became the basis of the values of 'good citizenship' and 'equality' were inherent to Georgia, which also enriched its national culture with the humanist ideals of Iranian, Turkish, Byzantine, Russian and European civilizations. At the same time, Georgia represents an example, not of war and animosity, but of mutual complementarity of cultures that leads to a flourishing of national culture, and not to its decline.

Thanks to, and not in spite of, cultural pluralism, our people

managed not only to preserve our national identity, but also to add new colours and shades to our national Georgian ethnic culture. In this very fact, I see a modern embodiment of the ideal of 'choice' not as a negation, but as a way of enrichment and development.

As President of Georgia, I consider myself to be entitled to suggest to you that the next meeting of the Round Table be held in Tbilisi. I will be entirely forthright and say that I consider the capital of my homeland to be well placed for organizing such an event, and even locating the headquarters of a permanent international structure to systematize and co-ordinate our joint efforts.

I fully realize that a policy-maker speaking about culture risks crossing over into the domain of political co-ordinates and logical schemes. Indeed, there is a common system of co-ordinates which we can see and understand only through the unconditional recognition of the primacy of universal human values, giving such notions as political culture and cultural politics some concrete meaning, thus retaining culture as a constant denominator. This is precisely what we had in mind when developing a concept of new thinking for the new world.

Five years ago at the Tbilisi International Forum for a Dialogue of Cultures, I stated that the policy-maker must become a key figure in the dialogue of cultures and that politics itself must become an instrument for interaction between cultures. At the same time, the more politics becomes culture-based, the stronger will be its linking force between cultures.

The past few years have strongly reinforced my conviction that we must create a world architecture that is in line with the new realities of current geoculture and geopolitics. We must create this world architecture to prevent the devastating manifestations of xenophobia, ethnic-cleansing and intolerance, and not merely develop the 'dialogue of cultures', but elaborate a system for the 'interaction of cultures'. The principle of solidarity against a flagrant lack of cultural regard – hence aggressive separatism and ethnic hatred – must become its basis.

I hope that our dialogue will become an important factor in this global process. We not only *must*, but based on the historical experience and culture of our peoples, *can* create strong guarantees for a peaceful happy development in the new millennium, which we will hope becomes an epoch of solidarity between peoples and civilizations.

Abdurrahman Wahid

President of the Republic of Indonesia

I will not repeat the Islamic concepts of different cultures, because they have already been discussed by President Khatami from the Islamic Republic of Iran and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika from Algeria. I would like in the short time available to talk about the internal dimensions of this dialogue. If we have a true civilizational dialogue among us, then in the external discussions we have to be aware of the internal developments in our own countries and societies, especially in societies such as Indonesia, comprised of very different cultures from one part of the country and another. Thus we should welcome the initiative to declare the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

This is important because, without this kind of dialogue, there will be no impulse for us to have an intensified internal dialogue here. Only by such an 'internal' dialogue will we be able to encourage dialogue among the peoples of the earth. I believe that we have to first know what is actually happening in our own countries. In every country we see a process of dialogue between those promoting modernization and those clinging to tradition. Modernization and traditionalism are the essence of dialogue between different forces in our countries. If we carefully examine this situation, we will have a very rich ground for internal dialogue. And if we succeed in an internal dialogue, then we can have an international dialogue among the peoples of the earth. Only the construction of a civilizational dialogue at the international level will be worthwhile. Dialogue without any practical measures or results to be implemented in our own areas will be futile.

In Indonesia, for example, after the debacle of an authoritarian regime for more than thirty years, we have begun to see democracy flourishing in our country. But the fact remains that the dialogue of modernization versus traditionalism is being carried out in a very intense way. Because we have an intense dialogue among ourselves, we see the emergence of so-called militants, or 'hard liners', in our own country. The emergence of such groups in Indonesia now mainly involves a very small number of people who cannot digest the essence of dialogue – namely to know each other. They cling to their own 'eternal truth', their own 'eternal lessons' which they think will be applicable to all humankind. But this is wrong. We have to evolve by taking into account the new dimensions of our lives.

Our very long history dates back more than 2,000 years in Indonesia. To illustrate what I wish to say, some places have embraced both

modernism and traditionalism in their policies in the past. For example, Jogjakarta, an area in Java, encouraged the emergence of traditionalism by asking the Muslim *ulema*, or clergy as they are called in Christianity, to continue their traditional practices, but also to embrace modernism by integrating the modernist challenges to traditionalism. By pursuing both sides, they think that this will bring a stop, or at least a pause, to the conflict between the two tendencies. The situation has changed now because with the emergence of the nationalist State, the nation-State concept, forces of modernism versus traditionalism are found not only at the local level, but at the national level as well. There is now dialogue between both modern and traditional Islamic organizations. This is only one aspect, however. There is also dialogue among the various manifestations of different cultures as well.

Thus our current internal dialogue moves towards how we understood modernity in the past, how we understood the challenge of the changing world, and how we responded to these changes. This will produce results that we can offer to other nations to study, understand and, in the long run, use as a component of a globally changing world. I should like to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General, the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and President Khatami for bringing up the idea of a United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. We have suffered so much from a so-called dialogue that is confrontational only, from dialogue between civilizations in opposition, that we now need some kind of peace among us. We can have real dialogue if we can live in peace, and if we understand the reasons for violence, wars and everything else, and then try to resolve these conflicts.

Vaira Vike-Freiberga

President of the Republic of Latvia

I will make a few brief comments on the main subject of concern today, the two basic concepts in question: civilization and dialogue. I would like to start by offering you a very plain and simple definition of what *civilization* means to me. I would take it to be everything that makes human beings different from animals. I would take civilization to be everything that makes humankind truly human.

We are biological beings for whom civilization offers an opportunity to transcend the animal nature that we have inherited from the long aeons of biological evolution. Man may be a naked ape. Man may be a biped reptile with an overdeveloped cerebral cortex, carrying in its mid brain the very same instincts of devouring, destroying and survival that you find among the lowest reptiles on the planet.

But at the same time Man has been endowed with a brain that is totally unique on our planet, that allows it to write a new programme for each new life and for each new generation. (When I say Man, I of course mean humankind.) Instead of starting from 'scratch' as the animals do, we have the privilege and the legacy of being able to inherit from countless past generations all the wisdom, all the experience, all the knowledge and all the understanding that they have been able to accumulate.

This knowledge, then, is what I mean by *civilization*. By definition it cannot be equal or identical in every part of the world. We are finite beings limited not just by biology, but also by time, place, experience, and the particular events of history that have shaped the fate of our nations. Each of our nations has known joys and sorrows, moments of glory and moments of humiliation. All of us, as human beings, have known joy and sorrow. We share aspirations, and we share the same hopes for tomorrow.

In the dialogue among civilizations as I see it, it is incumbent upon us to present our view of the world to others in as simple and as plain a manner as we can. But more important still, it behoves us to be there and to listen to the other. And to listen not just with an open mind, but with an open heart and an open spirit.

Each of us in our culture, in our nation, and in our civilization, has tried to distil and to retain what we feel is the most valuable contribution that we as human beings and as nations can make to the world. These contributions are as different as we are who sit here today: we are different in physical appearance, in gender, in garment, in conviction and in religion. But we are all united by our one common trait of belonging to the

family of humankind. And just as each individual makes a unique contribution to his or her people and to his or her nation, so each nation makes a unique contribution to the community that is the world.

Now, at this present moment, at the dawn of a new millennium, we have a chance to rethink and to reaffirm the necessity and the importance of listening to each other, of hearing what the other has to say and of showing respect and appreciation for the achievements that they have to offer, and to hope that they will do the same for us in return.

With this new millennium stretching ahead of us, we have been given a wonderful opportunity to use the tool that is the United Nations to help us to redefine what we mean by *civilization*, by humankind, and to help us to progress and to evolve in the very essence of what is an ongoing and open process.

If *civilization* is the accumulation of wisdom from ages past, it is also the opportunity for us to contribute ideas, innovations, and things that have never been seen before. It is our opportunity to offer something new and to do things in a different way, without giving up our past or our heritage, and without giving up on the values that we have held dear.

The new millennium offers us the challenge of developing new values to which we can all subscribe. It offers us the challenge of finding and distilling that which is truly human, that which will not cause us to oppose each other, but in which we can recognize that we are all part of the same family, that we are all part of the same brotherhood and sisterhood of Man.

Alpha Omar Konaré

President of the Republic of Mali

My profound thanks to President Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for having suggested to the international community that the year 2001 be proclaimed the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. I also congratulate the United Nations and its Secretary-General and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its Director-General on the implementation of this idea.

The question of dialogue among civilizations is before us all and asks of us fundamentally the question of man, the fundamental value of this exceptional creature who is the shaper of the universe, so powerful, so weak, the dominator. Man who is creative because he is also vulnerable and submissive. And with the relationship between man and God, all of the problems of spirituality are before us. Nor can one have dialogue among civilizations if there is no respect for life, and above all, for the preservation of life. And here we raise other problems: the death penalty; the refusal, the rejection or the physical mutilation of human beings; and mutual respect for and among people.

It would be a pity, and indeed highly detrimental, if the dialogue among civilizations, which is at the centre of human history, served just as an outlet for anguish and concern at the end of the twentieth century, when spectacular technological and scientific progress are accompanied by exclusion, intolerance and hatred. We must be clearly aware that if we have set ourselves this goal it is one of the most fundamental initiatives which the United Nations has ever had in its brief history. Because the quest for dialogue among civilizations cannot be reduced in this discussion group to mere intellectual whimsy, to brilliant but empty international speculation about ethics and the law. After all, as we are holding this Round Table, there are individuals, minorities and peoples who are being harassed, persecuted, excluded, and indeed exterminated because of a lack of such dialogue and a lack of tolerance.

For all that, people do not reach exclusion through philosophical actions but frequently, alas, through the errors and follies of their leaders, follies based on the one-sided consideration of self with a sovereign scorn for the differences of others. Slavery, colonialism, racism, xenophobia, fundamentalism, and a certain degree of underdevelopment have no other meaning. It is for us, the leaders, to reread our own histories and to revisit our collective history to understand and accept that the quest for dialogue among civilizations does not place everyone, yesterday and today, at the



Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, making his presentation; with, left to right, G. Picco, K. Matsuura, S. M. Khatami.

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Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addresses the Round Table.

(Left to right, G. Picco, K. Annan, K. Matsuura)

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same level of responsibility, and that the common future can be envisaged only in the light of the duty of truth.

This level of meeting on such an important subject cannot be discussed in 'official speak'. We are talking about dialogue: this is not a tribunal history, nor is it a simple protocol for communication which in itself can kill dialogue. Rather, it is a profound marriage of two diverse identities who respect each other because somewhere they are equal in value. They are interchangeable. They borrow from each other. They enrich each other mutually. They mingle together and this mingling can lead to a wealth of exchanges. There is no civilization at this time whose members are being tortured or killed for supposed 'inferiority'. Past civilization, and other pasts, are a dead heritage. The death of civilizations always occurs with decline and violence, frequently brought in from outside. The time when the law of the strongest was that of nations is far away now. But what is the utility of force, if not progress. The advantage of scientific and technological progress as a driving force of civilizations has never been disproved over the course of history. For us to be able to have dialogue with other cultures we need to be able to give – above all, give – and not just to receive.

It is unfortunate that some civilizations have no future. I accept clearly the central place of intellectual contribution as the 'sap' of culture. But allow me to explain the symbolism. It is only its sap, not its blood. Humanism which flourishes in philosophy, literature, art and all of the creations of the mind, is the fruit of progress and well-being. By well-being I mean feeling comfortable, feeling at ease with oneself, comfortable in one's environment. May I paraphrase someone famous by saying that the quantity and quality of mental productions differ according to whether one lives in a castle or a hut. Socrates would certainly have been ignored had he been in the latter position. Even more so, had he not benefited from the providential pen of a patrician. Certainly, material poverty reduces human beings, who need a certain amount of dignity and responsibility. Equality cannot be replaced with something else. It is the source of communicability among men.

Though the Dogons or the Bamanan developed systems of thinking that referred to the extraordinary strength of their internal balance, nevertheless they were reduced to forced labour and to depersonalization in the face of better-equipped civilizations. Though Dogon or Bamanan philosophy attracted a tiny number of experts, it was essentially a dead letter, incommunicable to the heirs of those peoples. It means little for an African to hear in round tables that his continent is the cradle of humanity.

But that is where the respect for African cultures stops. When it is a question not of the past but indeed of the present of our continent, which is starving, ill, torn apart by debt, suddenly dialogue seems to become a deafness to the desperate appeal of a portion of forgotten humankind. We would like there to be a true dialogue among civilizations at last, one which is not just the subject of conversation among a few people from the developed world between the dessert and cheese courses. Rather, dialogue as a real commitment to respect the hundreds of millions of human beings who are drowning.

Apart from the worn refrain about the African past, of which everyone is a passionate advocate, the Africans of the year 2001 indeed possess a civilization and not just a heritage. After having resisted a thousand vicissitudes throughout history, day after day they labour with their hands, with their sweat and with their blood to cultivate their land, to build roads and towns, to construct schools and hospitals, sources of water and to set up micro-credit funds and shape a society based on solidarity and sharing, the only recipe that has made it possible for them to survive for millennia so far.

The real Africa advances above the noise of the media today, taking small but sure steps and highlighting some of its profound values – solidarity, a sense of consensus, neighbourliness, fellowship and respect for the elders – to help it to progress and ensure its development, not just material but integral, social, cultural, moral and economic. We need solidarity and greater sharing of social justice today. Tired, deprived, but full of human warmth and humanity, believers, exploited, increasingly losing their culture, torn apart but stubborn, standing upright despite famine and illness, Africans are marking out their destiny with determination towards democratic and humanist societies. For them, a dialogue among civilizations means a little more respect and consideration for what they are and what they are doing. For them, a dialogue among civilizations is the end of an inextricable spiral of endless debt, and that they be paid fully and properly for the fruits of their labour. Dialogue among civilizations will be based on free societies where censorship is abolished, where acceptance of differences is a right. It will be based on international relations which have been made democratic.

If we understand the dialogue among civilizations differently, then we cannot explain this world of despair where men and women express themselves through violence and terrorism, through genocide and fundamentalism and act through exclusions of all kinds. The small minority that possesses three-quarters of the wealth and riches of

humankind will never, unless superficially, establish a real dialogue with the huge majority of the deprived, for the feeling of indignity is their lot. The United Nations must demand this truth so that tomorrow new relations among the people of the Blue Planet can be built. If the virtue of communication in itself were the remedy to the nightmares of humankind, then this beginning of the millennium would be a kind of end to history.

In the past 50 years, the means for communication have increased more than during 4,500 years of history. The area of multimedia, with the Internet at the top, has made civilizations communicate in real time without, however, making them transparent to each other. The reason is that *communication* is not necessarily *dialogue*. If we want tomorrow to open the eyes of our children to the wonders of others, let us ensure that they will not pity them. Let us work so that our children can show admiration and respect for the beauty of living civilizations as much as for those of the past. Let us educate them by opening schools and universities, teach them to read, to write and to count. This is laying down good roots for dialogue among civilizations and for developing a culture of peace. Security and peace must be rights for all. Let us educate them in human rights. Let us protect the whole heritage of mankind, including the living libraries. Let us promote tourism and sport and increase exchanges through major gatherings and festivals, meetings at Olympic Games and world cups, which promote dialogue among civilizations. In this respect I would like to testify to the unfailing commitment of the United Nations for this to come about.

At the dawn of the third millennium, tribute must be paid to our common institutes for having laboured tirelessly over the past half century to translate into reality the dreams of an insane humankind. They must be commended for their struggle against hunger, ignorance, illiteracy, illness, violence and corruption; the struggle to promote children, the protection of refugees; above all now, the struggle against an enormous pandemic, HIV/AIDS; the protection of refugees; employment and social security; struggles to protect all cultures and particularly languages; respect for the elderly and for youth. We have more generations alive at the same time today, because our lifespan has been extended. All these battles for the whole of humankind, without racial discrimination or discrimination of belief or sex, without reductions of minorities, all these are the best tool for multicultural reality and dialogue among civilizations. We must give each of our great international organizations a committee of ethics, and we would strengthen the concept of repentance and forgiveness first in order to renew dialogue.

Finally, I would like to address President Khatami and once again offer him our sincere congratulations on his initiative and express our confidence in his continuing this action. Let us note with him indeed that he should not hold it against me: there should be forgiveness, but never forgetfulness. That is an important aspect of dialogue among civilizations. Even people condemned for blasphemy deserve pardon. We should never despair of humankind, for in humankind resides eternity. To the great country of Iran and all the others let us share our concerns with a greater demand for solidarity and public support, which must be stronger for the most fragile countries through globalization, and which will be a sign of dialogue among civilizations, a dialogue that is unavoidable and inescapable. At the moment it is driven only by the logic of the market, whereas social and human aspects should also be involved.

What is the interest of the market? What is the point of it? It is not just to sell or to buy. To be able to buy and sell, each of the leaders of the world must be inspired by an ideal from the people themselves to cultivate, day by day, more justice at the global level, more equality, more humility, and more truth for the explicit benefit of the balance of the world.

Joaquim Alberto Chissano

President of the Republic of Mozambique

I should like to join those who have preceded me in congratulating President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran on his initiative to originate the debate on this topic. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for their endeavours and active involvement in promoting the dialogue among civilizations, including the holding of the present Round Table.

The discussion of the present topic could not be more appropriate today. We are on the eve of the Millennium Assembly, dedicated to debate the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century in a world characterized by an increasing interaction among nations and consequently a reduced importance in geographically demarcated physical spaces.

The twenty-first century, with daunting challenges posed by globalization, brings not only economic, financial and technological interaction, but also a more comprehensive level of interaction among peoples, cultures and national identities. It is thus imperative to seek common ground for a continuous and open dialogue among us, the peoples of the world, with a view to allowing the harmonious existence of humanity by accepting our cultural diversity and the right to be different, thus strengthening our commitment to peace and the development of our peoples. This meeting is certainly a step towards that goal by means of reviving the lofty ideals of peace, prosperity, human dignity and social progress based on dialogue, tolerance and the mutual respect and understanding of the peoples of the world.

There was a time when some of us believed in the dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them', the civilized versus the uncivilized. There was a time when some of us, the so-called civilized, undertook a mission to spread civilization around the world. But history has taught us that those dichotomies were false. They were no more than a well-elaborated discourse to hide greedy political and economic agendas. We came to understand that humanity is by itself a civilization, and therefore that all of us are in one way or another part of that civilization. We came to understand that what we called different civilizations were in fact integral parts of that great civilization called humanity.

Nature is diverse, and that diversity is reflected in our cultures,

religions, languages, customs and races. Yet we are united by a single human dignity. Our diversity is a precious cultural asset of human civilization and therefore it is in our interest as human beings not only to value it but also to use it to face the challenges we have today. One of the major challenges today is the need to disseminate and transform the ideas of peace and non-violence into an intrinsic part of the collective conscience of people as we strive to meet the challenge of bringing together people in a more just world free from conflict, poverty and hunger.

The proclamation by the General Assembly of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in the year 2000 and of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations in 2001 constitutes a vivid invitation to revive the debate on interaction among the peoples of the world. In this regard we understand the concept of the culture of peace as being a set of values, attitudes and behaviour, ways of living and acting based on respect for life, the dignity and rights of the human person, rejection of violence, including all forms of terrorism, and commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among all peoples, all groups in society and among individuals.

The culture of peace means above all the spirit of non-violence and the conviction that retaliation can never restore what was destroyed. This spirit and conviction can help us to develop a sense of the value of life above and beyond the circles of the past, to revive the memory of what was lost, to work hard with dignity and solidarity, to restore broken spirits and a country's economic, social and cultural fabric. Thanks to this spirit and approach, in Mozambique we have made it possible for our people, regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, culture, political or religious belief, to work together for the construction and economic development of the country. This is the spirit of unity in diversity that underlies the recent economic and social progress the country has made.

Success in making and strengthening peace in Mozambique has put us in a position of actively contributing to the solution of existing and potential conflicts. It is in keeping with this principle that Mozambique has actively participated in several international initiatives organized by, *inter alia*, the United Nations, UNESCO, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and other regional organizations and individual States. Our presence here is in the context of that spirit.

We all agree that globalization presents us with great challenges. We had hoped that the globalization process would result in increasing economic opportunities for all, especially the developing nations. Evidence

has shown us that there is an increasing marginalization in and of some parts of the world. Perhaps this dialogue is the right moment for us to understand our past, to interrogate the present globalization process, so that together, by bringing our diversity to the dialogue, we can imagine and shape the future of human civilization. In Mozambique, experience taught us that through dialogue we could build peace and development, which are two faces of the same coin. There can be no peace without development and there can be no development without peace.

We should avoid the risk of the line dividing the poor and rich being mistakenly taken as the line allegedly dividing cultures. We commit ourselves to make a modest contribution to this dialogue among civilizations in recognition that tolerance and respect for diversity must prevail as envisaged by the United Nations. Only then shall we have a sound foundation for the full participation of all civil society, in the management of public life in a constant search for consensus and the values of unity, social harmony and peace.

Sam Nujoma

President of the Republic of Namibia

The yearning for dialogue among civilizations is not a novel aspiration. The quest for peace, justice, tolerance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has been with us all at different stages in our lives and in the histories of our countries. However, something very important and new indeed emanates from General Assembly resolution 53/22 of 1998, which proclaims the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

That important decision of the General Assembly was a collective realization that global solidarity must entail global peace, tolerance, justice and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all the people of the world. We have made that important recognition; now we must work with it and live it together. This is important, because one thing binds us all together: we are all human beings, and we all deserve basic peace, security and sustainable development. This Round Table on Dialogue among Civilizations could not have been more timely, and I am most gratified to be participating in this process. Since 1995 several initiatives have been taken to recommit ourselves to the values of peace, tolerance and solidarity that will give the world's young people a sense of ownership of the process of peace, justice, liberty and sustainable development. Indeed, the international political and economic process is evolving. Goods are moving from one country to another, and from one continent to another. Some feel disadvantaged by globalization, others are basking in the benefits accruing therefrom. A better understanding and appreciation of the common bonds of people will help us all to benefit even from our diversity. We must inculcate in ourselves a culture of peace that is inviolate. Solidarity must know no race, no hate. Dialogue among civilizations must enable us all to pursue the higher goals of peace, tolerance and civil dignity.

In all that we do as world leaders and individual human beings, we must put the well-being and dignity of all people at the centre of our decisions and undertakings. It is no coincidence, but rather out of immense foresight that the preamble of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Constitution states that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. It is clear that we have the instruments to realize this goal. We must support and sustain UNESCO to bring home to future generations the message that tolerance and understanding are for the benefit of us all. I also believe, therefore, that dialogue at this juncture

should broaden our focus on what is to be done, to be encompassed while we continue to share knowledge about our diverse cultures, and enhancing international co-operation cannot be overemphasized.

We are interdependent. Nevertheless, the level of tolerance we all have exercised and the number of violent conflicts that have added to the catalogue of despair and poverty since 1995 are of great concern to us in Namibia. The alarming global statistic indicating that 75 per cent of the world's population is struggling to survive below the poverty line – including 25 million internally displaced persons, about 30 million people affected by HIV/AIDS, and 15 million refugees – underlines the urgency with which any dialogue among civilizations must be conducted. In Africa, many countries, including 23 heavily indebted poor countries, have been waiting to qualify for debt relief and/or cancellation. While the waiting game continues these countries have no choice but to service their external debts with 40–45 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) at the expense of social programmes such as education and health, and this continues to affect women and children negatively.

I stress once again that we must enter into dialogue to foster international co-operation, and we must promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The culture of peace cannot be constructed and talked about only in the halls of the United Nations. It must be lived and realized by the women and children who are sidestepping deadly landmines, and the working poor who are mining the gold and diamonds in their countries but who cannot enjoy the fruits of their labour. If we cherish the principles of human dignity and the sanctity of life, we must apply economic justice proportionately to addressing the question of poverty, which remains the root cause of human misery in many developing countries. Only when we appreciate one another as human beings with diverse cultures can we begin to understand one another's social and economic needs and standpoints.

It is, therefore, my firm conviction that the call for international co-operation and tolerance for human diversity is the key to building democracy and sustainable economic development in the world. Moreover, constructive engagements taken by each country to contribute to education and training in technology would facilitate the promotion of cultural diversity and the protection of those human rights and freedoms that constitute the cornerstone of harmony and peace among nations. We at the United Nations all have a role to play in our countries, our homes, our schools and our villages. Let us join hands together to meaningfully enhance the dialogue among civilizations.

Olusegun Obasanjo

President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Presidential Round Table is indeed an opportune occasion, both in terms of timing and in terms of substance and scope.

We are on the eve of the Millennium Summit. So many of us have looked forward with anticipation for breakthroughs in the reform of the United Nations, or some initiatives that could be of advantage for developing countries in a world that is increasingly inequitable. While these hopes may not be fulfilled, we have a real opportunity to reflect on the foundations, indeed the underpinnings, of multilateral engagement today.

The dialogue of civilizations is not an ancient abstract notion; it is very much a fresh and badly needed approach to help us to understand each other better, to capture and respect complexities and diversity in a globalizing world and to help build a more effective framework for co-operation. Dialogue is the very essence of the United Nations, as we have heard from the Secretary-General himself. I welcome the General Assembly's decision last year to declare the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, a decision that owes so much to the initiative of President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I also salute UNESCO and its Director-General for organizing this novel event. And we are convinced that UNESCO is well placed to play a leading role in promoting this dialogue, and we are confident that we will be able to engage in many more fruitful events over the next fifteen months.

Indeed, throughout its history, humankind has experienced the conflict of civilizations, prompted by the hegemony of civilizations and sustained by the arrogance of civilizations. These tendencies have been the cause of deep anguish for the world community. Behind the masks of ethnic, religious and economic causes of disharmony among peoples and nations, there was always the inability of some peoples to give due regard to the heritage and identities of others.

Sometime this disregard and lack of respect for the worth of others has been manifested so blatantly and with such brutality that it affronted the collective conscience of humankind. But most often it is expressed in subtle and unspoken ways that nevertheless precipitate disruptions and instability in human relations. The world has long registered the consequences of this human disability, consequences such as hatred, wars, mutual contempt, and suspicion among nations and lack of peace.

The United Nations was founded on the belief that the scourge of war could be minimized while the virtues of peace could be perennially

promoted. In the past 55 years, we have pursued those goals vigorously and with varying degrees of commitment and success.

Now I truly believe that we are making a great leap forward in the realization that peace is bound up inextricably with a clear understanding and respect for the mutuality of the diversities of human heritage and identity. Surely, with the assignment of peace we face the challenge of human diversity. The foremost challenge lies in our ability to recognize these diversities, to admit that their existence is a positive thing and not a pointer to mindless hegemony, and to respect them as we aspire to greater success in our assignment.

The second challenge will lie in our capability and capacity to appreciate the richness of the diversity in cultures, religion and ethnic values, the morals and traditions of other cultures and their levels of creativity. The variety of these experiences together provide an abundant storehouse of knowledge for the uplifting of humankind.

The global village will not owe its existence solely to scientific, technological and economic advances. It will survive only when its development process incorporates the educational with the cultural, the social with spiritual and the religious and ethnic with the traditional. These are the true indices of the intellectual content of the emerging new world. Prejudice towards other cultures and civilizations is a major impediment to true globalization.

While dialogue at the international level is ostensibly the focus of our meeting here today, dialogue begins at home. A democratic dispensation and a spirit of good governance affords us the opportunity for dialogue, debate and deliberation together for peaceful solutions rather than bitterness, confrontation and violence.

Each nation must embark on the urgent task of reconciliation and confidence-building which is vital to the building and continuous review of relations among communities. In many developing countries reconciliation and harmony among communities and various interest groups is indispensable for economic and social development. Reconciliation is also at the heart of enjoying the fundamental rights enshrined in our constitutions which comprise the freedoms of worship and speech, and the freedom from all forms of discrimination and fear guaranteed to every citizen. We must cherish and uphold these fundamental freedoms.

Within many countries, industrialized and developing alike, we must hold in check the temptation to resort to violence for settling differences between groups, whether religious, ethnic or political. We must



Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addresses the Round Table.
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rid ourselves of the mentality and propensity to resort to violence that stems from fear and suspicion of the other person. We must rediscover the value of dialogue.

In our communities, in our nations, and indeed in the global community, we must begin to return to the fundamental faith *that life, all life, is sacred*. There is nothing in any of our cultures that even remotely justifies the cynicism with which many today respond to acts of lawlessness, corruption and wickedness. We must demonstrate our good-neighbourliness and willingness to be keepers of our brothers and sisters and to preserve a sense of outrage and moral sensitivity. We must care to share.

Looking at the disturbances my country experienced earlier in 2000, I noted in a speech to the Nigerian nation that Islam and Christianity are based on peace. Both religions have love as cardinal in their creeds. An adherent of either religion would thus be failing in his or her faith if he or she were to resort to violence, or to destruction of life and property. It is irrational, to say the least, to assert our faith in a manner that engenders conflict and violence. Instead, we must enthrone tolerance, constitutionality, decency and good-neighbourliness. Extremism in religion, nationalism or in any other belief is self-destructive, in addition to possibly destroying its victim.

What seems to have happened in Nigeria is that after many years of tyranny, misrule and mindless violence, encouraged and practised by the State itself, a general atmosphere of moral apathy set in and the population grew indifferent to the moral, even religious, duties that we all owe one to another. Today, as we are no longer hostages of an evil and lawless government, we are striving to ensure that our conduct, our relationships, whether religious, ethnic or political, be governed by the laws of the land. We are once more dealing with each other in transparent comradeship. We now seek to settle our differences peacefully, decently and humanely. Above all, in matters of religion and conscience, rational and just behaviour guide our actions in our institutions and at all levels of government. This is because we place the highest premium on peace and harmony in society.

Peace is not a means. Peace is an end in itself. Peace is indivisible. A life without peace is not worth contemplating. The greatest and the most enduring legacy is peace. Peace is the foundation of all development and progress. It is either there or it is not there. We need peace everywhere – at home, at work, in our family, in our community, in our locality, in our country, in our continent and, indeed, in our world. There is no substitute

for peace and any sacrifice is worth making for peace. This message is the very essence of the International Year for the Culture of Peace for which the year 2000 was designated by the United Nations General Assembly and which will now be followed by the Decade of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

Dialogue is an imperative at both international and national levels. There is no hierarchy in culture, nor is there superiority in the manifestations of human civilization; rather, they are cumulative and progressive. It is thus noteworthy that earlier this year, political leaders in Africa and Europe sat down in a dialogue to promote co-operation for the mutual benefit of Africans and Europeans. A little more than a century ago the continent of Africa was partitioned in Berlin among European powers who proceeded to impose a regime of colonial administration on the continent, the negative consequences of which are still with us today.

Africa's modern history has, since the 1884 Berlin Conference, been essentially the story of the European impact on Africa. It is a story of how autonomous African people were forcefully divided and separated by a stroke of the pen. It is a story of how they were merged into different political units without rational justification. It is a story of how, for most of the last century, that arbitrary partition led to constant war and conflict among African countries. It is also a story of many bloody revolts against colonial oppression and racism, a story of the emergence of modern African States and a story of how African countries in the contemporary period have embarked on the search for a more equitable form of partnership with European and other industrialized countries of the world.

The dismemberment of Africa by Europe did not, of course, begin with the partition of 1884. For four previous centuries, European countries had rivalled one another in competition to seize and transport the largest number of Africa's youth to the Americas. The Slave Trade, which this macabre project was cynically called, is the epitome of man's inhumanity to man, and an act of criminality against our continent. It depopulated the continent, it deprived it of its most able-bodied and productive inhabitants, and it destroyed the economy and traditional political structures. Africa became so brutally unlinked from world history that African peoples and societies were rendered helpless to cope with and manage the technological revolution of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Between 1884 and 1960 African affairs were generally regarded by many in Europe as simply an extension of political and economic conflicts in Europe. African colonies had no say in the determination of their own fate. They had no control over their own resources. They were obliged to

live with whatever their political masters in Europe imposed. When there was war in Europe they were drafted to fight, quite often without knowing exactly what it was they were fighting or dying for. And when, in the decade of the sixties, most African countries began gradually to achieve their independence, they inherited severely depleted natural resources and economies that were contrived almost entirely for the benefit of the former colonial masters, to the exclusion of the interests of the citizens of the new, independent countries in Africa.

Colonialism made its exit just before the end of last century, but that process is still at work. Who can deny the imprint of that process when we still carry tags of 'Lusophone', 'Anglophone' and 'Francophone' Africa? Today millions of Africans speak European languages, with the inherent cultural implications of the transformation of their original African cultural values.

Yet there is all too often a tendency in the industrialized world to indulge in the comfortable myth that the so-called backwardness of Africa is divinely ordained. It most certainly is not. It is, instead, the direct consequence of a deliberate policy, adopted and practised by virtually all European countries over half a millennium, to degrade, depopulate and denude the continent for the benefit of Europe. This might seem hard, but it has to be said.

The relationship between the rest of the world – particularly the Western world – and the people of Africa, is laden with pointers for re-defining human values for the new millennium. There are good reasons for the feeling among many Africans that the continent has disproportionately suffered at the hands of foreigners. Many even reckon that the suffering is unparalleled. Critically, the treatment of African peoples has uniquely exhibited racist implications and designs. Indeed, other groups around the world have at one time or another suffered discrimination because of their faith, religion, or culture. However, Africans seem to have been the only people to have been subjected to the worst form of indignity simply on account of their race for which they are indelibly marked by physical features.

With all the advances in human genetics there may be the temptation to regard the issue of race as academic. But not for us Africans. Scars of historic and individual experiences are too deep and too fresh for us to engage in dialogue among civilizations without due recognition of the negative force of racism, even when it exists subliminally. For some time to come into this new century, a degree of soul-searching is an imperative for all dialogue between Africa and the world until the ghost of racism is finally laid to rest.

I have recently been calling for a new Berlin conference that would see the beginning of a series of dialogues to restore the parity between Africa and the rest of the world culturally, politically and economically. Primarily, the dialogue would be between Africa and Europe, two continents which God in His infinite wisdom have put next to each other to share a common destiny. The hope is that Africans will get the chance to participate in the agenda set in motion by the formulations of the Berlin Conference of 1884.

No time can be better than now, the beginning of a new century, with all the opportunities offered for incorporating our mutual hopes, wishes and aspirations into a new agenda. Our common destinies should be peace, security, harmony, prosperity and co-operation in a stable and sustainable environment. Our partnership must be based on common concern for equity, justice, mutual respect and primary regard for the uplifting of underprivileged people everywhere – but particularly for African peoples – from their present economic and social predicament. That is the true meaning of dialogue today.

Let us begin to get the future right on the occasion of this unique Millennium Summit. We will not have many more such historic, solemn and defining moments in the history of humankind. Our generation has a particular responsibility not to fritter away this unique opportunity.

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani

Emir of the State of Qatar

The choice of 'dialogue among civilizations' as a theme for this Round Table, is extremely opportune due to the importance this subject holds for the world in the post-cold-war era. We are, therefore, indebted to President Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his initiative in raising this subject. Indeed, it is not surprising that such a call should emanate from him because of his profound knowledge of both the Islamic and Western cultures and because of his past and present responsibilities for cultural affairs and his present responsibilities as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and to all members of the group involved in preparing for this noteworthy event.

The importance of this meeting is evident from the theme chosen for it, namely 'dialogue among civilizations'. The theme is also indicative of the positions of those present here regarding the issue of the relationship between different civilizations and the fact that it is based on the positive interaction which enriches us all. It is, accordingly, a most eloquent repudiation of those counter-claims that were circulated a few years ago and which culminated in a well-known essay entitled 'The Clash of Civilizations?' by the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, published in the 1993 summer issue of the periodical *Foreign Affairs*. In that essay, Professor Huntington gives expression to the dangerous idea that the post-cold-war world will witness an increase in conflicts within and among states because of cultural differences. Basing his theory on the premise that differences among civilizations are not only real but also fundamental, he asserts that in a world that is becoming smaller, shrinking distances are increasing interactions between the peoples of different civilizations, thus intensifying awareness of the differences between civilizations. Local identities and loyalties and national ties are weakening and are being replaced by allegiance to religion. The growing power of the West is creating an increased animosity towards it among the members of other civilizations. Finally, cultural characteristics and differences do not readily disappear, but could, perhaps, acquire regional dimensions leading to the emergence of major regional groupings in North America, Europe and East Asia.

For those reasons he foresees a clash of civilizations occurring at two levels. At a lower level, namely within states, tensions would escalate

between culturally different groups and may explode into violence as a result of rivalries for control over territory and people. At a higher level, States from different civilizations would compete among themselves in order to acquire greater military and economic power, to gain control over international institutions and third parties and spread their own political and religious values.

No doubt this hypothesis is replete with contradiction and is inconsistent with historical facts and with reality. Moreover, it has dangerous political implications. The shrinking of distances in the world as a result of scientific and technological breakthroughs might, for instance, result in bringing people closer together when they discover that despite differences in colour, religion and language, major common and shared interests bind them. Examples of such interests are many and varied; for instance, witness the hundreds of millions of viewers around the world who simultaneously enjoy a historic moment happening somewhere on the globe, or political events taking place in a certain country, or those who watch transmitted pictorial programs or empathize with the same ideas, to cite but a few. In addition, the process of modernization throughout the world may well weaken the effect of primary ethnic or linguistic loyalties in shaping people's consciousness. That theory also ignores the fact that substantial differences exist between members of the same culture. Have there not been wars between Britain and France, China and Japan, or Iraq and Kuwait? Yet in each of these examples, the combatants belonged to the same cultural-religious group. Finally, it is still States, and not civilizations or cultures, that form the basic units in international relations. states act in accordance with the dictates of their strategic economic, political and military interests, and not necessarily on the basis of their cultural affiliations alone.

More important, however, are the dangerous political consequences inherent in this theory, since it presumes that because people differ in their cultural affiliations, this by definition creates tensions and conflicts between them. The most acute and the most perilous of such differences would be between the West and the rest of the world, particularly the Islamic and Confucian civilizations. Indeed, there is evidence that foreign-policy planners and some members of parliament in major powers have started formulating policies for confronting countries of different cultures, civilizations and religions, and taking positions of both judge and jury towards them.

From within the Arab Islamic civilization, we in fact would like to utterly reject such orientations. In our view, differences among peoples are

reasons for co-operation and collaboration, for the welfare of all. The Koran states, 'We have made thee peoples and tribes that ye may know each other.' And this emphasizes that the best humans in the eyes of God are the most pious and the most dedicated to their work: 'The most honoured among thee in the sight of God are the most pious'. Islam's prophet Mohammad stressed the same idea: 'Arabs are not privileged over non-Arabs except in piety', and added that it is the duty of Muslims to search for knowledge everywhere and in every group of humans when he said: 'Seek knowledge even in China'.

These values of tolerance have been reflected in our Arab Islamic civilization as characterized by acceptance by the adherents of other religions, namely Christianity and Judaism, and by the quest for the sources of knowledge in the classical Indian, Persian and Greek civilizations. It is this openness to the various civilizations of the world as experienced by the Muslims at the peak of their civilization between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, that enabled them to make some brilliant contributions to human civilization and to become the link between what was then known as the 'East' and the 'West', but also between the older and newer civilizations. Through the writings of Ibn Rushd, Al-Farabi and Ibn-Sina (Avicenna), to cite only a few, the Arabs transmitted a great part of the knowledge of the Greeks to the rest of Europe near the end of the Middle Ages.

These traditions did not disappear as the Arabs moved into the modern era. We in Qatar are proud that we were able to translate these values into a lifestyle that represents a fruitful interaction between people from different civilizations in Africa, Asia and Europe who had come to Qatar to assist its people to achieve a modern renaissance. In Qatar, they find security and a dignified livelihood.

As regards the subjects for discussion in this Round Table, such as the definition of the parties to the dialogue, of civilizations and the role of the United Nations and its agencies, in this respect we believe, first, that the definition of culture or civilization should not be rigid. It should not link culture exclusively to religion or language, nor to geographical affiliation or shared historical experience alone. Second, the dialogue should be open between the representatives of all governments and peoples regardless of their diverse affiliations. Without a doubt, the United Nations, with its specialized agencies and numerous activities aimed at consolidating international peace and security and promoting friendly relations between peoples, is an outstanding example of this effective and fruitful dialogue between civilizations. Its member governments represent most of the fundamental cultural groupings in the world today. They

participate in its activities for the good of them all, be that by putting an end to armed conflicts and finding solutions for them, or by furthering international co-operation in many fields – from drug control to catastrophe management – and promoting economic and social development in all its aspects.

However, the danger in advocating the clash of civilizations by some of the mass media in the West requires specific action by the United Nations aimed at combating the various effects of this theory which would lead to an escalation of tensions in the world, at a time when we were hoping that the end of the cold war would mean reducing the reasons for these tensions, and bringing about harmony and concordance among all peoples, regardless of any divergence in their cultural affiliations.

For this reason we could perhaps suggest that UNESCO play an essential role in this respect. UNESCO's Constitution states that it is in the minds of men that wars first start. Similarly, it is in the minds of people that any probable clash of civilizations would also start, through an erroneous perception and a fallacious mental image of other human groups. UNESCO may want to conduct the dialogue on strengthening relations between human groups from different cultural backgrounds at three levels.

The first level would be comprised of purely scientific activities involving scholars in history, politics and social sciences with a view to disclosing the truth of the claims of the so-called clash of civilizations and whether what appeared to be a clash of civilizations was in actual fact a result of either conflicting strategic, economic, political and military interests, or a manipulation of the basic loyalties of people in order to serve the narrow interests of political leaderships.

The second level would be geared mainly towards the men and women who are the opinion shapers in the public information field and all its media, with a view to exploring the best ways to clarify the effects of erroneous images of groups from differing cultures that the media might convey. This activity could also include the faculties and administrators of educational institutions, especially those responsible for curriculum decisions, and particularly those intended for the young in their early formative stages.

The third level would bring together political leaders and statesmen from different cultural groups with the aim of eliminating tensions between those groups and reducing the prospects for clashes between them. The discussions that would take place at these three levels would not necessarily have to remain confined within the walls of UNESCO or the United Nations. Their proceedings and findings could rather be made

available on the widest possible scale through television, radio and the press, as well as through books and electronic information systems.

In Qatar we are ready to participate at all three of the proposed levels, should recommendations materialize to transform them into reality, or in any other activities conducted for this purpose through the United Nations or its specialized agencies.

We believe that different cultures and diverse civilizations are a source of wealth for humanity and a firm foundation for co-operation among nations. For this reason, we attach great importance to the outcome of the meetings of this Round Table.

May God lead us all to serve the best interests of the human family.

Peace be upon you and may the mercy of God and His blessing be with you.

Jaswant Singh

Minister for External Affairs of India

Those who have contributed to this Round Table before me have already most eloquently elucidated several facets of civilizations, their contributions and also exchanges between them. Indian thought, a unique synthesis and an unmatched confluence, has always held that the deliverance of man is possible, but only through release from *avidya*, or ignorance. I am confident that discussions today and also later during the year of dialogue among civilizations, will fulfil this yearning for greater knowledge and bring an enhanced appreciation of each other, of our ways of life, and also, as a consequence, enhance the contribution that each of us can make to the other in our common shared richness and the eternal journey of Man on that road which has no end.

I visualize the dialogue among civilizations as a confluence of great streams, some ancient and thus very wide and placid, imbued with aeons of reflection and knowledge, the very distillation of human experience. Others are younger, more ebullient, forging ahead with the vitality of invention and material progress. These streams must merge, greening the entire spread of humanity with shared wisdom, freedom of the spirit and liberty, thus generating lives enriched by real choice, drawing in the rivulets of modern technology to nourish the arid soil of poverty and human deprivation to create a world secure in respect for each other, where there is no inequality, no discrimination and no insecurity from want or violence.

It is only appropriate that there be a dialogue among civilizations now at the dawn of the twenty-first century, that Iran initiate this dialogue and that UNESCO take the lead in this respect. The century just past marked the culmination and also the end of the age of imperialism. It was an age in which Europe, enriched by the industrial revolution, and also enriched by renaissance, spread colonial control over great parts of the globe. It is a thought to which with eloquence the presidents of Algeria and Nigeria have already given voice. But that age of imperialism was marked by the deafening silence of an absence of dialogue. What marks the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century is the end of the age of imperialism and the potential for the release of the creative energies and genius of mankind in its entirety.

It is in that context that it is only timely that the dialogue among civilizations be initiated now on the eve of the Millennium Summit. Today in our midst, in consequence of the growing influence of the media, the

poor are certainly aware of the lifestyles of the fortunate and the affluent, but can the 'haves' say with any degree of conviction that they have more than a fleeting sense of their existence in their midst? Can we say that we are a global village of equality, or a global village of shanties, slums and the oppressed on whose very shoulders and through whose labours and endeavours some of the present-day material prosperity of the globe is based? The dialogue which it is hoped will bring together the advances of all civilizations will be judged by one touchstone, that of compassion, a reaffirmation of human conscience and of universal fellowship, and the care that it will bring to those whom material advances have left behind. I trust that this dialogue among civilizations will promote a sense of indivisibility, of mutual belonging, that will nurture the feeling that a community's or a civilization's ascent cannot be complete until it is accompanied by the progress and advancement of the whole of humanity.

Unprecedented advances in science and technology hold out the promise of great material progress and development. We stand on the doorstep of the age of knowledge, post-industrial revolution. It offers a unique possibility of intensifying productive exchange in diverse fields. Science and technology also provide us with valuable tools for historic preservation and documentation and wide dissemination of the cultural heritage of all civilizations.

The promotion of identity and cultural diversity could in itself become the very substance of dialogue among civilizations. Globalization should contribute towards the creation of a world that offers equal opportunity and not any obliteration. We must guard against the tendency of threatening diversity and unique cultural attainments through globalization and the technological revolution. A balance between the acceptance of integrative globalization to mutual advantage and the necessary quest for identity has emerged as a major civilizational challenge of our times. Unless vigorously addressed by those that are threatened by the erasing hand of uniformity, it will heighten the anguish of exclusion and marginalization and at a profoundly deeper level it will separate humanity instead of bringing it together. Cultures are not to be placed on the extinction list in this world of biodiversity.

Of course, the maintenance and promotion of identities and the protection of cultural and civilizational traditions, must not become a tool to shield ultra-nationalism and exclusionism. Mahatma Gandhi once said that he would certainly not like to be blown off his feet but would also not like to shut the windows of his consciousness to the rest of the world. He thought that breezes from all directions must blow through his house.

Therefore, exceptionalism and exclusivism become the base for a clash of civilizations instead of a dialogue of civilizations, which would enrich us all collectively.

The promotion of universalism must not become a means to undermine the rich diversity of the human race, thought and civilizational accomplishments either. There should be no attempts at a standardization of global cultures and civilizations. The parameters of this dialogue should move away from the traditional to a greater appreciation of the diversity as but a variation on the theme of one humanity and its unlimited potential. The enlarging of a common denominator of values and principles on which our entire humanity rests, must be part of our quest in this dialogue among civilizations.

A great Indian sage in the last century, Vivekananda, said that you cannot claim to be more human simply on the basis that you have six fingers as against my five. The Indic civilization to which I have the honour to belong, from time immemorial has believed in the fundamental unity of all humanity. The whole world is a family. The ancient Sanskrit saying *vasudhaiva kutumbkam* means 'all the world is one family'. The central message of our philosophy has always spoken of *ekam sat, viprah bahuda vadanti* – there is but one truth, the learned express that one truth in different ways. Respect for all cultures, non-violence and tolerance therefore form the core of the Indian value system. Indian tradition has fostered the value of creative interaction and peaceful coexistence for thousands of years among our people as among the peoples of the world. It is this vibrant mosaic that is threatened by the belief that civilization can be based only on narrow religious affinities. Religion is personal, and it reflects an individual's relationship with his or her God. Civilization is what is common, what is shared and that which should enrich all. While promoting the dialogue among civilizations we must be conscious of this delicate difference.

Over the past half-century, the United Nations, has served as a host to all nations promoting reconciliation and a culture of dialogue among them. Search for common moral and ethical values has led to the codification of a range of international instruments concerning tolerance, human rights, cultural co-operation and co-operation in science and technology. Values of democracy, human rights, pluralism and respect for the rule of law, all common civilizational influences, have acquired almost universal validity. Dialogue among and within nations and civilizations can and must promote understanding, pluralism and diversity as essential components of progress and human advancement. The central question

that we have to grapple with is how to forge societies that are truly liberal and multicultural but which retain a sense of unity and a corpus of common values; how they can best contribute to the emergence of a truly shared and liberal human civilization; and how the dialogue among civilizations can deal effectively with the menaces that today afflict and threaten to drown our common civilizational heritage.

I believe that the United Nations and UNESCO, in the context of dialogue among civilizations, should work to ensure that the principles of pluralism and democracy, acceptance of diversity and mutual respect, freedom and equality, solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility – in a word, humanity – are consolidated. The dialogue must bring out the uniting features of our civilizations, all of which have contributed to the human saga while preserving those distinctive features of a civilization which gives it a distinctive genius and adds to the totality of human richness. India will contribute in thought and action to this endeavour.



Heads of State at the Round Table. Left to right: President of the Republic of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid; President of Georgia, Eduard A. Shevardnadze; President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika; President of the Republic of Namibia, Sam Nujoma.

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Heads of State at the Round Table. Left to right: President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Burhanuddin Rabbani; President of the Republic of the Sudan, Omar Hassan El-Bashir; Emir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani; President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo; President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, Joachim Alberto Chissano; President of the Republic of Mali, Alpha Omar Konaré.

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Roberto Rojas Lopez

Minister of External Relations and Worship of Costa Rica

It is a great honour for Costa Rica to speak here, representing the Spanish-speaking American world in this dialogue. We, as human beings, must recognize at the outset that amidst the magnificent diversity of cultures and forms of life, we are a single family and a single community on earth with a common destiny. Through shared work we can create a sustainable global society based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. This will be the only way to reverse the present environmental destruction, the depletion of resources, the massive extinction of species, inequality in the distribution of the benefits of development, extreme poverty, inequality of opportunity, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

Development without its human and cultural context is only economic growth. While economic growth is essential because it provides goods and services for us to enjoy a better quality of life, it is also an instrument that should be at the service of the strengthening of every nation's culture.

The irreversible process of globalization is not a solely an economic phenomenon. In opening greater and better channels for economic and commercial communication among human beings, corporations, states, and societies, there are also greater and better possibilities for mutual understanding and the coming together of human beings in their various views of the world. Having one's own strong culture therefore is a key element in making globalization an instrument of development and not a threat to national identity. Thus, globalization can only make sense if it promotes the coexistence of all peoples in dignity and honour, which is the common goal of mankind.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines the culture of peace as a multidisciplinary process that requires participation by all governmental and non-governmental sectors of society. It is the focal point of a way of life in which common sense, honesty, gender equality and respect for human rights, among others, are the guiding efforts towards the establishment of a suitable environment conducive to human development.

Education for peace is an instrument through which a culture of peace is built and nourished through the development of knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Maintaining peace depends to a great extent on the levels of interdependence among peoples and the

existence of common socio-economic, political and cultural interests, as well as on the degree of understanding and knowledge among individuals. For this, dialogue among cultures and societies is an essential precondition. As societies understand each other better there will be greater interdependence among human beings. Thus, true interdependence among peoples is no more a purely economic phenomenon than is globalization.

Another essential precondition for peace is tolerance and respect for diversity. Costa Rica, in its traditions but mostly in the conviction of its people, has made dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect a daily instrument. This stance is also reflected in our foreign policy. We constantly seek out dialogue and negotiation in order to solve disputes and disagreements peacefully.

In 1980, the General Assembly of the United Nations created the University for Peace. My country is honoured to house the headquarters of that University. The mission of the University for Peace is to provide mankind with an international institute of higher learning for peace, to promote a spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among human beings. The members of its Council were recently elected in consultation with the Director-General of UNESCO. This new Council represents a new impetus and a further universalization of the concept of peace. My country represents and supports the spirit of understanding, tolerance and coexistence. We feel that this University should also play a role in this new dialogue that has been established. We wish to thank President Khatami for this initiative and UNESCO for welcoming it. All of us, states, nations, peoples, individuals and of course organizations such as UNESCO, must work together to make a new world in which cultural differences are turned into an element of progress and development and not one of conflict.

Koïchiro Matsuura

I should like to thank you all for patiently listening to the discussion at the level of Heads of State and Ministers this morning. We heard very stimulating and thought-provoking statements. We have organized the second session with scholars and thinkers in order to pursue our discussions on the dialogue among civilizations, in particular in the light of what we heard from Heads of State and Ministers.

I will sit here but will ask Mr Picco, Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for dialogue among civilizations, to be your Moderator. Therefore I call now on Mr Picco, who will outline the basic themes that will be dealt with in the round-table discussion that follows.

Discussion

Giandomenico Picco

I suggest that we begin this discussion as a real dialogue: I will introduce some of the questions that all of us have been asking when reflecting about this idea, and I will then ask each participant to comment on these questions, the understanding being that there will be a real interchange. At the end I will try to summarize the conversation.

Allow me to introduce the first question. One of the key reasons why a dialogue among civilizations seems to be so relevant today is the self-evident need for all to learn how to manage diversity better. The increasing interaction and contact among peoples is not only the result of information technology and the globalization of the economy, it is also a consequence of the increased voluntary and involuntary movement of individuals in groups across borders of all kinds, and indeed the transmission of ideas. By the end of the last decade it was clear that not only could large countries affect small countries but also vice versa. The financial crisis of 1998 was a stark example. This reality has made obsolete any autarchic illusion. If time has any effect, and it does, relations with 'the others' will simply become more frequent and not less. Learning how to manage diversity among ourselves is accordingly no longer an option. But the issue of dialogue seems to be an overwhelming concept. It is also a very general concept. So my first question will be: how do we focus the conversation on, or approach to, dialogue so that it becomes relevant?

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

I should like to be a little different in the sense that we should start by thinking of what we mean when we use the expression 'dialogue'. I sense that it is important to deal not only with dialogue among nations but also dialogue within nations. That is very important because dialogue among nations is something we are doing in this very House. For almost sixty years we have been dialoguing here. I will not comment on the outcome of this permanent dialogue but what is now very important is to think and reflect on dialogue within nations. Almost all the problems we are now facing have arisen as a consequence of differences within nations – internal wars, internal difficulties, internal civil wars – and our first objective should be to help countries to start a real internal dialogue. There is no other way of having an internal dialogue than through democracy. Democracy is indispensable for obtaining a dialogue within nations. That is one way of very briefly answering the question.

Richard W. Bulliet

This topic of dialogue of civilizations is one that has engaged me for the last year and a half and I tackle it from a somewhat more operational point of view than a philosophical point of view. While I was particularly struck by President Khatami's evocation of dialogue of civilizations as something for artists, poets and mystics among other people, it would be unfortunate to lose this opportunity to have something more concrete as an objective. Let me suggest three areas in which I would like to see a focus achieved.

The first area would be for people interested in this topic to begin to focus on a number of issues that are issues of our time, not issues of the 1940s, not issues that were particularly addressed in the Charter or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but issues that call for collective international consideration. These are issues such as sovereignty, intervention, the role of non-governmental organizations, where I think the world could benefit from a collective consideration of these issues from different civilizational perspectives; issues dealing with immigrant labour, expatriates, refugees, and the status and rights of these people; and issues dealing with the environment as the common heritage of humankind. I would hope that an agenda for discussion could focus on some of these specific issues.

Beyond that I have a second concern which has to do with globalization and the Internet. We all recognize that this is the particular point in history where something dramatically new and different is occurring in the world of information and in the world drawn together by information. It is important in the dialogue of civilizations to enlist actively not just scholars, statesmen, artists and philosophers but also to seek to engage the people who are creating this new information world. It is important to go to the people who are creating the new information order and ask them not simply to look at their profit and loss bottom line interest but to look at what they, as the specialists in this field, can do to make it an international issue. Someone must take an initiative to try to work towards that focus because unless selected people are drawn in, in a very active way, they will simply be responding out of self-interest.

Thirdly, as a university professor who has spent close to the past 40 years studying Islamic society, I am very conscious of the fact that knowledge of non-Western civilizations is declining as an agenda, at least in the United States and to some degree in other Western countries. We have seen a relegation of specific knowledge about other cultures being dismissed as 'local knowledge' and we have seen the emphasis in higher education go towards theory, particularly in areas of politics, economics,

and so forth. I think we can recognize, partly through the work of my colleague at Columbia University, Edward Said, that there is some rationale to this. That is to say, the type of knowledge about civilizations that arose and climaxed in the decades just after the Second World War, was perhaps the kind of knowledge that was stimulated and oriented towards the era of imperialism. Perhaps that knowledge is in a state of decline. We must try to formulate new parameters, new expectations, for a new type of study of other civilizations, one that is formed within the sense of dialogue of civilization rather than simply exploring the museum of humanity from a Western point of view.

The President of Mali said that communication is not necessarily dialogue and that is a very important observation. As we try to revitalize and redirect concrete knowledge of other cultures, whether working from a Western, East Asian or African background, we should do it in the spirit of dialogue rather than in the spirit simply of informing ourselves about the other. That is a very important mission for the academic world, that could be stimulated by it becoming a focus of this enterprise.



Participants in the Round Table, including (right) United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

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President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika; President of the Republic of Georgia, Eduard A. Shevardnaze; President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, Joachim Alberto Chissano; and Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.

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Edgar Morin

Since we are talking about information, I believe that understanding is not based on the quantity of information. Information is necessary for understanding but understanding is more than that. For there to be genuine dialogue there is a need for the interlocutors to be able to understand each other and to understand each other's reasons. Therefore, since we have that great difficulty of dialogue which is precisely a lack of understanding, we need to try to see what separates us. To my mind, what separates individuals is their egocentric attitude, ethnocentrism and socio-centrism, that is, those trends which mean putting oneself at the centre of the world and considering the other as secondary, inferior or humble.

When we understand those reasons then we can try to dominate or to control them. In a very correct manner, several Presidents, in particular the President of Mali, have very rightly showed that for Western countries and for civilizations that stem from Western Europe, which believe themselves to be the owners of rationalism, truth, reason and culture, there is a very real, deep-rooted problem. This problem, which lies in the fact that they thought they were at the centre of the universe, is that of the renunciation of this monopolistic attitude. This can be said, for that matter, of all cultures and all civilizations. But, for all cultures and civilizations we need to recognize that in any civilization there is both genuine knowledge and wisdom, but also errors committed as well as illusions. That also holds true for Western civilization. But to recognize this is extremely difficult.

We also encounter the difficulty of understanding the values of the Other. The representatives of traditional civilizations told us about respect for age, for elders. We in the West are living in a civilization in which, indeed, we put elders out to pasture, not because they are supposed to have experience, but they are sent off to retirement because we feel that they do not have the experience of today's world and it is time for youth to take over. It is obvious that before we try to judge the grounds on which the two kinds of reasoning are based, and, to my mind there is a positive side to both, we need first to try to understand. Then I would say that what happened in Western civilization is that not only did it fail to understand other civilizations, but it also became incomprehensible to other civilizations in terms of its own pluses and virtues. I would add that the German author, Walter Benjamin, managed to put this in very strong terms when he said that in any civilization there is always an element of what is barbarous. It is the element of the barbarous that each of us needs to try to find in his own civilization.

I could go on at great length but I should like to make one crucial point. Mention has been made of tolerance. In my view there are three

levels, three demands for tolerance. The first was formulated by Voltaire: Someone holds to an opinion which is in fact unworthy and cannot be backed, and yet I must give him the right to express that opinion. That means the right to expression even if someone holds an opinion that we find repugnant. This implies suffering. Being tolerant means suffering, and it means accepting that suffering.

The second level is explained by the idea of democracy. That is to say that democracy is a system in which a diversity of opinions is required because it can be productive. Democracy is not primarily the law of the majority. It implies respect for minorities who are different, and it means the interplay of antagonisms and therefore requires the need to respect ideas which are fundamentally opposed to each other.

The third level was very well expressed by Pascal in the seventeenth century who said that the opposite of a profound truth was not an error, it was simply another profound truth; we must try to understand the truth which can be found in those ideas which are opposed to our ideas.

In conclusion, I would say that we need to promote and advance education in understanding, to try and show the obstacles to understanding that individuals have – psychological, cultural, historical and social obstacles – and be open to understanding. Everyone agreed on the idea of both unity and diversity of cultures and of human beings. We should not say that on the one hand there is unity and on the other hand there is diversity. I believe that it is human unity, be it genetic, anatomic or cerebral, that produces this diversity. Diversity is not the opposite of unity and unity should not wipe out diversity for us. These are not mere formulae, these are things which each person must grasp for himself so that we have within us a feeling of the human community which does not abolish our differences. This human community should be deep enough so that, in this era of globalization, each and every individual can feel that our planet, this Earth, is also our motherland and that today we have not only our own country, our own motherland, and sometimes an even broader one as Europeans do in the case of Europe, but that we also have a shared homeland. If we do not have this awareness and sense of a shared homeland, a community of destinies, then understanding, and therefore the dialogue of civilizations will be nearly impossible.

Ugnė Karvelis

I would like to say a few words, since in April 2001, Lithuania will be organizing a conference on the dialogue among civilizations. It is a European conference but with the participants from other continents as well.¹ We have taken that decision for an obvious reason, as we believe that the Europeans among themselves do not have much to say to each other in terms of dialogue among civilizations. I would like, however, to share with you two or three points which seem very important to us.

First, as was said by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and by President Khatami, we must go back to the old adage of our studies: know thyself before wishing to be able to know others. One of the workshops we will be organizing, will be dedicated to the issues to be raised at the conference: what do we know of other civilizations, and what do we know of our own civilization and of the tools it provides for better understanding of ourselves and the world?

Another point of great importance, which has just been raised by Richard Bulliet, is the scope and the definition of the word 'dialogue'. Indeed, this is no longer merely an issue of knowledge of other cultures and other civilizations. This knowledge will continue to be developed by scholars and by experts in various fields: archaeologists, ethnologists, sociologists. We are now reaching another stage where observing the other and gathering information about his specificity is not sufficient any more: knowledge is not synonymous of dialogue. It can lead to it, but not necessarily so. If we want to initiate an authentic dialogue, we have to practice empathy and even a certain type of osmosis. This, of course, does not mean, that we should renounce in any way the diversity, but that our approach should be based on permeability, on a porousness to what can be received and integrated, not only in terms of the fringe that is common to most civilizations, but beyond that, in terms of the fundamental values and ethics of each different civilization. This might be a step towards the quest of a coherent answer to the stereotypes of globalization. Nevertheless, we should not forget that, today, the Internet is accessible to less than 30 per cent of the global population. Therefore once again we are involved in creating a phenomenon meant for the rich, by the rich, in the same way as we are further creating, through modern technology and start-ups, the

1. International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Vilnius, 23–26 April 2001; the Final report of the Conference and additional information may be found at the following ULM:
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/2001/vilnius>.

riches for the already rich. That perhaps is a fact we should not lose sight of, any more than the fact that 80 per cent of humanity has no access to basic telecommunications.

This means that, beyond the very small part of the global population which fully participates in the globalization process and feels involved in it, the majority of humankind is continuing to live in inherited civilizations, on the soil where they have their roots and bear the common memory of people expressed by tradition and immaterial patrimony. The notion of immaterial – or intangible – and oral heritage, which is now being recognized thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO, is extremely important, because it is the foundation and the cement of identity – individual as well as collective – the face and the voice of a people and the bearer of its collective memory.

Maybe some day we shall discover that globalization also is a sort of new type of civilization with which the older ones also should initiate a dialogue with its tenants without fear of the all-pervading and irresistible power which we, for the time being, believe to have. The Internet is already sowing more than one traditional civilization by helping the diasporas, scattered all over the world, to dialogue among themselves and thus to participate in the life of the civilization they belong to.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to the notion of homeland Earth, as proposed by Edgar Morin, rather than to that famous ‘global village’ of Marshall McLuhan which already sounds like an obsolete meta-metaphor.

Ru Xin

I should like to contribute a few ideas from the standpoint of a Chinese scholar. We are facing a new problem, the problem of globalization. We are living in a world increasingly integrated and interdependent. It is particularly true in the field of the economy. With the growth of international trade, capital flows and the rapid development of technology diffusion and information exchange, different economies have increasingly infiltrated each other and become more interdependent and restricted by each other.

The globalization of economic life has become an irreversible international trend. Meanwhile, we are also faced with other global problems – resources, environmental protection, population, drug trafficking, the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, poverty – all concerning the common interests of different countries and calling for concerted efforts at settlement. Therefore, dialogue among civilizations is extremely necessary for us. Faced with the process of globalization, I believe that we must have a global consciousness; that is to say, we must not take actions out of individual narrow interests alone, but have a broader perspective of the common interests of all human beings. We must realize that the world is an integrated whole and we have to live on this planet together in peace, be dependent upon each other and help each other, live our own lives well and let other people live well. That must become a common role in international relations.

The process of globalization provides different countries not only with opportunities but also with challenges. The internationalization of the economy and the future exchanges of science and technology will undoubtedly promote economic and social development and accelerate the modernization of developing countries. Through their recent economic development and prosperity, the newly industrialized countries and regions have benefited from this process. However, at the same time globalization creates new problems, such as the difficulty of preserving the characteristics and cultural tradition belonging to a country in the process of globalization. Increasing global integration should not deny the plurality and diversity of human societies and culture. In fact the world is diversifying at the same time as the process of globalization is taking place. People in different countries live in societies with different political and economic systems, different cultural values, different religions and different historical backgrounds. It seems to me that it is not possible for them to adopt a unanimous development model or to impose certain cultural values upon them. People in different countries have the right to

choose their own path of development according to the state of affairs in their own countries and to preserve their own culture and values.

Take China, for example. China is participating more and more in the process of globalization and striving for modernization. A China open to reform is willing to learn from and absorb achievements of the world's civilizations but will not copy any foreign model of development. She will firmly take the path of her own characteristics and the path suitable for the Chinese people. It is important that different countries should exchange with each other, respect each other, tolerate things that are different from their own, seek common ground and leave differences as they are so as to promote world peace and prosperity.

Some have spoken about the idea of the clash of civilizations. The idea of the clash of civilizations has paradigms of the post-cold-war world that are dangerous. I do not think that the clash of different civilizations is inevitable but rather that civilizations can and must coexist in peace, learn from each other, understand each other, and replace confrontation with dialogue. Only then will the process of globalization be beneficial to the development and progress of all nations, instead of leading to more severe international confrontations and the resumption of the cold war.

Wole Soyinka

I see this meeting first of all to be largely a preparatory encounter. It is obviously impossible to speak on such a wide subject as the dialogue of civilizations. Perhaps the value of going step by step, as you have done, is that it enables us to identify the many directions in which the very concept of civilization can be approached, and the areas of neglect. We still want to focus on the purely historic aspect of civilization – what happened in the past and how has it defined our present – and then move on to ask what the essence of intervening in the past, or recovering the past, really means in terms of human progress. In other words, it should not be just an academic inquiry, for example, of what various tributaries have flowed into the present stream of civilization, what I would call globalization and others would call civilization – which I disagree with, by the way. I do not see that globalization is necessarily what would constitute a form of civilization. It is a trend, a particular step in a progression but it is not something I would call civilization.

I do not think we can avoid totally what one might call the purely academic aspect, the exhumation of the past. It is necessary, for instance, to understand absolutely what is happening now and why we are in a state of increasing intolerance in many aspects of human, social and national intercourse. Last century turned out to be one of the bloodiest that the world has known for quite a while. I should have thought that one reason for dialogue is to understand why human progression took such a seemingly retrogressive step. In the process of course there will have to be some soul-searching. We had some indictments of certain civilizations, and these were quite accurate. One would hope that the result of dialogue would be that this kind of criticism would even come from within, a kind of self-criticism. What have we done to other civilizations? What have we done to make other civilizations so suspicious, so resentful of us today? Why is there such a catalogue of indictment from one side to the other?

The focus as I see it would be an examination, an exhumation of the past with a view to understanding the present and trying to build a more harmonious and humane future.

Mohammed Javad Faridzadeh

I think that the perplexity that has come up in our discussion is somewhat natural. Without this perplexity our conversation would have been questionable. We will hear many diverse points of view and many issues will be discussed, especially if we realize that we are talking about an issue that means a great deal. We cannot focus on one point of view alone. I agree with you. If we focus on dialogue we are not actually dialoguing for the purpose of understanding what dialogue means. There are people who believe that we must avoid some subjective or other points of view. We want to be all-encompassing. At the same time we have to elevate the level of discussion, that is to say, we must talk about some philosophical issues because when we talk about dialogue we should not forget that its roots are to be found in philosophy.

I am not suggesting that we should avoid other forms of discussion, for instance in sociology, or in the political sphere, with regard to the issue of dialogue. Not at all. But if we are to find a common language in order to explore words and meanings behind those used, we must begin with the meaning of the word 'dialogue'. Iran has proposed a dialogue among civilizations. Therefore we should also talk about civilizations. Before talking about the morphology of civilizations we must understand what civilization itself means, and by itself the result of modern thinking. Civilization itself is a concept that evolved in the modern period with sociologists. By analysing this word we can enter the next phase, which will consist of understanding what different civilizations are about. The clash of civilizations – and talk about the clash of civilizations should also be discussed in a multilateral way – is an important issue in itself. It does not examine the world in the context of nation states. It suggests that the world can undergo a new division, based on civilizations. That is an important point. It means that we must not see everything in the context of governments and actions of states but also gain a new perspective. I do not have time enough to go into the details of dialogue, but when we hear the word 'dialogue' we are reminded of Socrates, and Socrates was introduced by Aristotle. Socrates believed that we must understand issues based on dialogue. The Aristotelian dialogue is not a method by itself. Truth for Aristotle is linked to dialectics and to a dialect and therefore to dialogue.

These first stones that were laid in early philosophy have focused on dialogue. Dialogue was studied further by Christian thinkers when they were trying to examine the dialogue between man and God. We know that great Christian scholars have put forward important theories, specifically the theory of dialogue between me, as in man, and God. That then was

examined in a new way in the modern era. There are new philosophies such as those later related to the existentialist philosophy. There are others like Benjamin, whom Edgar Morin also mentioned, or Habermas. These are all people who have talked about dialogue.

Naturally, we do not want to have a class on philosophy here, but we must start our discussion based on what has already been said. Important things have been said about dialogue. At the same time we must refrain from repetition. Discussion on dialogue not only pertains to Greek, Christian or Western philosophy; in a modern sense, dialogue should be examined in various cultural spheres, and schools of thought. We cannot understand dialogue without understanding the critical issues that we all consider involved in it. I refer to what Ru Xin said, that China does not want to copy. While accepting modernism, China wants to pursue its own goal, its own path perhaps. I want to say that modernism is not an alternative for us to accept or not. The dialogue of civilizations is not an issue of whether we want to copy it or not. We expect Chinese scholars to come to us and explain to us what dialogue means in the cultural context of China. China is one of the most important geo-cultural areas with regard to civilization. We will have that then as a comparison, a point of reflection, of what we say from an Islamic point of view or from an Iranian point of view. Then Western scholars can come to us and tell us what they have to contribute to this dialogue. That is how we discuss dialogue.

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami conversing with Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami.

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Attiya Inayatullah

At the outset may I congratulate and thank President Khatami from the land of Hafiz and Saadi for this launch of the dialogue of civilizations. The President and the other leaders who participated gave us plenty of food for thought.

I think what we heard from President Khatami was the capacity of Islam to integrate and to augment cultural repertoire. He mentioned, as have others, how Islam overcame dualism but encouraged pluralism. He also mentioned the essential unity of Islam. Thereafter he commented on the fact that unfortunately in the twentieth century there was an absence of dialogue, and then he said 'that through this one year of the Dialogue among Civilizations he hoped that we would get an alternative paradigm for international relations'. He was seeking an alternative, a new paradigm, to replace the present paradigm of military and economic force.

From there I move on to what we heard from the Secretary-General of the United Nations and from the Director-General of UNESCO. The Secretary-General suggested that we use diversity as an asset in an increasingly interconnected world. So I would like to raise some of the issues which I feel could be the focus of the year-long discussion on this subject.

I am not a philosopher or a scholar but I am a practitioner of development, so please excuse me if I am being very practical in what I say.

My first point comes from the comments of President Wahid of Indonesia. He was basically stating that first we need to internalize the dialogue of civilizations within our own national setting. He alluded to something I completely subscribe to, which is the fact that each country could within itself address the issue of a good governance. He talked of ethnic and religious divides and he talked of putting our own house in order. Then he indicated the dialogue between civilizations is a process which starts at the national level, goes to the regional level and then on to the global level, where I feel it fits into the United Nations function of harmonizing the actions of nations.

Thus, the first issue I would like to see discussed is the process of a dialogue at all three levels, as propounded by President Wahid. The second issue is that there should be a link with the 1995 International Year of Tolerance, because we find a lot of important related messages there, as also from the outcome of the Year 2000 dedicated to the Culture of Peace, and then another relevant event is the 2001 world conference in South Africa on racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

As a third issue I request that we talk of a 'depoliticizing' of the dialogue of civilization. In this depoliticizing let it be recalled that

communication through the Internet and information technology is not dialogue. I want to depoliticize this within the context of globalization, and I am reminded that the President of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, has said that the single most important element for development is the human contribution. The President of the World Bank must take himself seriously, because we do. We from the developing world believe in development with a human face. In any depoliticizing of the dialogue in the context of globalization we must give a lot of weight to civil society. Here I refer to the Helsinki and East European process, and in particular the Vaclav Havel contribution and initiative.

The President of Latvia talked of survival and the animal instinct. We are living in a world of globalization, so there is fear, suspicion and the animal instinct. Then you have globalization which is neither just nor equitable. I completely agree with Wole Soyinka that globalization is not civilization.

Another issue for dialogue over the whole year is the issue of violence. The President of Mali raised the question of violence being due to fear and suspicion. How do we remove fear and suspicion? I go back to what President Wahid of Indonesia said, namely that fear and suspicion arise from one's internal beliefs. It is the conviction of internal beliefs which become coercive and do not provide space of pluralism, or for other opinions. Our efforts during this Dialogue of Civilizations should be to study and understand the cause of violence at the individual and society level.

My fourth point flows from what the President of Latvia has said, that humans have the endowment of civilization. Using these words, which were beautifully stated, a call was made for open minds, hearts and spirit. Taking this thought further, I go back to President Khatami's address when he indicated that during this year we would search for a new paradigm for international relations. What we need to work towards is forging an awareness of the unity inherent in human diversity. This unity is something UNESCO is working very hard on, but it is easier said than done because we have to shake off the clash of civilizations syndrome. Proponents of the clash of civilization theory advocate that the non-identical is the devil other, this disrupts all co-relations and makes civilization an impenetrable unit. This mindset of a clash is like a museum piece whereas the concept of dialogue is very alive. There must be civilization of inclusiveness instead of exclusiveness.

I would like to elaborate on civilization's inclusiveness with an example. There is an unconscious dichotomy between what we invoke and

what we provoke. On the side of provocation you have the word *jihad* in Islam. For us in Islam it does not mean war as the provocateurs claim. It is the effort, any struggle, in the path of God. The word *jihad* means 'endeavour'. So I do believe there is great scope and potential that this year of dialogue not a dialogue of the deaf but a dialogue where all will listen and speak with full respect for the initiative taken by President Khatami. The people and Government of Pakistan wish not only to extend support but are planning to hold an important international dialogue on the Indus Valley civilization.

Alexander N. Yakovlev

I fully agree that perhaps the most important condition for universal dialogue in the area of culture, and not only in the area of culture, is depoliticization of that dialogue. If we look at the great religions of the world we will see that the Buddhist philosophy, before Christianity and before Islam, spoke of dialogue as the most important content of human relations. The same thing can be found in the Bible and in the Koran. Perhaps I am exaggerating, but I personally do not believe in the absence or lack of dialogue between people. I do not believe that people want to be enemies and to be antagonistic. I do not believe that they want violence, and that they want wars. I am personally convinced, even from my own experience, that all this is a matter resulting from selfish groups reflecting political concerns, and thus a matter for the politicians to address. In that sense I believe that perhaps the most effective way to bring about a universal dialogue in the new millennium in the conditions of globalization and in a new world is, of course, contacts between people.

If governments were to agree to a full cessation of financing of military expenditures, and if those funds were to be used instead for contacts among people, then people in all countries would be able to overcome that unfortunate barrier raised by politicians against dialogue among people. But nevertheless, for all that, before we speak about dialogue we need to determine the sources of existing quarrels and disputes.

First, I am concerned, in this sense, about the environment in which we live. The twentieth century has brought enormous scientific and technical change to our lives; inter alia the scientific and technical revolution in fact has built within our lives such an artificial body as a world economy which gradually and inexorably is destroying us. We are acting as if we do not see or understand what is going on, although in my view the major resources of nature, that ability of nature to engage in self-cleansing, is nearly exhausted. Man has passed a fatal boundary. When we talk about dialogue for an entire millennium then it may be useless and fruitless to continue to lie to nature the way we do. We are truly lying to nature. Sooner or later nature will take its revenge. It has already started to do so. Without that foundation we cannot continue to exist. We must move on to a new principle of spiritual and material progress. I would call it eco-development. This includes ecology, philosophy and economy, in fact an entire way of life.

The second thing that perplexes me when we talk about globalization and its problems, and about a new information era, is the apprehension, the fear, that it is possible gradually to have a

universalization of life and its values; not globalization – that is understandable, an inevitable phenomenon, a way of life – but a universalization at the level of television culture. Now, in the area of the mass media, a kind of monopolism looms over us which is fraught with that danger. That danger is linked to a degradation of mankind. If we lose that unity of culture in diversity, if we do not defend diversity of cultures, then it makes no sense to speak of dialogue because that will be a dialogue of the deaf. People will be speaking about one and the same thing because they will be like non-human beings. We speak about unification and universalization of culture that will mean the spiritual end of mankind. I, of course, am against any kind of apocalyptic assumptions here but in this dialogue we need to achieve one very important thing, we need to fight for a culture which would not become universal but will be diverse and national with all its traditions. Only on that basis can we achieve its unity. I, at the least, am convinced that no kind of unified culture will come about. We will be able to avoid that.

Lastly, when I am talking about our environment as the basis for our hopes, our shared life, I believe that the only paradigm for our development in these conditions, despite any scepticism we may have, is freedom and the sovereignty of the individual. Without sovereignty of the individual, in terms of dialogue we will not achieve anything. That is why I am convinced that there is a need first to single out those most burning issues of our time about which we are divided, that is, the environment in which we live, the diversity of cultures, and the problem of the sovereignty of the individual. It is precisely on these three issues that we must have a dialogue for the future.

Of course, all these issues would seem to be issues involving a great deal of demagogy. Everybody loves the people, everybody loves nature, everybody loves sovereignty, everybody is against violence. But nevertheless apparently our task here means that on these questions we must overcome the demagogy which we very often hear from politicians, scholars and others. I think we will be able to do that.

Finally, where do I see the danger lying ahead? I believe that the dialogue of the future, that dialogue, which will indeed make us into a unified world and fit us into that single world, can only exist on the basis of relations among people and not relations between bureaucrats. We should not hand over that sacred thing into the hands of a universal bureaucracy although I believe that this United Nations must be a strong organization and must become a world government.

Rex Nettleford

I come from a part of the world where I suppose we would be considered by some to be neither 'civilized', nor whatever else there may be. We do not, indeed, have the claim to a discrete civilization, because we are still in formation. Personally, we in the Caribbean would regard ourselves as part African, part European, part Asian, part native American, but totally *Caribbean*. That is extremely difficult to understand for those who are accustomed to exercising power, since homogeneity has been the principal basis for social organization in such civilizations whereas heterogeneity is a principle of social organization as many of us in the Caribbean see it. I would imagine that one of the things that this Dialogue among Civilizations should seek to do would be to get it across to the entire world that the plurality of existence is a given and that any cosmology that we are going to embrace from now on in the so-called twenty-first century has to take that on board. There are people in the world who are very conscious of this, who live by it and who understand that the dynamics even of late twentieth century existence was such that one had to be continually code-switching.

I noticed with interest that all the authorities who have been cited in the interventions so far are the kinds of people I heard of when I attended those rather good Western schools. But there are other civilizations (established and emergent) with which we have to come to grips. That, of course, applies to the entire Americas. The United States of America managed to 'hijack' into its designation the word 'America'. Therefore when one refers to a 'US citizen' one speaks of an American. That is anthropologically quite wrong. All of us on this side of the Atlantic came upon ancient civilizations with which we as transplants have had to come to terms, and which in turn have had to come to terms with those of us who were either brought here involuntarily or came voluntarily as migrants and have created, or are in the process of creating, a new civilization. It is precisely after this kind of thing that the Dialogue now hankers. Therefore, I see the focus being on getting the next generation to understand the new kind of world in which they live, whether via the raising of consciousness or the ease with which we can now move from one place to the next, and whether labour is still needed and therefore has to be imported from other parts of the globe, interestingly enough, still to the countries of the North Atlantic.

One focus for the purposes of action is to find the target among the youth population. When one thinks that the child who is now ten years old will be 28 by the year 2020 and will just about ready to take over this world

and lead it, that young person has to be reared on the heterogeneous principle and has to understand that the world is not made up merely of people who look like the majority who come from the North Atlantic, but of persons from all of Planet Earth.

The whole notion of unity in diversity is not by any means new. Both the Roman and Spanish empires had as their motto *e pluribus unum* – lots of ‘pluribus’, very little ‘unum’. We are still plagued by the non-fulfilment of that particular aspiration.

There are a number of initiatives that UNESCO has already taken on board. I would advise that as part of this Year of Dialogue, the United Nations be reminded that UNESCO is already on the road of dialogue among civilizations and that it needs resources and help for this. The Silk Road is certainly one of them because things happen along routes. The Slave Route is another. Those are just two, but other initiatives taken by UNESCO towards global understanding, tolerance and conviviality need tremendous support and should be brought into the discourse. Practically, UNESCO and the United Nations could do a great deal to encourage educational institutions in every part of the world to take those initiatives seriously. Lots of books need to be *re-written*. Lots of histories need to be *re-thought*. That would be one way to do this.

Lastly, in approaching the young, the cultural indices needing attention are very clear. Many of the people from below are already teaching older folks and those in authority what can be done. Take *language*. I think the whole world has to become multilingual in a very real sense. Maybe we will have to rebuild the UN Headquarters in New York so that there can be more booths for more ‘official languages’. Then there is the question of *religion*. Absolutely no doubt about this! The ecumenical principle has been around for a long time but I am happy that I have lived to see that we have gone against what I learned when I was growing up in a colonial country, namely that anybody who was not a Christian was an infidel. I could never understand why so many millions of people should all go to hell for not following a particular faith, but now we know that this is nonsense. That no longer works.

I notice too in naming the civilizations and the religions, that the religions of Africa, south of the Sahara, are left out. Again we persist in the myth that Africa has no real civilization. I have heard this seriously put forward. But a place such as Africa, like all civilizations, has come up with thought and ideas which are universal. The notion that everybody sitting in this room is a manifestation of those gone, those living and those yet unborn, is a fantastic cyclical view of life which is repeated in nature – the

fruit falling from the tree and producing more trees. That is the kind of thing that should be taught to the young and should get into our textbooks.

Then there is the question of the *family*. That is a very important cultural index. But what kind of family? The myth of the nuclear family does not make sense to the millions of people all over the world who are nurtured in extended families structures. Certainly where I come from there are matriarchal and matrifocal family patterns, without people necessarily ending up being dysfunctional souls in this world.

Lastly, there are *artistic manifestations*, products of the creative imagination: young people everywhere understand these and that is why the music has spread all over. I can lie in my bed and listen to a reggae tune sung completely in Jamaican but if I turn around and look at the television I see that it is a Japanese who is singing it. What has happened in this sense is fantastic with the music of the world. Somebody mentioned sports which is for me a branch of the performing arts. There are all these different games. Where I come from, it is cricket which is played extensively in the Commonwealth. Those of you who have not heard of the Commonwealth, it is that gentleman's club which is the transformation of the old British Empire. (Only the English could achieve a transformation like this). There is basketball, and football world cups of one kind or another. The young meet at such events and come to understand each other. Dance, art, all such things should get into books and into the curricula schools everywhere so that Africans can appreciate Indian Islamic art and Westerners can appreciate African art and acknowledge that they are appreciating *African* art, and not something that the Africans might have been deemed to have stolen from Picasso. There is a great deal of work to be done by way of action. Happily, a lot is already begun. I recommend to the United Nations that we do not reinvent the wheel. Put resources into what is already on the ground, see what the young people, in particular, are doing. They are getting together while we old fogies are fighting each other. The President of Mali said that our deliberations in this Dialogue among Civilizations should not be empty rhetoric but should be the basis for meaningful action by which we can indeed learn to live *together* rather than side by side in the twenty-first century. I endorse that!

R. K. Ramazani

There is no question that we have a process of what in its own vocabulary the United Nations has called the rejuvenation of the world population and that we do have the process of rejuvenation all over the world. Therefore, I would subscribe to the notion that youth has a great role to play. I would add also that in addition to youth the whole process has to be extended to gender, and the role of women, in it as well as young men.

Although we might use the expression 'unity in diversity', which could sound as though we have already achieved some kind of reconciliation, that might be misleading. We are, in essence, still dealing with a problem that humanity has had to deal with over history for thousands of years, a problem that started in the East, the problem of dualism. Certainly the Greeks dealt with it in terms of the juxtaposition of the archetypes of ideas versus reality, the shadow and reality. Subsequently, in terms of Western culture, at least, there was the development of man versus nature. We are still entangled in this dichotomy, some kind of dualism, that will not be washed away by simply saying unity in diversity.

Having said that, and hopefully that statement is not a conclusion, it is an indication of my desire to explore the fact that we do indeed live with a world of reality which is that of diversity predominantly and very little of that which we call unity. Unity, to me at least, would appear to be more of an aspiration than something that we have at the moment. We must recall that even in the United Nations Charter we seem to have that dualism in terms of the sovereignty of nations and yet at the same time we talk about universality. One of the most intriguing aspects of this has been that indeed we have been at least nibbling in terms of universality, not in a theoretical sense so much as in practical terms, as we have come somehow to reconcile diversity, case by case. We have accepted the sovereignty of States yet when we come to humanitarian intervention we are talking about some other concept, that is the concept of universality. Perhaps the realm where this apparent dichotomy and dualism could be resolved is less at the level of theory and more in practical terms.

Let me for a moment turn to something that has been intriguing me for a long time. I was prompted to think about this by the very thesis of 'The Clash of Civilizations'. I made a criticism of it when it first appeared and was one of its early critics. Now we seem to be somehow encountering more than just the thesis of a clash of civilizations but a proposition of globalism or globalization. In trying to think about dialogue among civilizations we could perhaps think of approaching the problem either in terms of paradigms that have already been invoked, and somehow one

might then juxtapose dialogue among civilizations as a new one, as contrasted with, let us say, technologically driven globalism and the clash of civilizations. That juxtaposition comparatively would be extremely useful, if I may suggest, because unlike those two specially dominant theories, which both assume the existence already of an international system, an international system of clash and an international system technologically and scientifically dominated and somehow fuelling the world economy.

If we contrast dialogue among civilization, we would perhaps be more searching and scholarly in our approach rather than having an outcome already to substitute for the cold war. The proposition here is what attracts me to Homibarbe [*sic*] who has a wonderful statement about the kind of condition of the world in which we find ourselves at the end of the twentieth century, the beginning of the twenty-first century and the millennium. I should like to quote that literary theorist here:

‘At the end of the century, before we enter the twenty-first century we find ourselves in a moment of transience where space and time cross to produce complex figures, differences and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion, for there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction. Hence the paradigm of dialogue among civilizations would seem somehow to take that kind of ambiguity of our world at this juncture of history as a real question.’

If we take that to be the case then dialogue among civilizations juxtaposes in either this context of the stage of history that we are in, or in the context of these paraded pieces of technical globalism or clash of civilizations. I find four propositions of how it could help our thinking about a dialogue of civilizations actually benefiting this whole notion of unity in diversity.

The first one has already been mentioned in the sense that a dialogue among civilizations does not pretend to have a model. It is in search of a paradigm. It is in that sense an excellent idea because it is exploratory rather than a preconception of a model. I could go into that but time will not allow.

The second feature of dialogue among civilizations in comparative terms – and I am not saying ‘comparative terms’ only in terms of a clash of civilizations like globalization but in terms of humankind being not even in the post-modern period but the post-post-modern period – would be that relative to all others it has a normative dimension. It posits what is desirable in terms of aspiration of humanity. Ethics concerns this kind of concept of dialogue, the question of the decline of morality in terms of our

time, having come together so much with modernity and post-modernity and partly also the adverse side effects of globalization.

Thirdly, relative to other paradigms, a dialogue among civilizations seems to me to be far more comprehensive. I would call it holistic in its approach. It is not reductionist, as the clash of civilizations is. Even globalism is reductionist. One is reductionist in political terms and the other in economic terms. But dialogue among civilizations in essence says we need to look at all dimensions of humankind, not only political or economic but in terms of ethics, of religion, of lifestyles, beliefs and so on.

Finally, the fourth feature of the dialogue would seem to me to be indicative of a degree of concern with humanity or the oneness of mankind as an aspiration, which is indeed terribly difficult to find in either the thesis of the clash of civilizations or globalism as a thesis. In both those instances the underlying assumption, somewhat spoken and somewhat not, is that there is in the words of the proponent of a clash of civilizations – first it was America and now it is called ‘Atlanticist’ – that somehow a combination of North America and Europe would produce some kind of a paradigm that could perhaps be imposed or should be imitated by the rest of the world. In terms of a dialogue among civilizations there is no such claim. The claim, if there is any, is one of unity, the unity of mankind as an aspiration. So in a sense we are in a way station. We are searching. Searching for what? We are searching for shared values.

That reminds me of a wonderful saying from Santayana that I read long ago. It is in the most brief form but it strikes me as being so relevant to our discussion. Santayana profoundly called, in his words, for the harmony of the whole which does not destroy the vitality of the parts.

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations, conversing with Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, and Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.

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Masanori Aoyagi

I would like to return to globalization once more. Both the United Nations constitution and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiative, recognize and respect the individualities of each state, region and culture and foster fundamental diversification in the world. When we review the history of mankind, its developments or evolutions were brought about by the changes and inventions based on the cultural heterogeneity of the world. But today, the world, as it follows the new tendency towards globalization, is finding itself involved in a unifying process whilst at the same time actual regimes are losing their power of control and governance. This new tendency will foster a unified and homogenized world that is so different from internationalization, which has the nature of diversification and heterogeneity. We should pay attention to the different natures of internationalization and globalization, or we will soon encounter similar contradictions ourselves. Although they are different in nature, it was clear from the beginning of internationalization that from it would stem a new tendency, globalization. It is like using an antibiotic which is detrimental to other micro-organisms, bacteria, but makes them more resistant and able to survive. They then go on to reproduce or transfer their resistance to others of their species through a process of gene exchange.

If internationalization leads to the growth of new tendencies towards globalization, what is the process of gene exchange? The answer, I think, lies in the process of relativization, which is inherent in the nature of internationalization and which makes it possible to compare and analyse some elements composing units of the state, regions, areas and cultures. We are now talking about a dialogue of civilizations, except that the first syllable of the word 'dialogue' is always *di-*, which means a conversation between two. I do not know if such a word already exists, but I should like to change the word from *di-* to *poly-*, a 'polylogue' among civilizations and cultures. With the problems of globalization only the big cultures will easily survive, but many of the smaller cultures will be seriously endangered. At present there are about 2000 languages in the world, but every day a few languages are disappearing. Perhaps this new word is not so apt for this symposium, but I think that the concept of a 'polylogue' among civilizations and cultures is important for future discussion.

Koh Byong-Ik

First of all the dialogue among civilizations is progressing, on an unprecedented and deep scale among people in all nations. Due to the development of transportation and communication there are very wide and meaningful dialogues going on at every level: at the individual level, at society level and at government level. But at the individual level these dialogues are mainly sporadic, unintentional and unplanned, and perhaps these very factors are conducive to achieving genuine understanding or genuine reconciliation. However, in order to obtain our intended results of reconciliation among civilizations, dialogue will require centuries or even millennia. So the proposal for dialogue among civilizations by the President of Iran, and its acceptance by UNESCO is a very timely and welcomed move.

Nowadays it is necessary to have not only sporadic unplanned dialogue but centrally planned, supported and controlled dialogues. This may sound somewhat simple-minded or even dangerous. It may fall into the trap of making propaganda for specific civilizations or taking sides for specific civilizations, but if we try to be transparent and fair then the planned and organized dialogue from the centre, from the upper level, can be constructive and effective. It is good that UNESCO will also promote this organized kind of dialogue project.

The second point is a very critical one. Our troubles, or disharmony, in this world come mainly from the hate and contempt of one ethnic group or civilization towards the other. It is most important to focus our dialogue on efforts to dispel, eliminate or lessen hate and contempt. This feeling of hate, of harsh antagonism or contempt towards others is not an intrinsic, a priori feeling, not an inborn feeling, it is an implanted taught, manipulated or acquired sentiment. It forms a more recent layer of human sentiments and thinking which we must try to eliminate or dispel. President Khatami mentioned that the dialogue must have a specific purpose. He spoke of 'compassion' and 'empathy', and that is certainly in the right direction. If, however, we are aiming at the wrong goal to start with, then we may run an even greater risk or danger. So, we must set a very specific purpose to eliminate and dispel these mutual feelings of hate and contempt. Those later man-made, acquired sentiments must be removed, and this can only be achieved through organized efforts from above.

These comments focused on two points. To illustrate these two points I shall take the example of Korea, not for propaganda purposes but because I know the situation in Korea better than in any other nation or civilization. Korea has a long Buddhist tradition. Even a tourist can see

from the statues, temples or paintings that much of the cultural heritage is Buddhist-related. Buddhism is still very much alive today. However, before the formation of the Buddhist spiritual and cultural stratum in Korea, or simultaneously, Confucianism travelled from China, and until recent years Korea was a more 'Confucianized' country than China itself. Indeed, the Korean people had adhered most ardently to Confucianism. At the end of the last century however, Korea began to be Christianized, and today, Korea is perhaps the most Christianized country in Asia, possible even more than the Philippines. One could almost say that it even surpasses some European Christian countries in this respect.

These three beliefs, the teachings of the three sages, Confucius, Buddha and Christ, all thrive very peacefully. There is no persecution. I do not say there is no mutual contempt or hate, but in general they are at peace with each other. One wonders where this harmonious co-existence of three, sometimes antagonistic, sometimes clashing, beliefs comes from. There are many reasons, but one is that in Confucianism there is an inherent propensity for tolerance. There is another, however, and here I am talking about the efforts of Korean religious leaders towards conciliatory, harmonious co-operation. There have been many spontaneous efforts by leaders, mainly at the upper level, at reconciliatory measures. This recently rapidly Christianized and industrialized state, with all three teachings thriving in a very harmonious manner, may constitute very unique example. As I mentioned right at the beginning, organizers from the top have helped to bring this about.

A second factor concerns the elimination of hate. One such event has occurred very recently, just two months ago in Asia. Everyone knows that the antagonism between North and South Korea is unparalleled in the whole world. From kindergarten to school, the media, civil society and the government all had instilled in the people this hate, dislike and antagonism for the other. In North Korea there was even more antagonism towards us. I believe this unparalleled antagonism is now beginning to recede. This is because of the determined efforts of the two state leaders to bring about the reconciliation between the two divided countries. Of course, the people's desire was the basis for the event, but the real efforts to dispel the hate and contempt were initiated from the very top.

I wanted to mention these two points as practical examples for this discussion on dialogue among civilizations.

Jane Cortez

It is wonderful that the United Nations is emphasizing dialogue among civilizations. I would like to talk a little about action and present two recent examples of international dialogue coming from my own experience.

In 1999 to celebrate the end of the twentieth century and the capacity of the human spirit to confront and survive adversity, the African Diaspora Slave Routes Organizing Committee in conjunction with New York University's Institute of African-American Affairs, and in partnership with UNESCO within the framework of the slave routes project, organized an international symposium on the transatlantic slave trade which provided a forum for dialogue among scholars, critics, artists and the public. The four-day symposium included participants from Africa, Europe, South America, North America and the Caribbean. The panel discussions brought into focus new information concerning the origins of the enslaved, the social, spiritual, political and artistic expressions and creations that evolved as a consequence of the slave trade, the impact of the trade on the economic development of Africa, Europe, South America, North America and the Caribbean and the ongoing multicultural process as a result of the encounter between cultures.

The outcome of this symposium was an increasing in awareness about the physical and monumental heritage of the slave trade, the breaking of the silence and the promotion of co-operation between institutions.

In 1997, the Organization of Women Writers of Africa in conjunction with New York University's African studies programme had the opportunity of co-sponsoring *Yariyari* – this word in the Kuranko language of Sierra Leone means 'the future of the future' – Black Women Writers and the Future, an international conference on literature by women of African descent. It was the first large-scale conference devoted to the study, evaluation and celebration of the creativity of black women writers and story-tellers in all their contemporary diversity. One hundred and fifty writers of all ages came from Africa and its diaspora to exchange information and discuss technology, the future and the imagination, conflicting forces, identities, the subject of violence, globalization and literature, how to raise the level of their own work, achieve economic independence and control their own images and develop publishing

outlets, and effective means of distribution. The result of this dialogue was the dedication to expanding international co-operation and to continuing the dialogue at the local, national and global levels.

I have cited these two events as a way of saying that at this moment people are getting together out of a necessity for dialogue. They are dialoguing. They are deepening their knowledge, building networks, practising alternative medicine, creating movements, promoting peace, resisting negative influences, protecting the environment, taking responsibility for themselves and their communities. And they are choosing the path of life at the turning point and are forging ahead with life at the centre of the dialogue. I just wanted to bring that up because there are, as someone mentioned earlier, many dialogues happening and we must talk about how we continue the dialogue without interruption, letting it evolve without manipulation, and, finally, who is going to control the dialogue.

Flora Lewis

I should just like to respond to a certain number of points that have been made. To start with, the idea of dialogue among civilizations. With all due respect for the thought behind that phrase, I am uncomfortable with civilizations in the plural. A number of speakers this morning did make the point, without quite saying they rejected the idea of plural civilizations. A metaphor that was used which I thought very apt was that civilization is a river with many tributaries, but eventually all going in the same direction into the universality of the sea.

I consider that there are different degrees of civilization and there are many different ways of expressing it. But one is civilized or is not. The word comes from the Latin word *civis*, the Roman idea of the organized social life of the city against the barbarians on the outside. I certainly cannot agree that this is a modern idea. The ancient Persians had a very highly organized civilization and they were conscious that it was one. So did the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, and so on. I do not think there is any reason to feel that this is some kind of new invention.

What is a new invention perhaps is the idea of recognizing that there are different degrees and different ways of going about it, to pay more attention, as Wole Soyinka suggested – which I think is quite important – to how we got here. What happened in the past that led to these different ways, with an understanding, which would be quite new, that the past was not inevitable, that it was the result of a number of choices, a number of accidents, a number of assorted human decisions so that bad things were done in the past as well as things that were commendable.

Yes, fear and suspicion lead to violence but it is not only because of that there is such a thing as hatred and contempt. There is such a thing as bad, nasty behaviour. I was cheered by the new United Nations report on peacekeeping (*The Brahimi Report*¹) which makes a point of saying that it has been wrong all this time to assume that everybody who gets into a war wants peace and is going to make a good peaceful agreement if the United Nations peacekeepers go there; that it is necessary to consider that people who have been behaving very badly in the past may continue to behave badly and therefore certain kinds of pressures and force have to be used to prevent that.

It is important, as Javier Pérez de Cuéllar pointed out, that in order to have open conversation – which frankly I prefer to the word ‘dialogue’

1. The report may be consulted on http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/docs/full_report.htm

which is limiting – democracy is essential so that there can be a sense of non-constraint. But then the question to argue is this: is this a Western idea, as, for example, Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia would tell us, or is it something built in to the very notion of civilization which we have not achieved yet but we are working on? That is an issue to continue discussing. Language is very important. Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things, but learning another way to think about things. I am worried that the English-speaking world is going to face a very severe handicap exactly because English has taken over totally in modern communications so everybody else is going to know at least two, and maybe three or four languages, whereas English-speaking people, particularly Americans, will probably only know one and not have a clue why and how other people are thinking differently. It is very important to continue to push for more foreign language education and to point out that this is an education not only in words, but an education in how to think, how minds work.

I agree with Alexander Yakovlev that we do have a new issue. Not that it is new, but we did not know about it before – the issue of ecology, of nature. I am convinced that that was the real underlying question that led to the upheavals of 1968; that there was a sense that the eternal human effort to dominate nature so as to protect human beings from its vicissitudes had succeeded so far that now our problem is to support nature so it can continue to support us. That is such a profound change reflected in every aspect of human thought, religion, literature, art and history, that we still have not really come to grips with it, but it is something that is absolutely essential and certainly something that people everywhere necessarily will have in common.

I would also like to notice that in this discussion about dialogue and where to go, it has always been about the West versus the rest. One says 'polylogue', but it is not. We do not hear about Asia and Africa trying to understand each other, or about Latin America and the Middle East, not because they do not need to, but because this whole issue of civilization is being approached in what I consider to be the totally false way launched by Samuel Huntington, rather than seeing civilization as a state, a single state, expressed in many different ways by different cultures.

Hans van Ginkel

I should like to confine myself to some remarks and a concrete proposal. In my opinion, there is often too much talk about globalization in this context, because globalization is nothing new. It has been made new. When we think about the major migrations of people from Central Asia to and towards the south of Spain, major explorations and so on, contacts over great distances are something that already existed in the early stages of the history of humankind. That is one element. The other is that over time we have learned to live with improved means of mobility, of transport. As a consequence distances have been shrinking and there has been an increase in the frequency and volume of contacts and exchange. That has been a gradual process. So globalization is only now bringing the process up to the level of the whole of the world, but the major changes in Europe at the time of the unification of Italy or of Germany, or for that matter in Asia, in Japan or China, should not be underestimated. It is most likely that the differences between peoples, becoming united in one country, at that time were felt to be equally important as is the case now between different parts of the world. So we are not really into something completely new. We also know how people can learn to live with each other, in fact in many places they do live together peacefully, while often retaining quite important differences in orientation and in civilization.

Secondly, I think that as an aim for 2001 it would be enough to say that we would really like to improve the capacity for sincere dialogue among people. The question was asked whether we should focus on institutions or on people. Well, after all, institutions are made up of people and they have to respond to people. So where one does not start to change people there will be no dialogue, not between people and not between institutions, at the end of the day. First, we must make it clear that in order to improve this capacity for dialogue we have to get rid of the model of the debate, the exchange of arguments in order to win the debate.

Many of us are more used to debating, to winning arguments, to convincing the other, than learning to understand the way of thinking of those with whom we are communicating. In that sense, the capacity for dialogue among people has to be increased. One major fact is that there is no basis for dialogue unless there is already a basic understanding of the other side. Probably here we must look at the basic conditions for good dialogue. We have talked about democracy, but what I considered was missing was that there is no basis for dialogue unless there is the beginning of understanding based on education. It is an understanding that is also based on respect for the other party, so there can be no hate, no contempt,

or whatever. Hate and contempt generally find their basis in lack of knowledge. Respect is a basic condition for dialogue because one must accept the other as an equal but this must be based on knowledge, on knowing the other. Therefore when President Khatami speaks about world culture in terms of one river, but a river with many tributaries, and where warm and cold streams are coming together, he clearly bases his view on an acceptance of diversity. It will be, after all, a world culture of diversity.

I then come to the question of what should be the focus of the discussion. At the end of the day we cannot escape the question, what kind of world we do want to live in. Are we steered by market forces we do not want, or do not dare to influence, not understanding that the economy after all is a man-made system? Any man-made system can be changed, if we want that. What kind of world do we want to live in, one with cultural diversity? We talk about biodiversity and then say that there should also be cultural diversity. But in the end all our actions are directed at homogeneity, so what are the preconditions for maintaining cultural diversity around the world? That is a topic to think about.

What kind of world do we want to live in? More and more the reactions of common people are to say that at the end they want something on a human scale. They want not only the very big things and very large processes over which they have no control, but they also want to have some kind of control themselves. As a reaction, many people talk about 'rootedness', identity, a sense of belonging, and that is also part of the world in which we would like to live. Contrary to the tendency towards eco-destruction, about which many have already spoken, the world we would like to live in should be an ecologically sound one. In many places one will find initiatives. In Tokyo, there was a major conference, in which many cities participated, on the eco-society and how this can be promoted in practice at the city level.

Now my proposal. When we think about all these topics it becomes more and more clear that only when one has a sense of the background from which other people come is a real dialogue possible. Not only must science contribute to make things more clear, but education must contribute too. We live in a world where generally we are looking at mono-dimensional solutions to problems of development, so we talk about information technology or doing something against infectious diseases, or this and that, and forget about the total complexity of development. How and in what ways can information technology contribute to development? What factors do cause the spread of infectious diseases? How can these be countered? The same is true in education. We hear that there should be

more time for information technology, for mathematics, and for learning a language, but what about history, geography, social science, or whatever, to help children learn about the rest of the world in which they will be living, and about the other people they will have to share this world with. Unless we are successful in primary and secondary schools in educating young children that there is something beyond the borders of their own country, or province, and what is going on there, there will not be the basic condition for dialogue among people, for true understanding. I would like, therefore, to rephrase 'dialogue among civilizations' as being a dialogue among people from very different civilizational and geographical backgrounds in order to understand each other.

We must realize ourselves, however, that as far as there is education in this field, often the textbooks are quite biased. In Europe a major contribution was made by the Council of Europe, when teachers from different countries started to screen the textbooks of other countries with references on their own country to see what kind of biases were present in textbooks in other, often neighbouring countries. I know that UNESCO is already carrying out activities in the field, but the screening of textbooks should be systematic and worldwide in order to find out what we are saying about each other, teaching about each other, in order to ensure that we can create that basic understanding.

Certainly the United Nations University is prepared to work with UNESCO on this topic. We will deal more in detail with the promotion of dialogue among civilizations through education and science, by paying specific attention to ethics and the role of mass media and communication.



Left to right: Giandomenico Picco, Personal Representative of the Secretary General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilization; Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO addressing the Round Table and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami.

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Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO and President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Mohammad Khatami.

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Further exchange of views

Giandomenico Picco

Having myself spent 20 years, until 1992, in this bureaucracy, and having discovered in the last eight years a different kind of world, I thought I would share with you some of the different sources of input that can enter into a discussion on something called a dialogue among civilizations. One input, of course, comes from the information technology industry, which is quite wide and effective in some way.

R. K. Ramazani

We have had so many buzz words in the world, including information technology. Like everything else it has positive dimensions and very negative dimensions. But I am going beyond that: I believe that the very concept of dialogue requires more than has been said here up until now, and that is the concept of understanding. In my humble view it is not enough, whether through the Internet or any other channel. We need more than mind, which implies understanding, we need empathy, putting ourselves into other people's shoes; this is a matter of heart. If we could get that, then we would really have dialogue.

Wole Soyinka

I wish to thank Flora Lewis for pointing out the obvious fact that dialogue does not mean one versus the rest – not the West versus the rest, or the East versus the West. Neither the West nor the East is the answer, nor is Africa or Asia or Australasia the answer. That is the essence of the whole notion of dialogue. I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that internal dialogue is every bit as crucial as dialogue between not only nations and civilizations but between religions. It is a dialogue of the entire concourse of humanity. That is the significance of choosing the end of a millennium to hold this dialogue. It is supposed to be a dialogue different from any other.

A very useful example was given earlier by Attiya Inayatullah when she explained the original meaning of *jihad*. In an internal dialogue, a religion like Islam would have to ask what has happened in the meantime to turn the concept of jihad into one of a provocative, aggressive war. That is what will ensue from a dialogue. A Christian can say, 'Oh, you have the crusading spirit', but that word 'crusade' is redolent of horrors that have been perpetrated on humanity; on the intellect: inquiry, the Inquisition, the index. When one hears about the Christian 'crusade' something has happened to that word. The origin of the word may have been noble but we know very well what horrors the major religions, the major so-called civilizations of the world, have inflicted on other parts of humanity. Many of them do not even believe, as my brother here said, that African cultures exist. They destroyed these cultures. They do not even know the meaning of African religions because they came as religions and civilizations of conquest and domination. That is the whole essence of dialogue, to look into the entire history of civilizations, the impact of their contacts with one another and then see whether it is not time to begin a dialogue among equals. I believe that this is what will result from a genuine dialogue at this turn of human existence, a dialogue of equals as opposed to a dialogue of domination.

Hans van Ginkel

Is information technology helpful? Yes. However, is it in itself enough? No. The United Nations University has two projects, one in Tokyo, about universal networking language, and in a way it is more or less co-operating with the European automatic translation programmes. But we still have a long way to go before it will be possible for someone in China to write something on the computer in Chinese, and someone in Saudi Arabia will get it out in Arabic.

The second project, in Macao, is about script. In some languages one writes from top to bottom, but in other languages the script goes from right to left. So how does one get it printed properly? These projects are important and progress in being made, but still there is a long way to go. When we look at this kind of international culture, a distinction should be made between an international culture having elements of very different cultures, and cultural diversity: these are different concepts. Cultural diversity means the existence of many coherent cultures in themselves, that have grown over the centuries, in different places, very different in many aspects from each other. This is completely different from one international culture, which is at the end homogeneous and the same everywhere.

On the topic of education, I should like to make the following remark. In Europe, the school programmes were developed in the nineteenth century in relation to the building up of the modern state, often called the 'nation-state'. So geography, history, social science always has a role to socialize young people into the nation, to make them capable and prepared to contribute, to work and fight for the country. In many, if not all of the newly independent countries, more or less the same [curriculum] was repeated, but in ways adapted to their own circumstances. We must make it clear that the world community of peoples in the twenty-first century is asking for a different type of pedagogy, of school programmes focusing on understanding both their own country and people as well as the other countries of the world, the other peoples of the United Nations, and that this is a major project, of gigantic proportions.

Alexander Yakovlev

We continue here to live in conditions of atavism. We have states, visas, customs, security, and in fact more than the things that are being guarded. The Internet and our new epoch will wipe away all these atavistic elements or customs, opening then the road to mankind. On the other hand, I have apprehensions as to how in conditions of the Internet or an information era we might not in fact take man's living soul out of him. We might forget what a book or the theatre is. We might forget what normal human contacts are. We might be transformed into individual entities, almost like 'biomachines', even before those things are invented. Those problems are now facing us as we are faced with the new information era.

Jane Cortez

Over 70 per cent of the people in the world are poor. We need to search for a dialogue without domination, without controlling forces trying to control a dialogue that the whole world needs.

I think the dialogue should correct inaccuracies in textbooks and should help end divisions, conflicts and inequalities. Once we know the responsibility and focus of the dialogue, the dialogue should not remain in the lecture hall or at the summit, the dialogue must leave the room, the paper and go to the streets, the schools, the web, the carnival, and should include exchanges between people from diverse backgrounds and cultures and become a way of life, a way of survival, and be a living thing for the well-being of humanity.

Masanori Aoyagi

I want us to remember that in Athens 2,300 years ago the Greeks Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had already been born. So in the Hellenistic period to keep creativity and to have a say in maintaining innovation the kings established a museum together to collect all the information throughout the world of Greeks. That was a time of some claustrophobia in the world. We now feel that claustrophobia very much. A few centuries ago everyone felt agoraphobia but that has changed now. [Because of that claustrophobia we are enlarging and widening the world with information.] But we are concerned about enlarging only the quantity and not the quality. So how do we change from information to cognition of knowledge?

Richard W. Bulliet

I wish to endorse Hans van Ginkel's comments about education, particularly the teaching of history. In the United States, world history is the most rapidly growing area of historical study, especially at the secondary school level, and there is a great deal of agitation among élite historians who feel that this is an impossibility, and yet we must do it anyway. But we are lacking adequate international consultation and co-operation and, I choose the word, 'dialogue' with respect to what should be in world history as we teach it to our children. I should like to see that as a focus.

Mohamed Javad Faridzadeh

Mankind is imprisoned by history, by language, by certain historical and social circumstances, nevertheless they are the only creatures who can decide what the prison cell will look like, whether wide, or tight and narrow. Only mankind can overcome the difficulties and challenges. Communication technology can broaden our information. At the same time it can lead to misunderstandings because what is relayed through it, through the Internet for example, is only one reflection of life, and if we think that we can recognize every individual being through that, it will lead to much misunderstanding. We must understand the limitations that the Internet has within the context of our cultural and social lives. It is a tool that can create understanding and also misunderstanding. We can refrain from misunderstanding, by being more humble and not thinking that we can communicate everything through the Internet. We will therefore benefit from it and reach understanding.

Ugné Karvelis

If a dialogue of citizens has to go through information technology and the Internet I am afraid we will have to wait for a very long time until we can hear a satisfactory number of citizens, unless somebody wants to distribute computers for free all over the world. The Internet is wonderful and necessary for information technology, but it is not exactly an instrument of dialogue because there is a live dimension that will always be lacking. It is the same as the difference between a live concert and a very, very good compact disc. It is not the same thing, and one cannot modulate the answers, the questions and the voices on the Internet.

Flora Lewis

The key is that we must talk about what kind of world we want to live in. Information technology is a tool, nothing more. The content has to be decided. It is absolutely true that the tools you have decide what you can make with it, enlarge what you can make with it, or define what you can make with it, but one still has to decide what it is one wants. That is the issue we should be concerned with.

Edgar Morin

What Alexander Yakovlev suggested reminds me of T. S. Eliot, who said that knowledge could be lost in information, and wisdom could be lost in knowledge. In other words information is necessary but not sufficient. If we have only information we lose a lot of knowledge.

Information does not provide understanding. Here we are attempting a dialogue on dialogue via many monologues. But that means we are trying to understand each other despite all the difficulties involved. We have heard that dialogue is neither debate nor discussion but an attempt to understand the ideas and arguments of others. It was quite right to emphasize that there may well be two modes of comprehension. There is objective comprehension with the idea of understanding ideas and situations. Then there is subjective comprehension, that is from subject to subject, from person to person. That type of understanding is an understanding of what the other person feels and how we make other people understand what we feel. In any case, we know that from a biological, intellectual, sociological, and psychological point of view there is no such thing as cold, hard intelligence in human beings. That only exists in computers. Human intelligence always requires sentiment and passion. If we want to hold a dialogue of civilizations it is only because we have this passion for peace and understanding, otherwise we would never even attempt the dialogue of civilization. Moreover, Samuel P. Huntington said that we must refuse war in order to achieve civilization, otherwise we will be tempted to close our eyes to each other's situations and not to understand each other.

We are facing a number of very difficult problems. Why is it so difficult for us to understand each other? Well, it is because the world is very complex and difficult and we cannot understand all its elements. Secondly, we have means of acquiring knowledge that separate us rather than link us and make it possible for us to understand global problems. Each of us sees one individual problem without seeing the others. Consequently we need to envisage a reform of education, not only history books, but education as a whole. In other words, we must teach people to understand others. That is necessary in all countries. We must have an introduction to the complexity of the world. We must have an introduction to the realities of the world. We can only get a glimpse of the tasks with which we are just beginning to come to grips, but these have been assigned to us and we must undertake them.

Rex Nettleford

Information technology is something that will definitely have to be taken into account. But I am very happy to continue believing that it is we, as human beings, who have the best computer that was ever invented, with the capacity for tremendous storage and retrieval. I of course refer to the mind. I am quite willing to admit that the machine, information technology, helps us. The Internet, after all, gives a lot of information, much of it very necessary. I do not, however, think it really *educates*. I should like to feel that dialogue, discussion, discourse, and so on, will continue to have the benefit of flesh and blood as well as the creative imagination and intellect that goes with it.

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

I should like to say a word about the Internet. In reality this a great achievement of humanity as a whole. However, it is not being used by a majority, but by a large minority. So when the great majorities, especially in the third world, are able to gain access to the benefits of this marvellous technology, the Internet, then we will have achieved something. Obviously I use the Internet but I use it for the purpose of dialogue. I send an e-mail to my son, for example, or I receive an e-mail from my son. That is the real meaning of dialogue. That is why I say that the Internet can be a marvellous source of information, but that is about as far as it goes. It is an opportunity, of course, but I would not say that it is a major element of dialogue for human beings yet.

My concept of dialogue, which is our topic of discussion today, includes two phases. The first phase is what I would call an internal dialogue – and I should like to repeat that, an internal dialogue – which I think is essential. Internal dialogue will lead us to democracy, and democracy is what will lend credibility and legitimacy to external dialogue. That needs to be made crystal clear. Internal dialogue is absolutely indispensable and should be the first phase of a dialogue of civilizations. After that we can move on to an intergovernmental dialogue. But if intergovernmental dialogue is to be credible, I stress once again that it must be the fruit of an internal dialogue. That can be achieved via authentic democracy only.

What is the purpose of dialogue? What is the goal of dialogue? The final objective of dialogue is peace. To that I would add further that it is peace with justice. Peace alone is not, and never will be, sufficient. We are all seeking a just peace, be it in the Middle East, the countries of Africa, or Yugoslavia in the middle of Europe.

What about the need to preserve different cultures? This is a very important aspect of this debate. We must respect not only different cultures but also different identities. In countries of the third world there is some fear of globalization because it is feared that our respective identities will be erased. We come from many countries, and all of us have our own identity, and we do not wish that to be dissolved, absorbed or dominated by entities that are not our own. We are prepared to receive a lot. We have already begun receiving – and I say that coming from a country with both a Western element and a native element – but if we are to talk about dialogue, we must include the idea of respect for individual identities. Above and beyond that we must ensure respect for diversity, because diversity is creative.

In 1992 I was honoured to preside over a world commission created by UNESCO and the United Nations, and its purpose was to devote itself to the relationship between culture and development. Our conclusion at that time was that development can be only one dimension of culture and not vice versa. Culture is not something we see just as art or literature. We see culture as a type of behaviour and we in our commission thought that we should work on the common denominators of the various different cultures, civilizations and religions of the world. On the basis of these common denominators, we thought we would be able to achieve something which may seem paradoxical to dreamers: an ethical code at world level, that is, a code of conduct worldwide which would enable all countries of the world to establish at least certain basic rules of behaviour. We thought this would be an extremely difficult task, but I believe that this is the task before us in the future. As part of the final outcome of the Millennium Summit, I would hope that this concept would be included, that is, the idea of achieving a common behaviour of all of our various different societies, based on common denominators. That is the task of UNESCO first and foremost. The Director-General knows that he can count on me to endeavour to achieve this goal.

Finally, I should like to make an appeal to the Member States coming to the General Assembly, which will sign the Millennium Summit declaration. I have been working for about 40 years in diplomacy and for 30 years at the service of the United Nations, and I should like to say that however beautiful or inspiring a resolution may be, no resolution can be useful unless there is a way to put it into practice. Those of us who have worked in the United Nations for decades are fed up with seeing resolutions that are not implemented. We have a huge glass palace and we could paper the walls of this building with resolutions which have been

adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council which have not been implemented. I am talking about the credibility of this Organization. We must ensure that whatever we or the Heads of State or Government will sign at the end of the Summit will actually be implemented honestly. This is a moral and political commitment and it must be respected.

Giandomenico Picco

The Secretary-General and myself have come to the conclusion that perhaps we would like to speak about dialogue between two kinds of civilizations. The civilization that perceives diversity as a threat, and the civilization that perceives diversity as an element of betterment and growth. So we will not ask who is a civilization and what do they stand for, but will simply say take a seat where you like.

What is the practical objective of the idea of a dialogue? It to be hoped that it will be the starting point for a new paradigm of international relations, one based not on the interpretation of diversity as a synonym of enmity, but where the enemy, if it is necessary, should be a common enemy for all. That idea suggests it is easily identifiable because it is called intolerance.

The second element of this new paradigm of international relations perhaps will be a reassessment of the concept of enemy. The other element of this paradigm perhaps will be to attribute responsibility to the individual, even in international affairs. In a new pattern of relations accountability and responsibility are individual. Hiding such responsibility behind concepts such as history, religion and even institution, has led to the indignities that we have seen being perpetrated during the past ten years. History does not kill, ideology does not destroy, and institutions do not rape. The only entity on this planet who can do that is the human being, the individual. The dialogue to be successful may have to do more than just recognize the different identities and lead to tolerance. It has to give a voice and a role to those identities and to recognize the common humanity that is so germane to us all. The new paradigm engendered by the dialogue may open the door to an international social contract, where the recognition of a common denominator comes hand in hand with the recognition of different identities and where human dignity is finally at the very top of it all.

Koïchiro Matsuura

I would like simply to thank you all for the very useful contributions you have made to the dialogue among civilizations. I would stress that all your views, suggestions and proposals will duly be taken into account in the future activities of UNESCO in the areas of education, culture, science and communication. As we pursue various events and meetings in the course of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, we will draw on your suggestions for these events.

Participants in the discussion

Masanori Aoyagi (*Japan*). Professor of Classical Archaeology and a former Vice-President at the University of Tokyo, as well as a member of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO.

Richard W. Bulliet (*United States of America*). Professor of History at Columbia University, with a specialization in the history of Islamic society and technology. He edited the *Columbia History of the Twentieth Century* and authored *Islam: The View from the Edge*.

Jane Cortez (*United States of America*). African-American poet noted for performing her own poetry; has applied her keen ear for the rhythm of language to subjects ranging from unfulfilled love to jazz to social issues and the place of the artist in revolutionary politics; most recent book is *Somewhere in Advance of Nowhere*.

Mohammed Javad Faridzadeh (*Islamic Republic of Iran*). Director of the International Centre of Dialogue Among Civilizations in Tehran.

Hans van Ginkel (*Netherlands*). Rector of the United Nations University, Vice-President of the International Association of Universities, and acting Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Asian Institute of Technology. He has written extensively on geography and on urban population and housing.

Attiya Inayatullah (Pakistan). Social and human development consultant who serves on Pakistan's National Security Council and as the Pakistan representative to the UNESCO Executive Board. She publishes and researches on issues related to human rights, poverty alleviation, women and child development, and community empowerment.

Ugné Karvelis (Lithuania). Writer, multimedia producer, translator, editor and literary critic; Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO. She has written, produced radio and television shows, and organized conferences on Lithuanian history, art and culture.

Koh Byong-Ik (Republic of Korea). Formerly Professor of Asian History and the President of Seoul National University; President, Korea's National Cultural Properties Committee; recent publications include *Studies in the Cultural History of East Asia*, and *Flow of Time and Generations*.

Flora Lewis (United States of America). Long-time foreign correspondent and Chief Foreign Affairs Columnist for *The New York Times*; one of America's most well-known and highly regarded journalists; based in Paris, she currently writes 'Foreign Focus', a regular column for the New York Times Syndicate.

Edgar Morin (France). Professor Emeritus at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), where he specializes in sociology and social anthropology. From 1973 to 1989, he co-directed the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences; recent publications include the four volume *La Méthode* and *La complexité humaine*.

Rex Nettleford (Jamaica). Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and a lecturer on culture and development; contributed to and authored many books, including *Mirror-Mirror* and *Race, Discourse and Origin of the Americas*.

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (Peru). United Nations Secretary-General, 1982-92; lawyer, professor of international relations and a career diplomat, he served at Peruvian embassies around the world and in several high-level positions at the UN prior to his appointment as Secretary-General; Chairman, World Commission on Culture and Development.

Giandomenico Picco (*Italy*). Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001.

R. K. Ramazani (*United States of America*). Professor Emeritus of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia and Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies; Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Studies at the American University in Beirut and a member of the High Table at Cambridge University.

Ru Xin (*China*). Professor of Social Sciences and the former Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Wole Soyinka (*Nigeria*). Playwright, poet, novelist and critic; 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature. His writing is noted for its fusion of Western elements with subjects and techniques deeply rooted in Yoruba folklore and religion; most recent works include *Burden of Memory*, *Muse of Forgiveness*, and a play entitled *The Beatification of Area Boy*.

Alexander N. Yakovlev (*Russian Federation*). Member of the Russian Academy; historian, Chair of the Presidential Commission on the Rehabilitation of Political Prisoners, and President of the International Democracy Foundation; most recent publication *Russia in the 20th Century*, a history of Stalinist repression.

Annexes

I. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which, *inter alia*, call for collective effort to strengthen friendly relations among nations, remove threats to peace and foster international co-operation in resolving international issues of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

Recognizing the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity,

Aware that positive and mutually beneficial interaction among civilizations has continued throughout human history despite impediments arising from intolerance, disputes and wars,

Emphasizing the importance of tolerance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means to reach understanding, remove threats to peace and strengthen interaction and exchange among civilizations,

Noting the designation of 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance, and recognizing that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate universal promotion and protection of human rights and constitute sound foundations for civil society, social harmony and peace,

Reaffirming that civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of mankind, providing a source of inspiration and progress for humanity at large,

Welcoming the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium,

1. *Expresses its firm determination* to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations;
2. *Decides* to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
3. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations, to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to present a provisional report on activities in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, and a final report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

II. UNESCO General Conference – Resolution 31 of 17 November 1999

Preparation by UNESCO of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations *The General Conference,*

Referring to resolution 53/22, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

1. *Greatly appreciates and endorses* the terms of this resolution, which welcomes the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium;
2. *Recognizes* the importance of the values embodied in the resolution, such as the importance of tolerance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means of reaching understanding, removing threats to peace and strengthening interaction and exchange among civilizations;
3. *Notes with satisfaction* that specific reference was made to UNESCO in paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned resolution as one of the international organizations which should 'plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject';
4. *Recalls* that, by the very terms of its Constitution, UNESCO has, since its inception, been fully involved in advancing the relations of the peoples and civilizations of the world;
5. *Further recalls* that the concept of a dialogue among civilizations, in an age of growing intolerance, is concretely illustrated in the Organization's intercultural projects, such as those promoting inter-religious dialogue and interactions among peoples, *inter alia* the programmes 'Spiritual convergence and intercultural dialogue', 'The Slave Route' and 'East-West Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia', and the Bayt-al-Hikma project;
6. *Appreciates* the fact that UNESCO is moving beyond the concept of reciprocal knowledge to the concept that interactions between people and civilizations constitute the driving force in the promotion of a dialogue of civilizations;
7. *Considers* that a conceptual interrelation exists between the year 2001, United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and the year 2000, International Year for the Culture of Peace;
8. *Welcomes* the Declaration of Athens adopted by a meeting of representatives of Egypt, Greece, Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy, held to consider issues related to the theme 'The Heritage of Ancient Civilizations: Implications for the Modern World', and in which the representatives of those countries recognize that civilizations emerged from a 'complex web of interactions', and in which they propose the organization of a major international conference in the year 2000 to focus on the second aspect of the theme: the implications for the modern world;
9. *Recommends* that UNESCO play a leading role in the organization of activities of a cultural, educational, scientific and social nature, which aim to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations, through, for instance, active collaboration in

the organization of special events, conferences and colloquia on themes related to intercultural dialogue;

10. *Notes with interest* the discussion at the 156th session of the Executive Board, and *invites* the Director-General to provide the necessary intellectual and material support for the initiatives taken by the Member States;
11. *Urges* Member States to give the year 2001, the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, all due prominence and to support activities aimed at facilitating and promoting dialogue among civilizations;
12. *Invites* the Director-General to take all appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of activities by UNESCO that will facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Year;
13. *Requests* the Director-General, following the Year, to present a report to the United Nations on these activities.

III. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 54/113 of 10 December 1999

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998 entitled 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations',

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which, *inter alia*, call for collective effort to strengthen friendly relations among nations, remove threats to peace and foster international co-operation in resolving international issues of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

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

Recognizing the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity,

Aware that positive and mutually beneficial interaction among civilizations has continued throughout human history despite impediments arising from disputes and wars,

Underlining the fact that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate universal promotion and protection of human rights and constitute sound foundations for civil society, social harmony and peace,

Emphasizing the indispensable role of dialogue as a means to reach understanding, promote a culture of peace, remove threats to peace and strengthen interaction and exchange among and within civilizations, *Reaffirming* that civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of mankind, providing a source of inspiration and progress for humanity at large,

Welcoming the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium,

Encouraged by the positive reception of Governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and international public opinion to the proclamation of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and welcoming the initiatives undertaken by governmental and non-governmental actors to promote dialogue,

Expressing its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations,

1. *Takes note with interest* of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. *Welcomes* the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint his personal representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
3. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations, to continue and further intensify planning and organizing appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities;

4. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage all members of society to take part in promoting dialogue among civilizations and to provide them with an opportunity to make contributions to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
5. *Notes with interest* the activities undertaken and proposals made by Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and international and regional organizations, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference and non-governmental organizations, for the preparation of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a further substantive report on preparations for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
7. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations'.

IV. United Nations Document A/55/492/Rev.1 of 9 November 2000

United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, decided to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and invited Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform me of their planned activities. In that resolution, the Assembly also requested that I present a provisional report on activities in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (see A/54/546) and a final report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The present report is written pursuant to paragraph 6 of Assembly resolution 54/113 of 10 December 1999. The activities described in my previous report (A/54/546) have been pursued by my Personal Representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, Giandomenico Picco, and by UNESCO.
2. That the General Assembly's call for a dialogue among civilizations seems to have been well received across the world, in both the public and the private sectors, led to the launch of a number of initiatives aimed at celebrating, and defusing the fear of, diversity, and underlining the importance of inclusion.
3. Over the last 12 months, governmental and academic institutions and non-governmental organizations have conducted seminars, debates and research work on the issue of the dialogue among civilizations, bringing together a variety of civil society groups. The topic of dialogue among civilizations was also the subject of a meeting, at the head-of-State level, that was held at United Nations Headquarters on 5 September 2000. The meeting was strongly supported by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, and chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO. The Secretary-General, 12 heads of State (of Afghanistan, Algeria, Georgia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Latvia, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Qatar and the Sudan), the Secretary of State of the United States of America and the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Egypt, India and Iraq were among those in attendance.

II. The conceptual underpinnings

4. As mentioned in the 1999 report, diversity is the concept underlying a focused reflection about dialogue among civilizations. Learning how to manage diversity has become a more compelling necessity as our world has grown smaller and our interaction more intense and, indeed, unavoidable. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that is at the very origin of war. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that blinds so many who equate it with enmity. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that

has made so many overlook the common humanity that unites us all. Can a reflection on these issues help in the rediscovery of the foundations of the United Nations? Can it be directed towards enriching the vision that emanates from the United Nations? Can it become concrete and practical?

5. I am very grateful that a number of eminent persons (Prince Hassan bin Talal, Richard von Weizacker, Jacques Delors, A. Kamal Aboulmagd, Hannan Ashrawi, Lourdes Arizpe, Ruth Cardoso, Leslie Gelb, Nadine Gordimer, Sergey Kapitza, Hayao Kaway, Ambassador Tommy Koh, Hans Kung, Amartya Sen, Tu Wei-Ming and Javad Zarif) have kindly accepted the invitation to co-operate with my Personal Representative in pursuing these reflections during the next year. Their work will be contained in a book to be presented to me by late summer 2001. In striving towards those objectives, the conceptual journey may be articulated along the following lines:

The indignities of the 1990s:

- A look at ethnic cleansing, killings in the name of God and similar atrocities stemming from the perception of diversity as a threat;

Diversity and the United Nations:

- Diversity as an inherent part of universality, which is an integral feature of the philosophy behind the world organization;
- Diversity and the common denominator of values, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and other United Nations documents;

Diversity as the human face of globalization:

- In today's world, interdependence is a two-way street as never before. It is no longer only the case that the major powers affect the smaller ones, but also the reverse. 'Our world has never been more integrated, more vulnerable and more unequal';

Dialogue as a seed for a new paradigm of international relations:

- Revisiting the concept of the enemy. Do we need an enemy?
- Can we aspire to a society in which leaders can lead without enemies?
- If, at this stage in human development, society cannot exist without an enemy, can we all aim to rally against the same enemy – intolerance?
- Rigid alliances may be remnants of the past. Are alignments to be flexible according to issues?
- Individual responsibility as an indispensable ingredient of a new paradigm;
- Accountability of the individual in international relations.

III. The unsung heroes of dialogue

6. Examples are the best means for conveying a message in a convincing manner. The faces, names and stories of 12 individuals from a spectrum of societies, who have reached across the 'divide' to the 'other', will be shown in short television spots. The 12 spots — of 30 seconds each — will be offered to all television stations in the world for broadcasting as many times as possible during the year 2001. The same spots will also be placed on the web site for the dialogue, which is being established by the United Nations Secretariat. It will be an interactive site through which it is expected that direct and instant communication may be established.

IV. From theory to practice

7. If, indeed, it is possible to define a new paradigm of international relations engendered by the dialogue, then it should be possible to transform the theory into practice. In the spirit of the dialogue, it has already been possible to achieve small steps in the communication among some Member States that had, thus far, been at odds with each other. On the occasion of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has worked hard in this direction. Thus, it should also be possible to put forward a proposal that focuses on a specific area of the world and suggests a specific diplomatic initiative by the Secretary-General. This would be a fitting conclusion to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.
8. A United Nations Trust Fund for the dialogue among civilizations was established late in 1999. Switzerland has contributed in cash, while others have offered to defray some of the costs incurred by the meetings of the Eminent Persons Group. Academic institutions and non-governmental organizations have also offered support and assistance. Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations is providing the secretariat for the work of the Eminent Persons Group. As the contributions have been limited, support for some of the activities has also come from the private sector. No funds from the regular budget have been allocated to activities related to the dialogue among civilizations.

V. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/23 of 13 November 2000

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/22 of 4 November 1998 and 54/113 of 10 December 1999 entitled 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations',

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which, *inter alia*, call for collective effort to strengthen friendly relations among nations, remove threats to peace and foster international co-operation in resolving international issues of an economic, social, cultural and humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all,

Noting that civilizations are not confined to individual nation-States, but rather encompass different cultures within the same civilization, and reaffirming that civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of humankind, providing a source of inspiration and progress for humanity at large,

Bearing in mind the specificities of each civilization and the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000¹, which considers, *inter alia*, that tolerance is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and should include the active promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations, with human beings respecting one another, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity,

Noting that globalization brings greater interrelatedness among people and increased interaction among cultures and civilizations, and encouraged by the fact that the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, will provide the opportunity to emphasize that globalization not only is an economic, financial and technological process which could offer great benefit, but also constitutes a profoundly human challenge that invites us to embrace the interdependence of humankind and its rich cultural diversity,

Recognizing the diverse civilizational achievements of humankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity,

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

Stressing the need for the universal protection and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right of all peoples to self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Underlining the fact that tolerance and respect for diversity and universal promotion and protection of human rights are mutually supportive, and recognizing that tolerance and respect for diversity effectively promote and are supported by, *inter alia*, the empowerment of women,

1. Resolution 55/2.

Emphasizing the need to acknowledge and respect the richness of all civilizations, to seek common grounds among and within civilizations in order to address threats to global peace and common challenges to human values and achievements, taking into consideration, inter alia, co-operation, partnership and inclusion,

Welcoming the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations,

Encouraged by the positive reception of Governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and international public opinion to the proclamation of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and welcoming the initiatives undertaken by governmental and non-governmental actors to promote dialogue,

Expressing its firm determination to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General²;

2. *Welcomes* the convening, at the level of heads of State, of a round table on dialogue among civilizations, organized by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, held at United Nations Headquarters on 5 September 2000 and which further contributed to the promotion of dialogue among civilizations;

3. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations to continue and further intensify planning and organizing appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, inter alia, through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities;

4. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage all members of society to take part in promoting dialogue among civilizations and provide them with an opportunity to make contributions to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;

5. *Encourages* all Governments to expand their educational curricula relative to the teaching of respect for various cultures and civilizations, human rights education, the teaching of languages, the history and philosophy of various civilizations as well as the exchange of knowledge, information and scholarships among Governments and civil society in order to promote a better understanding of all cultures and civilizations;

6. *Encourages* all Member States, regional and international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations to continue to develop appropriate initiatives at all levels to promote dialogue in all fields with a view to fostering mutual recognition and understanding among and within civilizations;

7. *Notes with interest* the activities undertaken and proposals made by Member States, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and international and regional organizations, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference and non-governmental organizations, for the preparation of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;

8. *Decides* to devote two days of plenary meetings at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, on 3 and 4 December 2001, to the consideration of the item, including

consideration of any follow-up measures, and commemoration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and encourages Member States and observers to be represented at the highest possible political level;

9. *Invites* all Governments, funding institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to consider contributing to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General in 1999 to promote dialogue among civilizations;
10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary support for strengthening the activities pertaining to dialogue among civilizations;
11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session a substantive report on the prospect of dialogue among civilizations and the activities pertaining to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
12. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations'.

**VI. Report by the Director-General
of UNESCO on the Execution of the Programme
adopted by the General Conference:
United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations**

(UNESCO Framework for Action;
UNESCO document 161 EX/INF.14 of 21 May 2001)

The present document is prepared for information of Members of the Executive Board. It provides background about the consideration of the subject 'Dialogue among Civilizations', especially in the context of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, 2001 and sets out principles followed by UNESCO. Furthermore, it reviews activities undertaken by UNESCO in observing the year and presents a framework of action for UNESCO and its programme sectors pertaining to the subject, which is the result of an intersectoral effort.

I. Background

1. By resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. In doing so, the Assembly emphasized the importance of tolerance and recognized 'the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity'. The resolution invited 'Governments, the United Nations system, including UNESCO to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject. . . '.
2. Subsequently, by its resolution 55/23 of 11 January 2001 the General Assembly stated that 'civilizations are not confined to individual nation-States, but rather encompass different cultures within the same civilization . . . ' and that 'globalization brings greater interrelatedness among people and increased interaction among cultures and civilizations'. Moreover, the Assembly noted that 'the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations . . . constitutes a profoundly human challenge that invites us to embrace the interdependence of humankind and its rich cultural diversity. The General Assembly also invited 'Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations to continue and further intensify planning and organizing appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, *inter alia*, through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform the Secretary-General of their activities'.
3. By resolution 55/23, the General Assembly also decided to devote two days of plenary meetings at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, on 3 and 4 December 2001, to the consideration of the item, including consideration of any follow-up measures, and commemoration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and encouraged Member States and observers to be represented at the highest possible political level.

4. General Conference resolution 31 of 17 November 1999 endorsed the terms of proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, welcoming 'the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium'. It also recognized 'the importance of the values embodied in the resolution, such as the importance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means of reaching understanding, removing threats to peace and strengthening interaction and exchange among civilizations'.
5. The General Conference further recommended that 'UNESCO play a leading role in the organization of activities of a cultural, educational, scientific and social nature, which aim to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations, through, for instance, active collaboration in the organization of special events, conferences and colloquia on themes related to intercultural dialogue'; and urged 'Member States to give the year 2001, the United Nations year of Dialogue among Civilizations, all due prominence and to support activities aimed at facilitating and promoting dialogue among civilizations'.

II. Principles

6. The guiding principles for the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations are intrinsically linked to the three fundamental principles of universality, diversity and dignity, which will guide UNESCO's activities during the forthcoming Medium-Term Strategy (see Draft 31 C/4). These principles are closely related to the values of justice, solidarity, tolerance, sharing and equity, respect for human rights and democratic principles.
7. The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations represents an opportunity for UNESCO to highlight, in all its domains, the accomplishments by various civilizations and cultures, to promote the concept of dialogue, and to facilitate dynamic and inclusive modalities for dialogue between cultures and civilizations in a globalized world.
8. UNESCO's efforts are based on an understanding of the term 'civilization' as a universal and plural phenomenon, nourished by each society's specific characteristics, and encompassing a multiplicity of dimensions (economic, political, social, environmental, educational, cultural, scientific, philosophical, spiritual etc.). In contrast to the evolutionary vision that separates civilizations in order to place them in a hierarchical order or oppose them, UNESCO is emphasizing that there is no civilization which has not been enriched by interaction and exchange with other civilizations: civilizations are profoundly 'intercultural'. They are founded on sharing and mutual enrichment through dialogue.
9. Intercultural exchanges have intensified in scope and pace with globalization. It has resulted in cultural penetration and overlapping, the coexistence in a given social space of several cultural traditions, and in a more vivid interpenetration of cultural experience and practice. In such a context, the notion of 'civilization' carries with it the implicit assumption of a homogenous, integral, and coherent unity, which hardly corresponds to a lived reality. Rather, the question of promoting and protecting cultural diversity lies at the core of the larger framework of dialogue among civilizations in the contemporary context.

10. It should be recalled that the general principles for dealing with diversity were spelled out clearly by the World Commission on Culture and Development in 1995 and endorsed by the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm 1998.
11. In today's knowledge-based societies, cultures are rapidly becoming transboundary creations exposed and exchanged, often instantaneously, throughout the world via the media and the Internet. Certain types of activities – networking, building of solidarity, lobbying and reflection – suggest that culture must increasingly be regarded as a process rather than as a finished 'product'. The challenge for governments and civil societies is to find ways of channelling such exchanges – 'dialogues' – through democratic practices that respect human rights, gender equity, tolerance, sustainability.
12. UNESCO is facing new types of challenges in the struggle to promote cultural diversity, to preserve the world's heritage, including its intangible domains, and to foster dialogue among cultures and among civilizations. Cultural diversity has come under siege owing to the preponderance of limited cultural and linguistic approaches and content, effectively disseminated through new and old media. Indigenous people and cultures as well as local knowledge are most affected and UNESCO has an important mission to help preserve their uniqueness and identity.
13. Information and communications technologies hold the potential to foster hitherto unknown types of engagement, contacts and interaction among individuals, peoples, communities, nations, cultures and civilizations that can be harnessed to build understanding, solidarity and peace at all levels and to reduce isolation and exclusion so often associated with poverty. Participatory governance, the promotion of creativity, intensified intercultural dialogue, new forms of cultural exchange and dialogue among civilizations leading to better understanding and exchanges are other potential benefits and areas of intervention for the Organization.
14. Many of the problems faced by today's world have arisen as a consequence of differences *within* nations. Dialogue therefore begins at home. While globalization is creating new opportunities for cultural exchange, conflicts arising within nation-States often involve cultural matters. New forms of intolerance and aggression are emerging. Xenophobia and racism, ethnic wars, prejudice and stigma, segregation and discrimination, mainly based on ethnicity and gender, are widespread, generating violence and suffering. Tensions between migration and citizenship have intensified, as cultural minorities increasingly articulate their cultural rights as human rights. According to the International Organization for Migration, there are currently some 150 million migrants in the world, a figure expected to rise to 230 million by 2050. In ever more countries, migrants are sustaining economic activities and social service systems. Understanding the relationship with 'others' therefore has acquired a new urgency, and this will be one focus in UNESCO's many initiatives throughout the Year 2001.
15. The acknowledgement, approval and even celebration of diversity does imply pluralism. Cultural pluralism refers to the way in which different nation-States, civil groups, and national and international institutions understand and organize cultural diversity. The manner in which diversity is defined and acted upon by governments and civil society will determine whether it is to lead to greater overall social creativity, cohesion and inclusion – or to violence and exclusion. Equity and cultural

recognition are major avenues to turning cultural diversity into an opportunity rather than an obstacle – and they hold the key to sustainable pluralism. Hence, the very apt motto by the United Nations for the Year ‘Diversity is not a threat’.

16. Real dialogue occurs when a full recognition of the different ‘other’ generates a preoccupation with and responsibility for the ‘other’. In many respects, it is an invitation to re-think the idea of humanity. The capacity of human beings to feel empathy and compassion for others goes deeper than the mere coexistence of different ethno-cultural groups. Such feelings touch the most profound spiritual nature of human beings and should be given overt recognition in social and political discourse relating to a global society.

III. Review of activities already carried out by UNESCO

17. In September 2000, UNESCO organized a launch event for the Year at United Nations Headquarters and it has since carried out a broad range of activities, in co-operation with Member States, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The launch took the form of a Presidential Round Table on ‘The Dialogue among Civilizations’ held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 5 September 2000, on the eve of the Millennium Summit. The round table was organized in co-operation with the United Nations and with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ten Heads of State and two Ministers of Foreign Affairs participated in the session, sharing their views of how the dialogue among civilizations could lead to a new paradigm of international relations that recognizes universally shared values while preserving and respecting cultural diversity. A group of internationally eminent scholars and thinkers also met the same day for a further debate.
18. UNESCO has produced a video on the proceedings of the Round Table on Dialogue among Civilizations. It will be made available on the Internet for UNESCO’s field network, governments, National Commissions for UNESCO and other partners. A publication with the proceedings of the round table is in print and will shortly be released.
19. Since the launching event, UNESCO has contributed to many international events, including:
 - From 14 to 16 September 2000, UNESCO organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, an international congress on interreligious dialogue in the framework of the ‘Spiritual Convergence and Intercultural Dialogue’ and the ‘East-West Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia’.
 - In November 2000, UNESCO participated in the annual conference of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO in Ottawa, Canada. One of the main themes of this conference was devoted to the dialogue among civilizations.
 - In November 2000, UNESCO participated as the only United Nations Organization in the Second Quadrilateral Conference of Ancient Civilizations, bringing together parliamentary leaders from Egypt, Greece, Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy, held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran.
 - In December 2000, UNESCO organized in Paris a seminar for German journalists with briefings on the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations.
 - On 8 January 2001, UNESCO co-sponsored a major philharmonic concert with the Government of Lithuania at the Théâtre de Champs Elysées in Paris to inaugurate the Year.

- On 5 February 2001, the Director-General delivered a guest lecture at the Oxford Centre for Islamic studies, United Kingdom, focusing on the renewed contexts for dialogue at all levels of society, the recognition of diversity inherent in the notion of dialogue, and its important potential for humanizing globalization.
 - On 8 and 9 February 2001, the Director-General addressed the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi, Kenya, in connection with its ministerial meeting devoted to the subject of the Dialogue among Civilizations and Sustainable Development.
 - UNESCO also contributed to the Conference on Dialogue among Asian Civilizations, held in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 17 and 18 February 2001.
 - The Director-General addressed the International Colloquium on the Indus Valley Civilization on the occasion of its inaugural ceremony held in Islamabad, Pakistan, 6 April 2001.
 - An international conference on 'Dialogue among Civilizations' was held in Vilnius, Lithuania (23–26 April 2001), under the auspices of the President of Lithuania, the President of Poland and the Director-General of UNESCO.
20. During the remainder of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, UNESCO will organize, initiate or sponsor a range of activities in its fields of competence – education, culture, science and communication – which aim at facilitating and promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations, including special events, conferences, colloquia, publications and media productions. Among the events scheduled will be the UNU/UNESCO 'International Conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations', Tokyo and Kyoto (31 July-3 August), and the Summit of the Francophony on 'Dialogue of Cultures', Beirut, Lebanon (26–28 October), complemented by many national and regional events.
21. Several UNESCO special days and observances, festivals (especially youth festivals) as well as activities by the UNESCO Prizes and Chairs will be oriented towards the theme of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Among the Prizes selected for such focus are the 'UNESCO Prize for Peace Education' (10 December 2001), the 'UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize' (during the General Conference, 22 October-10 November 2001), the 'UNESCO 'International Music Council' Music Prize' (September or October 2001), as well as the forthcoming 'UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non- Violence' (16 November 2002).
22. Towards the end of 2001, an issue of the *Courier* will be devoted to the theme of dialogue among civilizations. This will enable the Organization to take stock of the results and main features of the many events held throughout the Year. It will help to capture the significance of dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world where cultural diversity poses new challenges and opportunities for mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.
23. UNESCO has also created a dedicated web site for the Year – available in English, French and Spanish. This internet site will continue to be maintained and expanded. It contains key information latest news on ongoing activities and forthcoming events and is linked to numerous other sites of relevance, among them the United Nations web site. It can be accessed at:
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001>
<http://www.unesco.org/dialogue2001/en/events.htm>

IV. The framework of action for UNESCO's future activities

24. At the policy level and level of strategic orientation, the dialogue among civilizations will be a significant issue for UNESCO's activities, especially in the Culture Programme, not only during the Year but beyond the Medium-term Strategy covering the period 2002–2007 (Draft 31 C/4). One of the three major strategic thrusts and objectives for the Culture Programme centres around universality, diversity and participation. As regards the Programme and Budget for 2002–2003 (Draft 31 C/5), the principal priority for Major Programme IV has been defined as 'Diversity, cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue'.
25. Through its mankind and regional histories and through interregional, intercultural projects (notably the Silk Road and the Slave Route projects), UNESCO has already shed light on the complex processes involved in cultural interaction and their relevance for today's life. The activities undertaken during the United Nations Year for the Dialogue among Civilizations will provide opportunities to reflect on these relationships and their present-day implications from different angles. Through conferences, workshops, publications and a dedicated website, UNESCO will promote awareness about these processes and relationships. It will also stimulate the conduct of research in order to document and demonstrate in more detail the benefits and enrichments civilizations and cultures have drawn from each other, for the larger good of humanity. UNESCO will support the creation of online networking facilities and interaction among research institutions internationally to promote synergies, collaboration and multidisciplinary results.
26. But beyond culture, it is clear that the dialogue among civilizations is of direct relevance for all other areas of the Organization. The dialogue among civilizations transcends dimensions of culture and heritage, affecting all areas of UNESCO's competence. It extends to a much larger agenda: different ways in which societies relate to and protect the environment, express solidarity, harness scientific and technological knowledge in innovative ways and express their societal experience and life through literature and the arts. UNESCO will seek to introduce aspects of the need and value of the dialogue among civilizations into curricula for history, geography and citizenship education.
27. All UNESCO's sectors, with input from field offices, will be actively involved in the preparation and implementation of relevant activities under the umbrella of the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations within their specific spheres of competence.
28. The overall UNESCO focal point is the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) who will be responsible for the co-ordination of all activities among the various sectors, and will ensure liaison with the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.
29. Relevant UNESCO activities will also be organized in connection with the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001–2010), which will promote a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations. The first year of the Decade has been designated by the Director-General to focus on the dialogue among civilizations. The Decade places children at the centre of programmatic action and it will be specifically geared to their needs and involvement. Priority will be given to education with the aim of preparing children for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship

among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins.

30. Activities in the various programme sectors include:

Education

Promoting universally shared values

An important dimension of UNESCO's role as catalyst for international co-operation in the pursuit of Education for All (EFA) goals consists in promoting new approaches to improve the quality of education for all throughout life, including the values forming the basis of social cohesion and respect for human dignity and linguistic diversity.

Revision of school textbooks

Support is being provided to Member States for the revision of school textbooks with a view to removing prejudices and stereotypes against specific groups in this literature. This action is undertaken on an intersectoral basis (ED/CLT) as it implies revisiting the general history of countries and revision of curricula. Particular attention is given to countries afflicted by internal conflicts.

Human rights education

The 'Intercultural education and education for human rights' project, financed by the Government of Italy, is being implemented in Albania. Its objectives are to promote a climate of intercultural understanding and respect for human rights in all educational establishments, through the introduction of the dimension of peace, human rights and democracy in the curricula, both at formal and non-formal levels.

Promotion of multilingual education

Within the LINGUAPAX network, a Language Institute on regional languages in the Caribbean region (Haiti) is planned, the preparatory work on the UNESCO Report on the world's languages has progressed, and the preparation of specialized teaching materials for language policies in education has been promoted.

International understanding

The approximately 6,500 institutions in 166 countries, which are part of the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), have been invited to undertake special activities for the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. An International Friendship Encounter 'Sport for a Culture of Peace' will be held in June, in Dinard, Saint Malo, France.

Promotion of student-teacher exchanges (and UNESCO Chairs) and internationalization of higher education

UNESCO will promote policy dialogue between all actors and stakeholders in education and enhance the exchange of information and expertise on innovative approaches and local solutions through advocacy and networks of learners, educational professionals and decision-makers.

Measures will be taken to facilitate the mobility of teachers and students and to encourage broad participation of women.

Sciences

Tolerance

UNESCO's activities follow the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and the related Action Plan, adopted by the General Conference at its 28th session as follow-up to the United Nations Year of Tolerance. Special emphasis is placed on education and

on sensitization for tolerance as a universally recognized value which transcends nations and communities.

The International Year of Mobilization Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001) and the World Conference

UNESCO is actively involved in the observance of the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The main event will be the World Conference against Racism (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001).

Preparations for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001)

UNESCO has contributed to all preparatory meetings for the World Conference. Close links are maintained with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Mobilization of partners

UNESCO's traditional partners are being mobilized to contribute actively to the Year and the Conference. Among these are the UNESCO Chairs in Human Rights, Democracy, Peace and Tolerance, the UNESCO Associated Schools, as well as various human rights research and training institutions.

Publications, information and media outreach

Special publications, handbooks and kits will be published during 2001. A compilation of articles by eminent human rights specialists on various aspects of discrimination, as well as the texts of major standard-setting instruments in this field, is being prepared in co-operation with OHCHR. A *Guide to Human Rights Institutions, Standards, Mechanisms* will be dedicated to the International Year, as will *Human Rights: Major International Instruments, Status as at 31 May 2001*.

Social sciences and dialogue

An International Colloquium on 'Les Civilisations dans le regard de l'autre' will be co-organized with École Pratique Des Hautes Etudes, Paris at UNESCO Headquarters on 13 and 14 December 2001.

Follow-up to the World Conference on Science

Worldwide co-operation among scientists can make a constructive contribution to global security and to the development of peaceful interactions between different nations, societies and cultures. UNESCO's programmes in science focus on issues that are at the root of potential conflicts and ensure that the ethical dimensions of the current scientific and technological evolution are fully addressed.

The World Water Assessment Programme

In accordance with the outcomes of the World Water Vision project, UNESCO regards the resolution of water-related disputes, especially at the international level, to be dependent, to a large extent, upon the reconciliation of different cultural perceptions and value systems. These perspectives form an integrated part of the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and its subcomponents.

Scientific and traditional knowledge holders

In order to strengthen the dialogue between scientific and traditional knowledge holders, intersectoral field projects are under way in Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Haiti, and Jamaica. The enhancement of natural resource management through the creation of synergies between science-based approaches and local and indigenous knowledge is

also pursued in a series of international meetings and forums of scientists organized by UNESCO.

Culture

Intercultural dialogue

The priority given to dialogue among cultures and civilizations will focus, in both reflection and action, on two closely linked lines of emphasis: the promotion of mutual knowledge of cultures, civilizations and spiritual traditions and the highlighting and recognition of instances of interaction and cross-fertilization. Cultural tourism constitutes another thrust of the Organization's action for the protection and revitalization of cultural diversity, which, by its very nature, affords an opportunity for dialogue among civilizations. During 2001, the intercultural 'Route' documentaries and television programmes will be re-diffused, and a new publication: 'Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce' widely distributed.

Examples of planned events

- 'Reflections on Interculturality', Barcelona, Spain (Centre of Documentation and Research on Interculturality (CIDOB), 28–30 June 2001
- 'International Conference on Education, Religions and Science on the Silk Routes', Almaty, Kazakhstan, October 2001 (CLT/SC)
- 'Intercultural Dialogue in Central Africa and in the Region of the Big Lakes', Libreville, Gabon, Autumn 2001

Participatory pluralism

Based on best practice analysis, UNESCO will develop guidelines for participatory pluralism, and seek to sensitize national and local authorities as to the crucial role to be carried out by cultural and educational institutions in this regard. Notions of dialogue, debate, tolerance and mutual respect for the other irrespective of their origins, gender, race or creed are at the core of this approach.

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

In the framework of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995–2004), UNESCO will apply an interdisciplinary approach towards ensuring the full participation of minorities and marginalized and vulnerable groups in devising, implementing and monitoring policies and actions which directly affect them. An International Colloquium and book fair on 'Indigenous identities: oral, written expressions and new technologies' will be held at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2001.

Intangible cultural heritage

The ceremony of the first Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity will take place at UNESCO Headquarters on 18 May 2001. UNESCO will encourage nominations for the programme of 'Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage' and stimulate the use of the Guidelines for the establishment of a Living Human Treasures system. This will feed into the preparatory work for a normative instrument which is intended to improve the Recommendation on the safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore and create new conceptual and legal framework for intangible cultural heritage. An exhibition on 'Youth and world heritage' will be co-organized by UNESCO and the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) in the context of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the International Year of Volunteers at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 25 November 2001 to 9 January 2002. The

exhibition will be accompanied by a symposium entitled 'Youth and World Heritage: A Privileged Space for Dialogue among Civilizations'.

Communication and information

Intercultural communication

The 'Screen Without Frontiers' project provides a database of television programmes to public service television stations in developing countries, fostering the circulation of audiovisual productions from South to South. A series of CreaTV workshops will be held during 2001 in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, with the aim of co-screening productions and promoting cultural diversity through audiovisual media.

Networking of institutions

In Central Asia, 'HeritageNet' seeks to converge methods of research via digital catalogues, enhance access to multilingual websites, establish virtual exhibitions between different museums, and promote international dissemination of e-digests on cultural development. La Bibliothèque virtuelle méditerranéenne (MEDLIB) highlights, via the Internet, the documentary heritage of the Mediterranean world produced by different establishments within and outside, the countries of the region.

Enhancing mutual understanding

In collaboration with EBU, Europe by Satellite and the Finnish TV YLE, UNESCO and the Baltic Media Centre will set up a Daily Regional Satellite News and Current Affairs Exchange Programme for southern Eastern Europe. The objectives are to ensure the free flow of information in the region, to assist in de-escalating tension and conflict between and within the countries of the SEE, to ensure the access to regional news, and to enhance the independence and professionalism of public television stations.

Women and youth

Cross-cultural encounters

As 2001 is also the International Year of Volunteers, UNESCO will develop pilot projects on youth volunteering, with a focus on intercultural learning aspects, in co-operation with international volunteer NGOs. UNESCO will be further organizing a series of round tables or special action days on the theme of the 'Dialogue of civilizations' within the framework of several international youth festivals.

'Arab Women in a knowledge society'

This project envisages to focus on the role of Arab women in the creation and sharing of knowledge, their access to and use of information-communication technologies, and their contribution to humankind's cultural and scientific heritage. It is expected to provide a forum for discussion *among* Arab women and *between* Arab women and women of other regions and cultures of the world.

V. Principal actors

31. The principal actors in all activities will be UNESCO Member States, National Commissions, relevant international and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO Secretariat units including field offices, the scientific community, and the media. UNESCO will seek to mobilize decision-makers, intellectuals, educators, and members of the scientific community in a series of regional, international conferences and meetings. UNESCO Clubs, Parliamentarians, 21st Century Partners, and key partners from the private sector will also be associated with

UNESCO activities. The electronic 'Global Constituents Agora' will play an important role in this outreach effort.

32. National Commissions will be invited to foster awareness about the Year in collaboration with the media, NGOs and schools (through country co-ordinators of associated schools in Member States) with the aim of promoting the publication of brochures and leaflets in local languages for wide distribution to the representatives of civil society, parliamentarians, organizers of academic lectures and symposia, and to social events such as 'Day of Dialogue among Civilizations' in schools and universities.

VI. Conclusion

33. UNESCO's contribution to the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations will be both significant and highly visible. In accordance with its mandate, and while drawing on the vast experience of the Organization in this domain, UNESCO will implement programmes and activities in its spheres of competence in order to promote and facilitate dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The motto chosen by the United Nations 'Diversity is not a threat' is most appropriate and fully endorsed by UNESCO.
34. In today's world, the need for dialogue is increasingly relevant and acute, both at the national and international levels. The faster pace and huge volume of global interaction have prompted a greater awareness of cultural diversity. While it has given wider scope to the expression of such diversity, it has also permitted the representation of differences such as hierarchy, domination and conflict. Difference is often used as an excuse for intolerance, hatred and the annihilation of others. Yet the very same differences, in a framework of political equality, human rights and responsibility for others, can – and often do – offer the opportunity to explore new horizons and to enrich our lives.
35. In many ways, the human trajectory is the history of different answers to the same questions. How do people behave towards those of a different community? How should they behave? These questions are as relevant at the level of interpersonal relations as in interstate, international and intercultural contexts. Our choices in relating to others with different cultures, traditions and heritages will shape the societies of the twenty-first century.
36. The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations is therefore a unique opportunity for UNESCO to take a fresh look at the potentialities of dialogue in a globalized world, to provide the concept with new meaning, and to facilitate dynamic and inclusive modalities for imbibing it with vivacity. The challenge is to broaden the spectrum and to orient the dialogue, not only towards the historic past but also towards the present and future, so that it becomes an instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, a vehicle for diversity and pluralism, especially in culture, with the ultimate aim of furthering the common good.