

Dialogue among Civilizations

The International Conference
in Vilnius, Lithuania
23-26 April 2001



United Nations
Year of Dialogue
among Civilizations



2001



Valdas Adamkus
Aleksander Kwasniewski
Leonid Kuchma
Ko chiro Matsuura

Messages by:

Jacques Chirac
Seyyed Mohammad Khatami
Abdoulaye Wade

Presentations by:

Ugn Karvelis
Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux
Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Brunson McKinley
Giandomenico Picco
Ataollah Mohajerani
Javier Wimer
Alphonso Lingis
Aleksandr N. Yakolev
Rekha Menon
Yves Plasseraud
Leonidas Donskis
Doudou Diene

Dialogue among Civilizations

The International Conference
in Vilnius, Lithuania
23-26 April 2001

Organized by the Republic of Lithuania,
the Republic of Poland and
the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

Dialogue among Civilizations



This publication is dedicated to the memory of Ugnė Karvelis (1936–2002) who served as Permanent Delegate of Lithuania to UNESCO from 1993–2002. Her untiring efforts made the Vilnius Conference possible.

Valdas Adamkus

Aleksander Kwasniewski

Leonid Kuchma

Ko chiro Matsuura

Messages by:

Jacques Chirac

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami

Abdoulaye Wade

Presentations by:

Ugn Karvelis

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux

Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Brunson McKinley

Giandomenico Picco

Ataollah Mohajerani

Javier Wimer

Alphonso Lingis

Aleksandr N. Yakolev

Rekha Menon

Yves Plasseraud

Leonidas Donskis

Doudou Diene

Dialogue among Civilizations

The International Conference
in Vilnius, Lithuania
23-26 April 2001

Organized by the Republic of Lithuania,
the Republic of Poland and
the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

The 'Dialogue among Civilizations' series is directed
by Hans d'Orville, Director

Bureau of Strategic Planning

The authors are responsible for the choice and the
presentation of the facts contained in this book and
for the opinions expressed therein, which are not
necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit
the Organization.

The designations employed and the presentation of
material throughout this publication do not imply
the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the
part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any
country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or
concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or
boundaries.

Published in 2002

by the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

7, place de Fontenoy

75352 Paris 07 SP France

Composed by JD impressions

Printed by JD impressions

90, rue Vergniaud

75013 Paris

© UNESCO 2002

Printed in France

Foreword

The International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations held in Vilnius, Lithuania, 23-26 April 2001, was a major event in the celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

Having proclaimed the United Nations Year by Resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, the General Assembly invited the United Nations system, including UNESCO and other relevant international organizations to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations through, among other activities, the organizing of conferences and seminars and the disseminating of information and scholarly material on this theme.

Lithuania responded to this invitation by holding the Vilnius Conference in collaboration with UNESCO. Bringing together leaders, decision-makers, distinguished scholars and artists from different parts of the world, the Conference offered a 'polyphony' of voices in a debate on the complex issues affecting relations between different cultures and civilizations. At the conclusion of the event, the Vilnius Declaration was adopted.

The present book, the second in the UNESCO 'Dialogue among Civilizations' series, sets out the different proposals made on how a dialogue among cultures and civilizations may be pursued in order to promote tolerance, solidarity, mutual understanding and enhanced co-operation. These forward-looking contributions reinforce the call for a new paradigm of international relations that recognizes shared values while preserving and respecting cultural diversity.

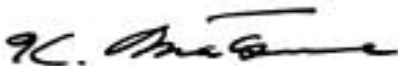
The adoption by the General Conference of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, in November 2001, is a significant landmark in this regard. Endowed with an ethical framework of universal validity, the international community has now committed itself to a set of core principles which must henceforth guide the interaction between cultural diversity, human rights and sustainable development.

The need for a renewal of global dialogue is clear; the tasks and challenges are numerous. A genuine reinforcement of democratic structures and practices must go hand-in-hand with efforts to uphold the

rule of law and to observe human rights and freedoms. New ignorances and prejudices have entered the international scene and must be combatted energetically. Mutual understanding of different aspects of the world's civilizations must be deepened through joint actions related to cultural heritage and by promoting a better appreciation of cultural issues in the modern world. National, regional and international networks for sharing school curricula and reviewing history textbooks must be created and sustained. And we need a new vision for science and technology in the 21st century, one which strengthens innovative networking and exchange mechanisms in accordance with the desire professed by many leaders to transform their countries into sustainable knowledge societies.

Dialogue is, and will continue to be, the key instrument for improving relations and understandings between different cultures. A genuine, broad-based dialogue is fundamental, for only dialogue succeeds in making us listen to each other, modify our positions and accommodate divergent points of view. Only through a wholehearted and committed practice of dialogue can conflicts be resolved, disagreements overcome and discord healed. And only in this way can we embark upon our major task of 'humanizing' globalization and making it a more inclusive and equitable process.

This publication is dedicated to the memory of Ms Ugnė Karvelis, the Permanent Delegate of Lithuania to UNESCO until her untimely death in January 2002. Her intelligence, energy and sensitivity always served the most noble causes of international co-operation and her dedication and commitment helped make the Vilnius Conference a great success. Through her actions, Ms Karvelis set a fine example to all those who strive to enhance mutual understanding between peoples, communities and civilizations.



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

Contents

FOREWORD

11 HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

PART I

17 THE VILNIUS DECLARATION

21 DECLARATION DE VILNIUS

25 VILNIAUS DEKLARACIJA

PART II

THE VILNIUS CONFERENCE

WELCOMING ADDRESSES

- 29 Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania
- 33 Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland
- 37 Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine
- 41 Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

- 47 *Ugné Karvelis*, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO
- 49 *Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux*, Chairperson, Executive Board, UNESCO (1999–2001)

MESSAGES

- 51 Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic of France
(Message delivered by H el ene Carr ere d'Encausse)
- 55 Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Message delivered by Ahmad Jalali)
- 59 Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal
(Message delivered by Penda M'Bow)

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES

- 63 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the International Organization of the Francophonie
- 67 Brunson McKinley, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration
- 69 Giandomenico Picco, Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for the United Nations International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations
- 73 Ataollah Mohajerani, Director of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations, Tehran (Iran)
- 77 Javier Wimer, Writer (Mexico)
- 81 Alphonso Lingis, Professor, Pennsylvania State University (USA)
- 87 Aleksandr N. Yakoley, Director of the Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression (Russia)
- 93 Rekha Menon, Philosopher and artist (India)
- 99 Yves Plasseraud, President of the Groupement pour les droits des minorit es (France)

104 PHOTOS

PART III

ROUND TABLES

- 113 Reciprocal knowledge and interaction
- 115 Globalization and cultural plurality
- 117 Plural identities and common values
- 119 Trade, science and cultural exchange
- 121 Otherness
- 123 Concepts of civilization for the twenty-first century
- 127 Reflections for the future:
Leonidas Donskis, Professor, University of Montevallo (Alabama, USA)
Doudou Diene, Director of the Division of Intercultural Dialogue,
UNESCO

ANNEXES

- 137 I. United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/22 of
4 November 1998
- 139 II. UNESCO General Conference – Resolution 31 of
17 November 1999
- 141 III. United Nations General Assembly resolution 54/113 of
10 December 1999
- 143 IV. United Nations document A/55/492/Rev.1 of 9 November 2000
- 146 V. United Nations General Assembly resolution 55/23 of
13 November 2000
- 149 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/INF14 of
21 May 2001)
- 160 VII. United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of
21 November 2001. Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

165 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Historical introduction

In April 2001, ten years after the re-establishment of Lithuania's independence and its admission to UNESCO, the capital city Vilnius brought together intellectuals, scientists, scholars and artists from Europe, Africa, North and South America and Asia for a conference devoted to the Dialogue among Civilizations, thus responding to the call of the United Nations when it proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. By so doing, Vilnius revived a tradition for international tolerance and communication dating from medieval times. At that time, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which spread from the Baltic to the Black Sea, was a principal regional power, and its capital was a crossroads where the East and West were able to meet.

Ethnic Lithuania represented only one-tenth of a sparsely-populated empire that was ethnically, culturally and religiously heterogeneous, governed by Grand Dukes who were happy to rule without seeking to colonize or to assimilate. As early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, Grand Duke Gediminas, who made Vilnius his capital in 1323, enticed craftsmen and merchants to come to his city by promising them freedom to travel and tax exemptions for a ten-year period; Russians and Germans soon flocked into Vilnius.

Lithuania remained faithful to the original religion of its ancestors until the year 1387. By the middle of fifteenth century in Vilnius, the altars

burning with the sacred fires of the gods stood next to the Christian churches, both Roman and Orthodox Catholic. During this period two brothers shared power for more than thirty years. Kestutis, sovereign of historic Lithuania, remained faithful to paganism, while Algirdas, who reigned over the Slavs, married an Orthodox princess: those of his children born on Christian soil were baptized as Christians, and those born in Lithuania remained pagan – demonstrating a spirit of tolerance rare for the times.

The first Act of Privilege in favour of Jews was promulgated in Vilnius in 1388. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were united as a ‘Common Republic’ that sheltered the largest Jewish community in the world. Vilnius, where a great synagogue was built, housed the most famous rabbinical schools of the Ashkenazi world, making it the ‘Jerusalem of the North’. Karaim and Tartar communities also established themselves throughout Lithuania.

During the Renaissance, Vilnius was a cosmopolitan metropolis whose freedom of expression can be compared with that which prevailed in the city of Basle; as early as 1522, books were printed in Latin, Byelorussian, Polish and Hebrew. The university founded by the Jesuits in 1579 was one of the oldest in the area and attracted many foreign scientists, Copernicus among them.

The sacking of Vilnius by the Muscovite troops who rose against the Polish central authority marked the end of this spiritual golden age. By 1795 the quasi-totality of Lithuanian territory had fallen to Russia. The Tsars practised a policy of Russianization and particularly harsh repression after the rising of 1863. Vilnius remained, nonetheless, a multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural centre until the Nazi occupation (1941–44). At this time a large majority of the Jewish population was exterminated. Thereafter, the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union resulted in the exodus of the Polish intelligentsia.

Here today, at the beginning of the third millennium, Lithuania hopes to become once again a place of meeting and exchange and a privileged centre for dialogue between civilizations. We are situated at the crossroads between East and West, between northern and southern Europe as well. The International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations that took place in April 2001 reiterated the reawakening of our own historic sense of commitment to fostering the ‘intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind,’ as UNESCO’s Constitution states, by encouraging a meeting between and among peoples of different languages, different

religions, different cultural groups and differences of opinion in our common global pursuit of peace and human development.

Paris, December 2001

Ugn Karvelis

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO

(1935–2002)

Welcome to Vilnius, where our conference on dialogue among civilizations revives an age-old tradition of tolerance, multi-ethnicism and multilingualism: in the past, the Lithuanian capital was at the crossroads where Eastern and Western cultures could meet and learn from each other. In 2001 Lithuania commemorates the first decade of membership in UNESCO. We feel that to be entrusted by UNESCO to host this conference is a symbol for which we are proud.

Today, at the dawn of a new century and a new millennium, under the signs of globalization and immediate world-wide communication, the dialogue among civilizations is one of our main venues in the quest for sustainable peace, development and prosperity. It means recognizing the cultural identity of each of us, placing value on our cultural diversity and at the same time seeking to promote the fundamental ethical values common to humanity as a whole.

Dialogue among civilizations requires knowledge of the other in order to fight the fear of otherness, but also empathy in one's approach. Tolerance cannot simply be indifference. May this dialogue among civilizations become the source of a world-wide civilization of dialogue!

Ugn Karvelis

Source: Brochure prepared for the Conference by the Organizing Committee

Part I

The Vilnius Declaration

Vilnius Declaration

1. Civilizations are entities of faith, historical memory, moral imagination and human connection. They contain historically unique and self-asserting cultures, irreplaceable forms of human creativity, and also the intellectual and moral sensibilities of large groups of people. Biodiversity and cultural diversity are closely linked and are instrumental for the ability of humankind to adapt, create and invent. No civilization can solely assume the responsibility for all humanity; neither can a single civilization claim exclusive rights to provide an ultimate and universally valid vision of how to be a human being in the complex and multifaceted world of today and tomorrow.
Like human beings, the historically formed and living civilizations can never be interchangeable since they are all equally unique and valuable. The loss of any single trait of one civilization is a loss for all humanity.
2. The ideas of tolerance and of the dialogue among civilizations rest on a clear awareness of human incompleteness. This is particularly true of the concept of 'the polylogue of civilizations' elaborated by Vytautas Kavolis, a great Lithuanian scholar.
3. Up to now the political exploitation of the concept of civilizations has been among the most problematic traits of modern social sciences and humanities. Regrettably, the theoretically exhausted and morally dubious inclination to employ or even exceedingly exploit

the concept of civilization for sheer political and ideological purposes is still the case.

4. Simplistic, monologue-based or otherwise politically convenient notions of civilization should not be applied. Contrary to a firm conviction that Western civilization was the only civilization nurtured by dialogue-based individualism, liberty and toleration, scholars have stressed the importance of each civilization and the dialogue among them as an inescapable part of the concept of civilization itself.
5. Civilizations are symbolic designs within which people raise core questions concerning their being in the world, and also search for key concepts and frames of meaning to interpret themselves and the world around them. No civilization can be regarded as a theory-emanating entity solely capable of interpreting the world and therefore framing the rest of the world as its empirical evidence. Genuine dialogue allows no room for absolute otherness, for it occurs among morally committed human individuals.
6. No civilization can assume or represent complete humanity. The comparative approach therefore brings us to a proper understanding of the complementarity of civilizations. It powerfully stands against bias, clichés, demonization of the other and the sense of superiority over other societies and cultures. The complementarity of civilizations would be unthinkable without the constant interplay and exchange of such faculties of human thought and creativity as science, art and philosophy; nor would it be possible without the ethical and spiritual dimension. Women and young people can play a crucial part in the process of bridging and uniting the world.
7. As a crucial attempt to uphold mutual respect, sympathetic understanding and tolerance, the dialogue among civilizations is the only means to build a world of human dignity, solidarity and hope. Such a dialogue of multiple, pluralistic and communicating identities would result in a multi-civilizational universe of discourse. No civilization could be demonized, and references to all of them, their intellectual traditions and masterpieces of art would come to the contemporary individual as easily and naturally as references to his or her own civilization. A particular civilization can experience itself or critically examine its core values only through a dialogue with other civilizations.
8. All Governments and civil societies are enjoined, as an integrated part of their cultural policies, to take the initiative to further a

dialogue among civilizations in such a way that it can become an instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance and a vehicle for diversity and pluralism, especially in culture, with the ultimate aim of furthering the common good.

D cl aration de Vilnius

1. Les civilisations sont des entités de foi, de mémoire historique, d'imagination morale et de relation humaine. Elles englobent des cultures historiquement uniques et qui s'affirment en tant que formes irremplaçables de créativité humaine ainsi que les sensibilités intellectuelles et morales de groupes humains étendus. La biodiversité et la diversité culturelle sont étroitement liées et constituent des instruments au service de la capacité humaine d'adapter, de créer et d'inventer. Aucune civilisation ne saurait assumer seule la responsabilité de l'humanité entière; de même une seule civilisation ne saurait revendiquer le droit exclusif de fournir une vision définitive et universellement valable sur la façon d'être dans l'univers complexe, aux facettes multiples, qu'est le monde d'aujourd'hui et de demain.

Pas plus que les êtres humains, les civilisations vivantes, pétries d'histoire, ne sauraient être interchangeables car chacune d'elles est parfaitement unique et précieuse. La perte d'un seul trait d'une civilisation représente une perte pour l'humanité entière.

2. Les idées de tolérance et de dialogue entre les civilisations reposent sur une conscience claire du fait que l'être humain est incomplet. Cela est particulièrement manifeste dans le concept de 'polylogue des civilisations' élaboré par Vytautas Kavolis, un grand érudit lithuanien.

3. A ce jour, l'exploitation politique du concept de civilisation reste l'un des aspects les plus problématiques des sciences sociales et humaines modernes. Il est regrettable que perdure la tendance, dépassée au plan théorique et douteuse au plan moral, à employer le concept de civilisation ou même à l'exploiter de façon excessive à des fins purement politiques et idéologiques.
4. Il convient de ne pas recourir à des notions de civilisation simplistes, fondées sur le monologue ou répondant à d'autres considérations d'ordre politique. Contrairement à une conviction fermement implantée selon laquelle la civilisation occidentale serait la seule à être nourrie d'individualisme ouvert au dialogue, fondé sur la liberté et la tolérance, les spécialistes ont souligné l'importance de chaque civilisation et du dialogue entre elles en tant que partie incontournable du concept même de civilisation.
5. Les civilisations sont des structures symboliques au sein desquelles sont posées les questions centrales portant sur la présence humaine sur terre, où s'inscrit la quête des concepts clés et des structures permettant à chacun d'interpréter son propre être et le monde qui l'entoure. Aucune civilisation ne peut être tenue pour une entité émettrice de théorie susceptible d'interpréter l'univers seule et de donner en conséquence au reste du monde un cadre qui en serait la preuve empirique. Le dialogue authentique ne laisse pas d'espace à l'Altérité absolue car il se déroule entre individus moralement engagés.
6. Aucune civilisation ne saurait assumer ou représenter l'humanité dans son ensemble. L'approche comparative nous conduit donc à une compréhension adéquate de la complémentarité des civilisations. Elle barre la voie à la partialité, aux clichés, à la démonisation de l'Autre et au sentiment de supériorité par rapport à d'autres civilisations ou cultures. La complémentarité des civilisations serait impensable sans interpénétration et échange constants de la pensée et de la créativité humaines telles qu'elles se manifestent dans les domaines de la science, de l'art et de la philosophie; elle ne saurait non plus exister en dehors de la dimension éthique et spirituelle. Les femmes et les jeunes peuvent jouer un rôle décisif en jetant de nouveaux ponts entre les civilisations et en oeuvrant à l'unification du monde.
7. Tentative décisive pour maintenir le respect mutuel, une compréhension fondée sur la sympathie et la tolérance, le dialogue entre civilisations est le seul moyen de bâtir un monde de dignité

humaine, de solidarité et d'espoir. Un tel dialogue d'identités multiples, pluralistes, communiquant entre elles déboucherait sur un univers de discours multicivilisationnel. Aucune civilisation ne saurait y être démonisée, et les références à leur ensemble, ainsi qu'à la tradition intellectuelle et aux chefs d'oeuvre artistiques de chacune d'elles y viendraient à l'esprit de l'individu contemporain aussi aisément et naturellement que les références à la propre civilisation de chacun. Une civilisation donnée ne peut faire l'expérience d'elle-même et soumettre ses valeurs fondamentales à un examen critique qu'au moyen d'un dialogue avec d'autres civilisations.

8. Nous enjoignons à tous les gouvernements et à toutes les sociétés civiles de prendre l'initiative d'encourager le dialogue entre les civilisations en tant que partie intégrante de leurs politiques culturelles de façon à ce qu'il puisse devenir un instrument de transformation, un jalon de paix et de tolérance, un véhicule de diversité et de pluralisme, particulièrement en matière de culture, ayant pour objectif final la promotion du bien commun.

Vilniaus deklaracija

1. Civilizacijos yra tikėjimo, istorinės atminties, moralinės vaizduotės ir žmonių ryšių esybės. Jos apima istoriškai unikalias ir save pagrindžiančias kultūras, niekuo nepakeičiamas žmogaus kūrybingumo formas, taip pat didelių žmonių grupių intelektualinį ir moralinį jautrumą. Biologinė ir kultūrinė įvairovė yra glaudžiai susijusios ir padeda žmonijos gebėjimui prisitaikyti, kurti ir išrasti. Nė viena civilizacija negali prisiimti atsakomybės už visą žmoniją, lygiai jokia pavienė civilizacija - pretenduoti į išskirtinę teisę pateikti galutinę ir visuotinai galiojančią viziją to, kaip būti žmogumi šiandienos ir rytojaus sudėtingame bei įvairiapusiame pasaulyje.

Kaip ir žmonės, istoriškai susiformavusios, gyvos civilizacijos niekad negali pakeisti viena kitos, kadangi kiekviena yra savita ir vertinga. Kiekvienos civilizacijos kurio nors vieno bruožo pradimas yra ir visos žmonijos netektis.

2. Tolerancijos ir civilizacijų dialogo idėjos grindžiamos aiškiu žmogaus visovės ribotumo supratimu. Tai ypač gerai perteikia Vytauto Kavolio, didžio lietuvių mokslininko, 'civilizacijų polilogo' samprata.
3. Iki šiol politinis civilizacijos sąvokos eksploatavimas buvo vienas iš pačių problemiškesnių modernių socialinių ir humanitarinių mokslų bruožų. Belieka apgailestauti, kad teoriškai susidėvėjęs ir moraliniu požiūriu labai jau abejotinas polinkis patogiai redukuoti ar net vis labiau politiškai ir ideologiškai eksploatuoti civilizacijos sąvoką gajus ir mūsų dienomis.
4. Pernelyg viską supaprastinančios, į monologą orientuotos ar kaip nors kitaip politiškai patogios civilizacijos sampratos neturi galioti. Skirtingai nuo vyraujančio įsitikinimo, kad Vakarų civilizacijos būtų vienintelės iš visų civilizacijų, kurios šaknis maitino dialogu grįstas individualizmas, laisvė ir tolerancija, mokslo žmonės kelia kiekvienos civilizacijos svarbos ir civilizacijų dialogo idėją kaip neatsiejamą

pačios civilizacijos dalį.

5. Civilizacijos yra simbolinės struktūros, kuriose žmonės kelia esminius savo buvimo pasaulyje klausimus bei ieško pagrindinių sąvokų ir apibrėžimų, reikšmingų suvokti save ir aplinkinį pasaulį. Nė viena civilizacija negali būti laikoma teorija kuriančia esybę, išimtinai pajėgia interpretuoti pasaulį ir apibrėžti jį kaip savo empirinę medžiagą. Tikrasis dialogas nepalieka vietos absoliučiam kitoniškumui, kadangi jis vyksta tarp moraliai pasirengusių individų.
6. Jokia civilizacija negali apimti visos žmonijos ar jai atstovauti. Vadinas, lyginamosios civilizacijų studijos leidžia teisingai suvokti civilizacijas kaip viena kitą papildančias. Tai priešpriešinama išankstinėms nuostatoms, stereotipams, kito 'demonizavimui' ir savojo pranašumo prieš kitas visuomenes bei kultūras jutimui. Civilizacijų viena kitos papildymas nebūtų imanomas be nuolatinės žmogaus proto ir kūrybiškumo pasireiškimo moksle, mene ar filosofijoje sąveikos bei mainų; tai negalėtų egzistuoti ir be etinės ir dvasinės plotmės. Moterų ir jaunimo vaidmuo gali būti labai svarbus, suartinant ir suvienijant pasaulį.
7. Civilizacijų dialogas, kaip lemtingoji pastanga išlaikyti tarpusavio pagarbą, supratimą ir toleranciją, yra vienintelis būdas kurti pasaulį, kupiną žmogiškojo orumo, partnerystės ir viltingo žvilgsnio į ateitį. Pasireiškiantis kaip daugelio pliuralistinių ir bendraujančių kultūrų tapatybių dialogas, jis turėtų peraugti į daugelio civilizacijų diskusiją. Nė viena civilizacija negali būti 'demonizuojama' ir šiuolaikiniam individui iškylančios sąsajos su visomis civilizacijomis, intelektualinėmis jų tradicijomis ir meno šedevrais turėtų būti tokios pat natūralios ir savaime suprantamos kaip ir savos civilizacijos. Tik palaikydama dialogą su kitomis civilizacijomis, pavienė civilizacija gali geriau suvokti save arba kritiškai įvertinti pagrindines savo vertybes.
8. Siekiant bendros gerovės, visos vyriausybės ir pilietinės visuomenės yra kviečiamos imtis iniciatyvos skatinti civilizacijų dialogą kaip jų kultūros politikos dalį, kad šis dialogas, taptų pokyčių akstiniu, taikos ir tolerancijos matu, įvairovės ir pliuralizmo, ypač kultūros srityje, paskata.

Part II

The Vilnius Conference

Welcoming Addresses

Valdas Adamkus

President of the Republic of Lithuania

We have gathered to discuss once again the direction in which our world is heading, so that we might enrich it with greater mutual understanding, enhanced confidence, partnership and hope. I am grateful to UNESCO for supporting Lithuania's initiative to organize the Vilnius Conference as one of the major events dedicated to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Lithuania, the last European state to accept Christianity, is a country where old cultures and civilizations have criss-crossed, competed and co-existed throughout the centuries. During the Middle Ages, our country suffered not only from the armed crusades coming from the West against the so-called 'barbarity' of the East, but also had to promote concord among its residents representing different cultures and religions.

For many years, Baltic pagan temples, Roman Catholic churches and Byzantine Eastern Orthodox churches here stood next to each other. Later, mosques, synagogues and Karaim kenesas were built in the immediate proximity to Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Even the members of the families of Lithuanian Grand Dukes were able to profess different religions. Different national traditions were respected in the lands under their rule.

Tolerance and the coexistence of nations, which marked the history

of the State of Lithuania in the past, regained their significance when our country restored its independence. Since the very first days of independence, our state has been strengthened by both the peaceful coexistence of its ethnic groups and good neighbourly relations. Lithuania's strategic partners of the past have become its strategic partners of today. Therefore the participation of my colleagues the Presidents of Poland and Ukraine at this conference is not accidental. I believe that the experience accumulated in Eastern and Central Europe over the centuries can be used as a background for the issues that this conference will address.

Globalization is expanding in today's world. Distances are shrinking and relations among peoples are intensifying. The contemporary world, dominated by modern information technologies, not only forces closer dialogue among civilizations, but is also gradually turning into a civilization of dialogue. Of course, this is a complex and contradictory transformation. Quite often it is impeded by stereotypes that for many centuries have hampered the relations among civilizations.

Still, no civilization by itself can claim to represent all humanity or to assume full responsibility for it. Neither can one single civilization claim exclusive rights to provide a universally valid vision of how to be a good human being and how to live wisely in today's world. We may find answers to these questions only through dialogue among civilizations – or by means of a 'polylogue'.

Only by participating in a polylogue of civilizations can a civilization get to know itself better and put its core values to a critical test. Only a lively polylogue of civilizations can help safeguard mutual respect and tolerance, dignity and partnership among people of different cultural experiences.

I want to emphasize that dialogue among civilizations is not self-generated. It is the result of joint efforts. As my old friend Professor Vytautas Kavolis, former President of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, once said, every civilization has its own denominator of cultural liberalism, which enables different societies to understand each other. He was convinced that this denominator of liberalism along with mutual understanding between civilizations should nowadays be promoted by a modern educational system. Professor Kavolis maintained that sooner or later comparative studies of civilizations will become an important part of modern education. Indeed, it will be essential to the people living in the contemporary world to be able to think and act, conscious of the entire complexity of civilizations, and to build a new future on the basis of this consciousness.

It is gratifying that Lithuania – a Central European state which regained independence only eleven years ago – has today become the venue of dialogue among civilizations and can thus make its modest contribution to building confidence among people and nations, and strengthening the traditions of mutual respect and tolerance in the twenty-first century.

As the Head of the State of Lithuania and a citizen of the world at the beginning of the new millennium, I strongly support the efforts of Lithuania in this area. I wish the Vilnius Conference lively discussions, creative spirit and meaningful work, and to all its participants and guests I wish the best of success.

I am most happy to extend my sincere greetings to the participants of the Vilnius Conference taking place under the aegis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and dedicated to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, which will contribute to the increased mutual confidence and openness among peoples, nations and states.

The new millennium calls for a still closer dialogue among politicians and intellectuals in discussing essential aspects of global development. The policies of tomorrow may avoid inertia only by being enriched with a clear-cut cultural dimension and greater sensitivity to the ethical values that are promoted by UNESCO.

The future of the world is our joint project. It should provide guidelines for overcoming a centuries-long confrontation of civilizations and open up new ways for a fruitful dialogue among the nations of the world on the basis of cultural diversity. It is gratifying that Vilnius, a city of deep-rooted traditions and long-standing interaction among different cultures and civilizations, has been entrusted with receiving the participants of a forum devoted to these issues.

I believe that the Vilnius Conference will provide significant stimuli to a further search for common dimensions and for respectful partnership of civilizations.

Valdas Adamkus

Source: Brochure prepared for the Conference by the Organizing Committee

Aleksander Kwasniewski

President of the Republic of Poland

Dialogue among civilizations is a process that is giving shape to the twenty-first century. The Vilnius Conference is an attempt to reflect on this challenge and an important contribution to the global debate initiated by the United Nations. It is my privilege and a great satisfaction to be a co-patron of this initiative. I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Lithuania for the invitation. In my view, this is yet another friendly gesture from a well-wishing neighbour, a sign of close partnership between Poland and Lithuania. May I also thank the Director-General of UNESCO for his presence among us, lending a very special significance to the Vilnius Conference. I wish to thank all the participants, who are luminaries of science and culture, people of good will and of great commitment. You represent many countries, many historical experiences, and many points of view. This meeting is a phenomenon in itself. Dialogue among civilizations is taking here a more concrete shape, and developing in a real-life contact between people.

The world's history is a history of many civilizations, of their progress and their inter-relations. Today this is an accepted truth which sets the tone of our epoch. But it was not always so. In our thinking about the world, we managed – to a large extent – to overcome two clichés. The first one consisted in overemphasizing economic factors at the expense of culture. Today, we have distanced ourselves from this method of explaining the world. This resulted not only from the fact that the political systems that relied on this model broke down and collapsed; it was also because we can see how many phenomena and processes of the contemporary world need to be explained on the grounds of culture, customs, and to what extent people's attitudes may impact the condition of an economy. Admittedly, economics has a great influence on our life: globalization is evidence of this. But in our individual and collective choices we also refer to spiritual values, often without even realizing it. The sense of identity and of belonging is very important in this respect. It is fulfilled in a civilization, since – to quote Samuel Huntington – 'Civilizations are the biggest "we" within which we feel culturally at home as distinguished from all the other "them's" out there.'

The second fallacy that we abandoned consists in treating our own civilization as the hub of the universe. More than ever are we realizing that this is a multipolar and polyphonic world, a mosaic of various cultures and historical traditions. This intellectual break-through is a particularly valid

experience for the Western civilization. For many centuries, it flourished under the conviction of being universal. Based on these grounds, it developed a sense of its mission – fallacious as it often was – and justified its domination over other cultures. The revision of this mode of thinking was a difficult and painful exercise, but it was a purifying one, and proceeded gradually. Historical developments such as decolonization were of primordial importance here. The reflections of great thinkers and luminaries of science such as Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee or Fernand Braudel have also shed new light. Today, Western civilization views other civilizations as partners and interlocutors. It is able to define the pillars of its own uniqueness and identity, while realizing at the same time how much it owes to other cultures. Moreover, the civilization of the West knows now how to define the cornerstones of human universality, such as fundamental moral values, the output of world culture, and human rights.

In the contemporary world, even the greatest civilizations and those most centred on their own identity cannot develop in isolation. State-of-the-art information technologies, development of telecommunications, global economic processes, migrations – all of these factors result in broader and more frequent meetings of civilizations, embracing larger groups of people. With growing global interdependence, separate autonomous phenomena are declining. For this reason, dialogue among civilizations is more than just a humanistic proposition, it is more than curiosity about the exotic or about diversity. It is a necessity, and the world of the twenty-first century makes us realize this more acutely than ever.

We must seek what we have in common, namely, codes of understanding. We must learn how to form unity in plurality. At the same time, we must increase our sensitivity so as to respect other's identities, the need to differentiate ourselves, and different views on the world around and on life. Only then shall we be able to avoid the problems, disappointments and dangers that globalization holds in store. If globalization is limited only to its technical, economic and media manifestations, and if it does not produce genuine partnerships between cultures and people, it will be of no avail. If a free movement of ideas, commodities and lifestyles is not equally vested in all societies, barriers will arise that will relegate many people to exclusion. A sense of 'unfulfilment', lack of understanding or inferiority complexes may pose a substantial threat to the world's stability; they may fuel nationalism, tribalism, xenophobia. Dialogue among civilizations must involve our abilities to speak and to listen; to contribute and to benefit from others. Globalization provokes anxiety and resistance because it may eventually lead to the

destruction of traditional ways of thinking, systems of values, deep-rooted cultures. But it may also open an opportunity for development and constructive changes, and it may lead to the formation of an identity among individuals and communities that will be more open and less inclined to prioritize only their own views.

Personally, I do not believe in insurmountable cultural barriers. I do not subscribe to the point of view that there are boundaries between civilizations, which were formed by a century-long tradition, never to disappear. Time and culture are powerful stabilizers but they may equally forcefully promote changes. The 'clash of civilizations' is therefore not predetermined. The mosaic world of the twenty-first century is not free from anxiety, but there are also premises to make us look into the future with optimism.

The venue of our meeting is symbolic. The colourful past of Vilnius provides an excellent example of dialogue among cultures. This is a place which for centuries has witnessed amicable cohabitation of people of various nations, religions and customs. Here civilizational influences of the West and East overlapped. Here was a crossing point of ideas, commercial routes and material culture. All of this represents the heritage of contemporary Vilnius, and from here a message is being sent that in a polyphonic global civilization we do not need to build the new order for the new century from scratch. Let us draw on experience gathered on a local scale, let us benefit from positive developments from the past.

Such models can be also found in the history of all of Central and Eastern Europe. Over four hundred years ago, this region gave birth to a unique phenomenon in history, the Commonwealth of Two Nations: Poland and Lithuania. A peacefully built federation of two states in reality was able to accommodate more than just two nationalities: not only the Poles and the Lithuanians, but also the Ruthenians, Germans, Jews, Tartars and Armenians. This was a meeting point of Western culture and of Orthodox and Islamic influences. Much has changed since those days of yore, many wars and conflicts have swept the region, many nation states have been formed since then. But the memory of that common existence is still alive in our minds.

Perhaps it is this memory, combined with good sense and responsibility, that helped us now to recover the way to reconciliation and partnership. It should be remembered that upon the collapse of communism, when the ice of Yalta melted, there were reasons to fear the revival of ethnic and civilization clashes still smouldering from the first half of the twentieth century. However, we opted for good neighbourliness,

openness and co-operation. The friendship of Poland and Lithuania may be an inspiring example here, and likewise excellent Polish-German relations, Polish-Ukrainian partnership, or the developing Polish-Russian dialogue. All of Central Europe, with so many historical and cultural threads woven into its heritage, is today an area of stability, security and co-operation. It enters the structures of a united Europe, while also remaining open to dialogue with the East and with other civilizations. This is our contribution to forming the world of the twenty-first century, a world of interdependence and mutual understanding.

Today Vilnius is sending an important signal to the entire international community. I am convinced that the Vilnius conference will contribute to the building of openness, confidence and co-operation among the great communities of the contemporary world. I trust that it will go down as an important event in the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

The world of the twenty-first century features growing global interdependence with fewer isolated, autonomous phenomena. At the same time, states continue to forge their mutual and multilateral relations in accordance with the principles and values, which they consider important for themselves and their peoples. Hence, more than ever before in history, humankind needs dialogue and solidarity. Dialogue among civilizations and nations allows us to discover the richness and opportunity arising from the plurality of cultures and civilizations. It is my profound conviction that only through mutual respect and recognition can genuine co-operation be achieved, both on national and international levels.

Aleksander Kwasniewski

Source: Brochure prepared for the Conference by the Organizing Committee

Leonid Kuchma

President of Ukraine

It is highly symbolic that this important and extraordinary forum is taking place in the charming atmosphere of ancient Vilnius, where different cultures, religions and traditions have coexisted and interacted peacefully for hundreds of years.

I am very pleased that the Conference is held under the patronage of my good friends Presidents Valdas Adamkus and Alexander Kwasniewski as well as the UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura. Their addresses have already created a high intellectual atmosphere in this hall. I am convinced that this will provide a stimulus for real breakthroughs in further discussions on dialogue among civilizations.

I believe that the objective of this forum is to define the most efficient forms of interaction between civilizations in the modern world and to separate the truth from the stereotypes. Two options – catastrophic and optimistic – have been the most frequently put forward. Catastrophic interaction is represented in the well-known theory of ‘clash’ by S. Huntington; the optimistic version in the theory of the victory of liberal values and ‘the end of history’ by Fukuyama. I think that the truth is to be found somewhere in the middle.

Can we regard the ‘clash of civilizations’ as an inevitable factor of modern history? I think we lack sufficient grounds to say ‘yes’. Human history is full of instructive examples of mutual penetration and cultural and historic enrichment. We can ask whether the West, or the Western Orthodox civilizations, would be proud of their intellectual heritage today had Europe in the Middle Ages not been enriched with the accomplishments that came from other cultures: mathematics, astronomy, medicine, architecture, philosophy and many other areas. I believe the key is not in attempting to thrust one’s own outlook on others, but in perceiving the values of other civilizations for oneself.

Undoubtedly, this does not mean that we must turn a blind eye on severe violations of human rights, excusing them as ‘local traditions’. But we ought to see something else: the obliteration of the cultural and religious particularities of any nation can have extremely serious consequences. A certain danger also lies in spreading simplified ideas about the current process of globalization. One may sometimes have the impression that a revolution in the area of communication and the development of Internet mean, first of all, the wider spread of the ideological and cultural influence of the West – and not the entire West,

but a small group of countries that possess certain technological resources.

But technological ideas spread rapidly, and this means that no one civilization holds the monopoly ownership on them, nor is it more eligible than the others. Many people associate democracy, pluralism and tolerance with so-called Western cultures. But just two and one-half centuries ago democratic ideas pertained to only a small group of philosophers and had no influence on real state policy in feudal and monarchical Europe. The well-known political scientist and economist Amartya Sen, in his article 'Democracy as a Universal Value' (February 1999), has described the laws of Indian Emperor Ashoka written in the third century B.C. Those laws depict the Emperor as the supporter of tolerance, pluralism and protection of minority rights.

Few people know that the Ukrainian Kozack State was an example of a democratic country in the eighteenth century. The first Ukrainian Constitution was adopted in a democratic manner in 1710 at the General Meeting of Zaporizhya Forces headed by Hetman Pylyp Orlyk. In order to properly assess this fact, I should remind you that the American Constitution was adopted 77 years later and the French Constitution, 81 years later. That is why I believe that one cannot draw demarcation lines between civilizations on the basis of a 'collision theory'.

In this context I would like to touch upon the present situation in Europe, but not because European affairs are of greater importance than developments on other continents. It is just that after dozens of years of ideological confrontation, the prospects for unification have raised a great deal of expectation among the European nations, and one cannot but notice the attempts to draw the old demarcation lines on whatever grounds. Dividing Europe into 'Latin' and 'Byzantine' parts, in which only one would be perceived as capable of absorbing European values, is most dangerous. Such a division along the former borders of long-disappeared empires would forever cut off half of Europe from modern integration processes. The question arises: does it make any sense to impose artificial limits on the expansion of the European Union by stopping it at the western border of Ukraine? What will be the moral grounds and consequences of such a decision? Who will play the role of supreme judge and interpreter of the truth for the European nations?

Ronald Reagan used to say that demarcation lines do not exist on the maps but in the minds of the people. This means that certain boundaries go through any society and even through our consciousness. Demons of the past raise their heads in western democracies in the form of extreme nationalism, xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism. The problems of

countries in transition do not lie in the deficit of democracy – that is common everywhere – but in complicated problems that have to be resolved. The countries that used to exist under totalitarianism are not renewing their democracies, but rather are building them again from scratch. Generally speaking, the influence of any value that is forced upon a society is as counter-productive as revolutions that were exported in the past.

I cannot but agree with the ideas of French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, who correctly pointed out that democracy has always been the result of a process parallel to social, economic and cultural transformations; it has never been parallel to one imposed from outside, nor is it a spontaneous metamorphosis. He thought it was impossible to immediately demand from new democracies the level of democratic development that can be attained only in several stages. That is why post-Socialists, and first of all the ex-Soviet European countries, need caring support, assistance and understanding of the complexity of their road to Europe from the West.

International dialogue among civilizations is not possible without the dialogue within civilizations, specific countries and social groups. As Mr Matsuura has pointed out, in one of his most recent addresses, real dialogue begins at home. Despite economic problems during the first years of its independence, Ukraine has managed to build a pluralistic multicultural society where different nationalities and religions coexist peacefully.

Our country, unlike many ex-Soviet countries, has managed to avoid conflicts and bloodshed between different ethnic groups and confessions. History has proved groundless all the forecasts that Ukraine would split into western and eastern sections. What makes the Ukrainian experience valuable in the context of the dialogue among civilizations?

Firstly, Ukraine can serve as a model of harmonic coexistence among numerous national minorities in a unified state. Today my country is a common home to 128 large and small nations.

Secondly, it provides an example of the repatriation of nations that were forced to leave their historical motherland during the era of totalitarianism, the first of which was under the Crimean Tatars. More than 250,000 representatives of that nation have come back since independence. In order to assess this achievement correctly, it is useful to recall how much effort was necessary from the world community to return the Albanians to Kosovo. Ukraine single-handedly carried the burden of accommodating the Crimean Tatars and helping them to adapt to new conditions. To some

extent, we observe in this case a unique phenomenon, in which the state authorities consciously involved another culture (Islamic in this case) in internal civilization dialogue in order to restore historical justice.

Thirdly, a complicated and in itself unique dialogue among different religions is currently underway in Ukraine. It should be noted that the mutual enrichment between different religions occurred many times in Ukraine. The orthodox Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium actively and intentionally used accomplishments of Roman Catholic theology in the seventeenth century. More than 105 different religious groups work in my country today. The dialogue between them is conducted within the framework of the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches and Religious Organizations. This forum was set up for the purpose of resolving disputes through joint efforts of the state and the religious communities.

We also count on the support of international religious groups and their leaders in carrying out the dialogue between religions. In particular we have high hopes for the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ukraine in June 2001.

In conclusion, let me say that I am confident that the dialogue among civilizations will become a permanent attribute of international life. From a moral point of view, we cannot wait until conflicts and confrontation force us to look for common understanding. The possibility of holding a dialogue instead of monologue, and the ability to listen and consider a different position, have always been the shortest way to mutual understanding. Because, in a larger sense, there is only one civilization on this planet, and we call it the civilization of humankind.

Ko chiro Matsuura

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

It is a great honour for me to address you on the occasion of this Conference in celebration of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. I am delighted to be here with you today. The United Nations General Assembly, in proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations on 4 November 1998, emphasized the importance of tolerance and recognized 'the diverse civilizational achievements of mankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity'. The following year, on the initiative of Lithuania, UNESCO's role in the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations was included in the agenda of the 30th session of UNESCO's General Conference: 'The collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations' was welcomed, and Member States were urged 'to give the year 2001 all due prominence and to support activities aimed at facilitating and promoting dialogue among civilizations'. On 5 September 2000, in co-operation with the Islamic Republic of Iran, UNESCO convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York a Round Table of Heads of State on Dialogue among Civilizations, followed by a Round Table of Eminent Persons in order to launch the United Nations Year of Dialogue.

I know, President Adamkus, that you were very sorry not to be able to attend the Round Table of Heads of State. However, two days later, your participation in the Millennium Summit provided a most symbolic moment for you to make your first address to an international gathering as the Head of State of Lithuania. It was also a valuable opportunity for us to discuss ideas and to launch in earnest the preparations for this conference here in Vilnius. I would like to say how gratifying it is to work with someone in your position who shares the same commitment to the promotion of dialogue between civilizations and different cultures.

I would also like to congratulate you on your musical taste! Four months after the Millennium Summit, on 8 January 2001, we attended together a memorable concert held at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris in order to commemorate the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Co-sponsored by the Government of Lithuania and UNESCO, this concert, previously given in Vilnius, saw Maestro Mstislaw Rostropovich lead the National Philharmonic Orchestra of Lithuania in a performance that will long live in my memory. It was a remarkable occasion that I am honoured

to have shared with you.

Today, we are here to open a major international conference which for the next three days will provide an opportunity for analysis, debate, and perhaps even a re-framing of the very meaning of dialogue in the twenty-first century. Lithuania is very well-placed to host this event. Modern Lithuania is indeed a place where cultural diversity and on-going intercultural dialogue are flourishing. Of course, this has been greatly facilitated and encouraged by the events of 1990. Since then, Lithuania has been actively engaged in forging closer ties and promoting better understanding among its neighbours. The presence here today of President Kwasniewski is a clear sign of the spirit of friendship and co-operation that both Lithuania and Poland are cultivating. Allow me to express my appreciation of your efforts to promote democracy and civic dialogue within Poland and to foster regional co-operation in its many dimensions.

I equally welcome President Leonid Kutchma of Ukraine. I recall my visit to your beautiful country last September. Given Ukraine's important role in the history of Europe, especially over the past ten years, your participation in this conference on dialogue among civilizations is particularly welcome.

At the same time that Lithuania is encouraging inter-cultural dialogue, Lithuanians are becoming increasingly aware of the value of their own heritage. As one sign of this, the contemporary folklore movement is reputed to be particularly strong. As you know, ancient Baltic and Lithuanian customs, traditions and folklore were mentioned in the chronicles and sagas of the past millennium. For over a century now – with a great deal of public participation – various well-established research societies have been actively engaged in the collection and publication of ethnographic material that reveals the richness of Lithuania's cultural heritage. In this regard, it is also worth underlining that Lithuania was the first country to propose using the new information technologies for the preservation of cultural heritage. As a result, information on Lithuanian dialects, an anthology of classic Lithuanian literature and historical collections of the Vilnius University Library are among the items that can be consulted on UNESCO's website and are also available on CD-ROMs. It is indeed important for all societies to know and appreciate their own cultural origins and lines of development.

At a time when the impact of globalization on the world's cultural diversity is increasingly being felt, UNESCO places particular emphasis on protecting diversity and safeguarding the world's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO's vision is one that respects all civilizations.

This vision has no room for an evolutionary perspective that separates civilizations so that some are ranked above others and some are set in opposition to others. The term 'civilization' must denote a universal, plural and non-hierarchical phenomenon, and also one that is interactive since every civilization has been enriched by contact and exchange with other civilizations. Civilizations are profoundly 'inter-cultural'. We recognize that, in the past, contacts between different civilizations and cultures have sometimes been violent and oppressive. We also acknowledge that the need still exists for dialogue not only among civilizations but also within civilizations; the recent actions taken in early 2001 by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan testify to this fact.

However, we must take heart from the fact that civilizations have thrived on peaceful inter-cultural exchange and mutual enrichment through dialogue. It is this that we are here to celebrate and encourage. In today's world, inter-cultural exchanges have intensified in scope and pace owing to rapid globalization; as a consequence, we are confronted with new cultural realities and experiences. The huge growth of new information and communication technologies over the past two decades has brought many parts of the world into closer contact, so much so that the predicted 'global village' is virtually with us. However, many people fear that this will lead to an enforced cultural homogenization at the expense of the world's creative diversity. This brings the question of cultural diversity and how it is to be promoted and protected, to the heart of the larger framework of dialogue among civilizations.

The Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, advocates that each culture should cultivate within itself values of respect for other cultures. Given the increased scope of inter-cultural exchange in a globalized world, as well as certain tendencies towards local exclusiveness and inward-looking prejudices, these values of respect for other cultures are more vital than ever.

Indeed, with the growth of our knowledge-based societies, an old truth is becoming increasingly evident: namely, that the flow of cultural change and exchange pays little attention to boundary lines on political maps. Today, cultures are crossing frontiers by being exhibited and exchanged throughout the world via the media and the Internet. Certain types of activities – networking, lobbying, reflection and the building of solidarity – 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 to channel such processes of exchange – such 'dialogues' – through democratic practices that respect human rights,

gender equity, sustainability and diversity.

While globalization is creating new opportunities for cultural exchange, there is also a downside. Whereas violent conflicts formerly took the form of wars between nation-states, conflicts are increasingly arising within nation-states and often they involve cultural matters. New forms of intolerance and aggression are emerging. Xenophobia and racism, ethnic conflict, prejudice and stigma, segregation and discrimination (based mainly on ethnic and gender criteria) are widespread, generating appalling violence and deep human suffering. Tensions between immigrants and host communities have intensified in some places, in part because cultural minorities – especially refugees, internally displaced persons, guest workers and other underprivileged groups – are increasingly able to express their aspirations, grievances and cultural concerns through the language and framework of human rights.

In all these new situations, economic factors and global pressures are at odds with national policies and local cultural fears, including fears about globalization. As a result, a new kind of dialogue is needed as a constructive alternative to contemporary cultural conflicts.

As emphasized by several participants at the Round Table on Dialogue among Civilizations held in New York last September, many of the problems facing today's world have arisen as a consequence of differences within nations. Dialogue, therefore, must begin at home.

But what is a dialogue? First of all, dialogue presupposes the capacity to listen – and to listen, furthermore, with an accommodating attitude. This implies a certain moral risk. The effort of listening is one of accommodating the 'other' without changing oneself completely, without disappearing and abandoning oneself. In this perspective, dialogue is the testing-ground of tolerance. Indeed, the dynamics of genuine dialogue and tolerance are closely connected. Through dialogue, a mutual understanding that transcends differences is achieved.

The goal of genuine dialogue is not conversion but mutual understanding. I say 'genuine' because one has to recognize that in our daily dialogues and exchanges, agreement is sometimes reached by convenience rather than by conviction. That is not 'genuine dialogue'. But when somebody, absolutely convinced by his or her own ideas, reconciles these with an aspect of another person's experience or values – then the point has been reached where dialogue demonstrates its true communicative capacity and discovers its vocation for tolerance. Dialogue thus opens the possibility of personal change, of an encounter with the 'other'. This is perhaps one way to understand what Emmanuel Levinas,

one of Lithuania's sons, meant when he called for a 'rupture with indifference'. Genuine dialogue, therefore, involves risk because it invites us to re-think the very idea of humanity. It does this by asking us to embrace simultaneously our common humanity and its irreducible diversity as well.

Understanding the relationship with 'others' has a new urgency in the contemporary international context. We must attempt to capture the significance of dialogue in an increasingly interconnected world where cultural diversity presents not only difficult challenges but also fresh opportunities for mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.

In the contemporary world, 'difference' is sometimes used as a reason or excuse for violent political struggles. But a barrier that supposedly protects against an outside threat may well imprison those living on the inside. However, where a framework of political equality and human rights exists, these very same differences can – and often do – provide the opportunity to explore new horizons and to enrich our lives. Hence, the motto adopted by the United Nations for the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations – 'Diversity is not a threat' – is very appropriate.

Let me emphasize that the acknowledgement and approval of diversity implies pluralism. Cultural pluralism is a way of addressing diversity in a dynamic and open-ended manner, both within and between states, and it implies a quest for sustainability. 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, freedom, cohesion and inclusion – or to violence and exclusion.

The United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations – and its celebration on the occasion of the present conference – represents an excellent opportunity to take a fresh look at the potential for dialogue in a globalized world. We must seek to endow the concept of dialogue with renewed meaning and to identify dynamic and inclusive approaches for reinforcing its relevance and vitality. Dialogue must become an instrument of transformation, a way for tolerance and peace to thrive, a vehicle for diversity and pluralism – hence a means for furthering the common good.

As we move into the third millennium, people the world over are ever more anxious to preserve their traditions while at the same time engaging in cultural exchange and redefining their relationships with their neighbours on this planet. Lithuania is at the crossroads of different cultures and civilizations and the city of Vilnius has become a cradle of co-existence of different cultures and a model of communication and exchange. It is therefore an ideal place to reflect upon new ways of building mutual understanding among different civilizations.

Every civilization has borrowed from others and has been enriched thereby. The United Nations itself, and most singularly UNESCO, were created in the belief that the world needs dialogue and that open dialogue heals discord. The April 2001 Conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations underlines the continued commitment of Lithuania to the cause of bringing peoples and nations together in openness to one another's spirit. Dialogue is to renew our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, to democracy and good governance.

I salute Lithuania and the city of Vilnius on this auspicious occasion and I wish much success to this important Conference.

Ko chiro Matsuura

Source: Brochure prepared for the Conference by the Organizing Committee

Introductory Statements

Ugn Karvelis

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO

Lithuania is proud and happy to welcome you today to its capital. I would also like to greet the President of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Mrs Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux, who is among us and who will address you in a few moments.

The Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations which is now opening has brought together intellectuals, scientists and artists from four continents and some twenty countries. Lithuania has thus responded to the call of the United Nations when it proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. This conference holds a double symbolic meaning for us.

Thanks to the conference, Vilnius has revived an age-old tradition of tolerance and ethnic and linguistic pluralism dating from the middle ages. In the fourteenth century, Grand-Duke Gediminas invited artisans and foreign merchants to settle in his capital, guaranteeing them the freedom to circulate and exemption from taxes for ten years. Germans and Russians flocked into the country, soon joined by Jews for whom an initial Act of Privilege was promulgated in 1388, because of which Vilnius became known as the 'Jerusalem of the North' and the intellectual, scientific and

spiritual centre of the Ashkenazim. Communities of Karaim Jews from the Black Sea as well as Muslim Tatars also took root in our country.

Situated at the crossroads between east and west, Vilnius was a compass card where oriental and occidental civilizations could meet and mutually enrich each other. Difference was common, so much so that a spirit of tolerance rare for the times prevailed here. During the Renaissance, the capital of the Grand-Duchy, which united with Poland into a 'common republic', was a cosmopolitan metropolis whose reputation for freedom of expression could be compared with that of the Swiss city of Basle.

And at the same time, Lithuania today is preparing to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its membership in UNESCO. The confidence that UNESCO has shown us by allowing us to organize this conference is another symbol for which we are proud, and we hope that it will allow our country once again to become a place of meeting and exchange, a privileged centre for dialogue among civilizations, essential in the shared quest of all humanity for peace, development and enduring prosperity.

In these times of globalization, the recognition of the identity of each people, thus of cultural diversity, is as essential as the search for and definition of shared values for all the inhabitants of our planet.

Why speak of civilizations rather than cultures? Quite simply because it is a question of taking into consideration every domain and aspect of human life, activity and creativity, and especially their aesthetic, ethical and spiritual dimensions. Dialogue among civilizations of course requires a knowledge of oneself and of others, but also an attitude of empathy towards other people. Tolerance cannot be simple indifference. May the dialogue among civilizations emerge into a civilization of dialogue!

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux

Chairperson, Executive Board

UNESCO (2000–2001)

Please allow me, first of all, to bring you the greetings of the Executive Board of UNESCO, a body that represents a cross-section of the cultures and civilizations of the world. The theme of dialogue and the values it revives are recurrent on the Executive Board, and it is an honour for me to participate in the present meeting. I would like to express my appreciation to the Government and the people of Lithuania for hosting this important conference, a major event in pursuance of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

The underlying principle of dialogue among civilizations and its promotion implies the recognition of cultural coexistence and unbiased interaction of the peoples, religions and cultures of the world, as values that are complementary to one another rather than as distinctive features that are mutually exclusive. We should see this exercise as our moral duty to nurture and promote the intangible heritage of the peoples living together in our global village. I regard these considerations as a prerequisite for dealing successfully with the fundamental question of dialogue among civilizations, that is, creating a common universe of discourse and arriving at common values, while striving to accept and manage cultural diversity, as well as removing prejudice.

The dialogue among civilizations must of necessity be an ongoing, open-ended process, which should be allowed to run its course freely across civilizations. In our present-day world, however, the inescapable phenomenon of globalization impinges upon the realization of this ideal. As this historical process cuts across economic, trade and cultural boundaries, and pursues objectives that very often run counter to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and understanding among nations, it impacts inevitably and heavily on human interaction and more importantly on the sustainability or survival of minority cultures. It would be a happy co-incidence if globalization were to be holistic and all-embracing in its consequences and effects, in that it would concomitantly promote intercultural understanding and artistic expression through intensive goal-oriented human interactions in its wake.

Another major obstacle to the fruitful development of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity is intellectual stereotyping, which has been a perennial evil for centuries. It is often at the very origin of representations and misrepresentations of other cultures and civilizations. The eruption of

hatred, racism, violence, xenophobia and other atrocities in many societies and across borders can often be traced back to many reprehensible stereotypical conventions. All individuals should find the determination and the tolerance within themselves of looking beyond all the boundaries of civilization for a better understanding and appreciation of the richness that cultural diversity comprises, and for becoming immersed in civilizations and structures other than their own.

In our thematic deliberations and discussions of this conference we cannot afford to take a narrow, pedestrian view of civilization and dialogue, but we should rather see these concepts as constituting deep-seated values, as being part of sustainable living. We must bear in mind that individuals in every society need to be encouraged and accommodated to foster their identities, and that we need to promote and preserve these values in order to be able to cope with ethnic and cultural diversity in the widest possible sense. Our present efforts and their follow-up may in the long term prove to be the crucible for lasting sustainable development and for the ultimate survival of human kind.

This Conference should be able to pave the way for a total re-evaluation and subsequent embracement of different cultural concepts, by all parties from all regions and civilizations. I express the hope that together we will make a significant contribution towards giving plural societies the tools and the support necessary to cultivate openness and tolerance, and that we will also succeed in developing objectives and defining concepts, strategies and social mechanisms for establishing and sustaining a true intercultural dialogue that will cut across all the civilizations of the world.

Messages

Jacques Chirac

President of the Republic of France

Message delivered by Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, Permanent Secretary of the Académie Française

Since official duties prevent me from leaving Paris, I have asked the Permanent Secretary of the Académie Française, my friend Ms Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, to be my representative and tell you of the importance, in my eyes, of the Vilnius Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations, organized with UNESCO.

When President Adamkus invited me here, it appeared immediately obvious to me how right it was for Lithuania to hold such an event and that no one better than its President could open it.

Steeped in heroism and glory, the history of Lithuania tells us of the confrontation of the peoples of Europe in these Northern lands where Slavs, Germans, Scandinavians and Balts have crossed paths from time immemorial. It tells us of the slow penetration of Christianity, the ancestral alliance of the Lithuanian and Polish peoples and of Lithuania's complex, often painful, relations with its powerful neighbours.

This history also tells us of a nation's obstinacy in forging its identity despite vicissitudes and tempering that identity with the contributions of outside influences but never resigning itself to assimilation.

It bears in its bosom, too, the scars of the dramas of our century, the

totalitarianisms that have bloodied and disfigured Europe.

With the passing centuries, Lithuania and the nations of Northern Europe suffered the brunt of different imperialisms and learned the priceless value of peaceful dialogue between peoples and their cultures. And yet what a message of hope do we receive from Lithuania and other Baltic States! What a splendid lesson of vitality and high civilization! Barely liberated, your country set to work to make up for lost time: building democracy and the rule of law, quite naturally; asking without delay to join the European Union, where you rightly discern the promise of peace and prosperity; joining together with Francophonie, in order better to play a part in the symphony of the world's cultures!

I should like to have been with you today to proclaim my admiration for this rebirth, pay homage to your people and their strength, and celebrate with you the joys of freedom, cultural diversity, and fruitful dialogue among civilizations. I should like to have greeted Presidents Kuchma and Kwasniewski, Mr Matsuura and Mr Boutros-Ghali, to mingle with you, participants from all over the world, who bring your experience and your knowledge to this Conference.

May I remind you that France also was built by the contributions of numerous civilizations. A France which likes to incorporate those who come from elsewhere, benefiting from their knowledge and granting them citizenship as a passport to universality. A France that has chosen Europe yet remains open to the world in all its diversity. A France which sees in Francophonie an exemplary dialogue among cultures, one of those counter-balancing forces which so many of us feel we need.

If I have tried to draw the parallel between the history of France and that of Lithuania, it is because a majority of the countries of the world, like most of your countries, can also draw on their history for examples and food for thought on the meaning of dialogue among civilizations.

A dialogue for peace, in a world where increasingly regular contact between very distant and different peoples imposes greater efforts for mutual understanding.

A dialogue for freedom and progress, to assert the power of diversity, the legitimacy of our multiple identities, against the threat of standardization.

A dialogue for future generations, because the formidable challenges of our time oblige us to imagine new instruments of world governance, which we shall hammer out together by pooling our experience and knowledge.

Conscious as you are of the immense promise that lies in the

explosion of human exchanges and the acceleration in scientific and technical discoveries, you will no doubt subscribe to our belief that freedom alone has made all this possible.

I am sure that you will discuss as well the planetary ethics that must be developed in order to subordinate economic and technological progress to the integrity and dignity of humankind, to control any possible dangerous drifts, and to advance together on the road to a universal civilization, rich in its diversity.

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Message delivered by Ahmad Jalali, Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO

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

On behalf of myself and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr Valdas Adamkus, the President of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian Government for their initiative in organizing this meeting. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO, for his efforts in promoting the idea of dialogue among cultures and civilizations through UNESCO's different actions, including co-organizing this event.

The presence of the President of Poland, the President of Ukraine, special envoys of many international organizations, intellectuals, writers, artists, scientists and thinkers in this gathering indicates the multifaceted importance of the issue of dialogue among civilizations and cultures and the comprehensiveness of the approach we need in this field.

It would have been a pleasure for me to be able to personally participate in your discussions, because I think that, in the long run, these kinds of gatherings are much more important than those which follow a strictly political point. It is better to come together to discuss questions and causes that can give rise to clashes and antagonisms than to try to make up for their consequences.

This gathering is both a beginning and a renewal. On the one hand, it is part of a continuing process that has been going on from the beginning of history. On the other hand, inasmuch as it is a deliberate action, it marks a new step in this process. The fact that the year 2001 has been chosen as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations is a revealing sign of the interest of the international community in this idea and the need of the whole world for such a dialogue.

I would like to seize this occasion to thank UNESCO for going beyond the Year 2001 having included the theme of dialogue among cultures and civilizations in its mid-term strategy for the years 2002–2007.

The events we are witnessing today in April 2001 highlight the ever-increasing need for dialogue among all cultures of the world. In the beginning of this third millennium, clashes and antagonisms are no less acute than they were before, and this situation has had irremediable cultural effects. Disastrous as they are, these events can none the less give rise to a general consciousness of the importance of the preservation, not

only of cultures, but also of the cultural heritage existing in different parts of the world as part of our common cultural heritage. These unfortunate events can also serve as a starting point for further reflections on the nature of culture and civilization, the conditions of coexistence among different cultures and civilizations and the prominent role dialogue can play to achieve these ends.

I am confident that this conference will provide a valuable occasion for highly qualified reflections on the nature and necessary conditions of dialogue among civilizations. A brief look at the subjects to be debated during the conference shows that sufficient attention has been paid to the multidisciplinary character of this issue. Themes such as identity and otherness are not exclusively philosophical questions to be dealt with only by professional philosophers. In fact, the theoretical problem of defining identity in such a way that it does not lead to exclusion and discrimination is related to other, more urgent practical issues. For example, how can we begin a real dialogue while we are still far from a wholly inclusive concept of humanity and while at both national and international level, discrimination and exclusion are still facts of everyday life? How can we ignore the fact that even our contemporary world has its own ways of placing barriers between different human groups, and that sometimes political imperialistic goals are pursued by drawing wholly negative pictures of other cultures and civilizations? How can we achieve a real dialogue among civilizations if science and technology remain exclusively in the hands of a few powerful sectors of humanity?

On a more theoretical level, one of the main questions that occupies many individual thinkers, as well as many cultures and civilizations of the world, is how to preserve their identity without falling into isolationism and introversion, and how to begin a dialogue with others without losing their own identity. That is why a more inclusive concept of identity is a necessary condition for any kind of dialogue.

Nevertheless, dialogue is also conditioned by the realities of the world in which we live. In a world divided into the privileged and the unprivileged (and this division is not limited to any specific aspect of life) one of the main obstacles that stands in the way of dialogue is a two-fold fear. On the one hand, some of those who are in an unprivileged situation are afraid to enter into a real dialogue with others, because they consider it a danger to their identity, while some others do not possess the means of making their voices heard. On the other hand, the privileged prefer not to enter into dialogue at all, either because they do not see any necessity for it, or out of fear of the loss of their privileges.

These problems show that the issue of dialogue and the concept of justice cannot be separated. Thus our efforts to establish a fruitful dialogue between cultures and civilizations should be accompanied by a parallel effort to build a world based on justice and true equality between all of its members.

همچو آن یک نور خورشید سما
 نیک یک باشد همه انوارشان

صد بود نسبت به صحن خانه ها
 چون که برداری تو دیوار از میان

The unique light of the sun in the sky,
 Becomes a hundred lights in the courtyards.
 But, when walls are removed,
 There will be no light but one.

Abdoulaye Wade

President of the Republic of Senegal

Message delivered by Penda M'Bow, Minister of Culture, Republic of Senegal

Senegal is delighted to be participating in the International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations, organized by the government of the Republic of Lithuania. We would like first to express our thanks to the President of Lithuania for his invitation to us. Our country, which strongly supported the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the resolution proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, has assessed the importance of this work, which inaugurates the actions that will be conducted on this occasion.

In humanity's long march, many tragedies have originated in the mutual incomprehension between peoples, and the resulting determination by the strongest to subjugate the weaker in the name of a so-called superiority of their civilization. The tragedies experienced by my Continent in the course of the past four centuries are the most striking illustration of this. Africa is, undoubtedly, the region of the world that has suffered the most from ostracism with respect to its peoples and their cultures. The consequences of this are still visible.

To reduce to slavery, to deport and exploit the labour force of the youngest, most creative elements of Africa's population on the plantations of the Americas and the Caribbean for three hundred years, it was necessary to deny them their quality as human beings. And this was done unscrupulously, right in the middle of a century called 'Enlightened'. In asserting that Blacks had no soul in order to justify the unjustifiable, one also denied them of having belonged to rich cultures and civilizations, even if there was evidence to the contrary.

In dividing up its geographical territory, dominating its peoples and mercilessly exploiting its resources towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was claimed that Africans were being given the 'civilization' that they were lacking, even as numerous scholars had already begun to show the wealth of their artistic creations and the universality of their systems of values. The exactions that marked colonization, the violations of human rights and the denial of justice that resulted, were yet other manifestations of the tragedy that ignorance or contempt of the other brings about. But let it be clearly understood, that it is far from my thoughts to categorically reject and ignore the other side of the story, namely some of the acquisitions brought in by colonization; indeed the language in which I am addressing you comes from those very times.

It took the Second World War, its trail of misfortunes and its acts of barbarism – the authors of which held racist theories as their creed – for us to finally understand how dangerous for humanity it was to erect barriers of contempt and incomprehension, based on perverse ideologies, between peoples.

Today, people dialogue together and better understand each other, and we must congratulate the United Nations system and in particular the United Nations and UNESCO for having contributed to this with so much effort. By recognizing the culture of each people, and by proclaiming the equal dignity of all cultures, by drawing up a list of the World Heritage of humanity, with the monuments and collections that demonstrate the creative capacities of the peoples of every continent, an important step towards a more just vision of the realities of this world has been taken. By doing justice to each person's past in this way, the paths that lead to mutual rapprochement are laid out. But much remains to be done in order to finally reconcile humanity with itself, so that every one will feel the community of destiny that henceforth unites us all, for better or for worse.

The prejudices that must be overcome are still numerous, and numerous are the distortions that mark the way information is treated in presentations of the past and present histories of formerly colonized peoples. Too much silence surrounds the major facts of their history; the knowledge of which is essential in understanding present-day situations. Their cultures have often been ignored, minimized or consciously biased, while the cultures of others have been unreasonably glorified. If we wish to instil respect for the cultures of others in the minds of the young, they must be educated and informed without excessive chauvinism. They must become aware that we all belong to the same human community, and that the accomplishments of each nation are an enrichment for the others. Certainly ignorance linked to illiteracy, poverty and isolation excludes too many people, denying them access to modern knowledge, which deprives them of the instruments for a better appreciation of what goes beyond the strict limits of their own world.

It is to help correct these insufficiencies and these distortions that the conclusions of our conference can and must contribute, so that the objectives defined in the United Nations General Assembly resolution can be achieved. Through our common will we can, in fact, make the world an open place for dialogue, enrichment and mutual understanding, solidarity and mutual aid. Scientific and technical advances and the new communication technologies are providing us with the means.

Senegal is already contributing to this effort, and it expects to

contribute more on the basis of the decisions adopted here. My country is aware that Africa, in spite of the upheavals agitating it and the destitution afflicting so many of its populations, can contribute decisively to fruitful international cultural co-operation based on mutual respect, thanks to its social and human values and the dynamism of its artistic creations.

Our country still bears the visible marks of the tragedies that have shaped the history of Africa, a history to which our peoples have contributed, by shaping it in terms of significant accomplishments. This is why we are a country of openness and of dialogue. We have concluded cultural agreements with a large number of countries. Our exchanges with them have multiplied. We host exhibits, conferences and the most diversified cultural activities. Our intellectuals and writers are read and recognized throughout the entire world. Our artists, painters, musicians, singers and filmmakers are acclaimed in all of the world's large capitals. We have given the United Nations system some of their most esteemed civil servants. Our soldiers participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions throughout the world.

We believe that it is possible for human beings to maintain relations of mutual confidence and justice with each other, despite the wounds of history. We know that it is at this price that world peace, our common hope, can be attained.

Keynote addresses

Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Secretary-General of the International Organization of the Francophonie

I am particularly happy to be here among you to open this International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations. And if we are here in Vilnius, we owe it first of all to the Lithuanian authorities.

My first words, as Secretary-General of the International Organization of the Francophonie, are thus directed to his Excellency the President of the Republic of Lithuania, to thank him warmly for this cordial hospitality, and to acclaim the ever more active role being taken by his country within our community.

Allow me also to say how pleased I am to see the President of the Republic of Poland here; Poland has also joined the International Organization of the Francophonie as an observer. For my part, I see in this the sign of the increasing role played by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe within our community, which makes me very happy indeed.

Finally, I would like to say that it always gives me immense pleasure to meet the Director-General of UNESCO. UNESCO and the Francophonie have become accustomed to working together, because we have many common interests, as indeed this Conference clearly shows. I would like to tell you that this Conference has taken on a particular significance for the Organization of the Francophonie, because, for several months now, we

have been reflecting on the dialogue among cultures, which will be the central theme of the next Francophone Summit to be held in Beirut in October 2001. And in June we will be holding a meeting of the Francophone Ministers of Culture in Cotonou, Benin.

All this is to say that the Vilnius Conference will be nurturing our debates usefully. And now I would like to share with you the perspective from which the Francophonie plans to conduct its thought on this matter.

Dialogue among civilizations has become, in the age of globalization, a political, economic, social and cultural issue for all of us. Interdependence between people, societies and territories has indeed become the norm. Scientific and technical changes, economic and financial globalization, and the instantaneous circulation of information have precipitated humanity towards a community of destiny. But is this the same as saying towards a common destiny? Far from it! I take as proof the aggravation of inequalities and of poverty in the world! I take as proof the digital segregation that one sees being established between the North and the South! I take as proof the risk of the hegemony of a few powerful states in working out standards or decisions that commit the future of the entire planet!

The risk, also, of subjecting local economies to industrial strategies conceived elsewhere, which have little relationship with the real needs of those countries. The risk, finally, of the monopoly of just a few players – private or public – in creating one uniform world of the imagination and in disseminating standardized modes of being, behaving, consuming, thinking, and creating.

In other words, while international exchanges are amplified, citizens feel more and more that the management of the world has been confiscated from them and that a 'monoculture' is being imposed on them. Confronted with this loss of decision-making capacity, this loss of references, this loss of identity, the temptation might be to withdraw into oneself, to fixate on the reassuring and set values of the past, in a climate of intolerance frequently verging on fanaticism, hatred and rejection of the Other. And if we wish to avoid that yesterday's Cold War turns into a cultural confrontation, stirred by vast movements of international migration, we must, in the broadest sense of the word, democratize globalization before globalization denatures democracy.

This is to say that we must establish as quickly as possible - and then maintain – both dialogue and co-operation in the places where confrontation might occur. I am convinced that the large cultural and linguistic domains also constitute privileged spaces for solidarity, which,

when they meet and mingle, are the best guarantee for democracy, peace and development. Dialogue among civilizations is not something ethereal. It is a genuine vision of society on a planetary scale.

A vision of society where cultures and civilizations complement, and do not exclude, each other; where they are reinforced and not diluted, where they gather together without, however, resembling each other. With a truly multipolar world as the ultimate goal, one that is respectful of the most vulnerable and their right to solidarity, respectful of a truly democratic management of international relations.

But this would presuppose that we recognize that global cultural diversity is a prerequisite for establishing a real dialogue among peoples. In other words, that we recognize that the right of all individuals to participate in the cultural life of their community, and the right of every cultural community to preserve its identity, are fundamental rights inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as guarantees of democracy. That we recognize that culture is not an exception, but the very foundation of civilization. That it is not limited to the arts and literature, but includes every aspect of life in its spiritual, institutional, material, intellectual and emotional dimensions, as well as the diversity of the social fabric. That we recognize that culture and development are indissociable, without, however, limiting ourselves to a strictly commercial or economic approach to culture.

This is to say that the time has come to see political order take the ascendancy over commercial and economic order in conducting the relationship – ambiguous by nature – that culture maintains with economics, business, investment and competition, and their ways and means of operation. The Francophonie understood very early the role that it could play, in both its own institutional arena as well as on the international scene, because it recognized from the outset the plurality and complexity of the cultural identities of its member countries.

Today we enter a New World, where democracy, diversity, dignity and freedom must, more than ever, be our common banner. For this world could also very well become one of indifference, silence, intolerance and violence. Such are the stakes, today, of dialogue among civilizations. Such are the stakes of the decisive step that we must take.

But I am convinced of this: it may happen, in a world full of dangers, fears and tragedies, that imagination will prevail over calculation, will-power over immobility, hope over resignation, solidarity over might, and the spirit of peace over the will to power. It may happen, that, in spite all odds to the contrary, people will mobilize for a grand purpose. A concept

can then become the lever for a tremendous step forward. And it is at that very moment that history vacillates, and civilization progresses.

Brunson McKinley

Director-General of the International Organization for Migration

In this fiftieth year of the International Organization for Migrations, it is a great pleasure and honour for me to analyse and celebrate the benefits of the dialogue among civilizations for creativity, mutual understanding and solutions to complex issues.

The interactions between civilizations have taken many forms over the centuries – and not always in the form of dialogue. But the migration of persons is a constant element. Conquerors, sailors, explorers, missionaries and pilgrims from all religions, scholars, adventurers, traders, nomads, refugees in search of security, farmers in search of land, workers in search of jobs – all have marked the world through the centuries.

The cultures of our world are the product of the interaction of migrants through the millennia. Look at the great and ancient civilizations of Asia. India and China have always accepted and amalgamated outsiders, forging their unique and lasting cultures through a composite of influences from outside – religious, military, economic. They are living examples of the power of cultural integration and assimilation. Look at the world of Islam, created through the expansion of a militant religion whose proponents unified vast territories and many ethnic groups around an idea still strong and valid today. Islam can serve as a living example of the power of multiculturalism. Or look at the power of the global economy, based on modern technology, which has made our world smaller and brought its people closer together. One result has been increased opportunities for migration. Another has been the unifying force of the marketplace. The latest United Nations population forecasts suggest that:

- by 2050, the world's population will rise from 6 billion today to 9.3 billion; and
- most population growth will be in developing countries.

By contrast, in developed countries, the population is expected to decrease while ageing. The result will be an increasing demand for younger workers from outside.

- Migration pressure will increase in the next 50 years.
- There are currently some 150 million migrants in the world, a figure expected to rise to 230 million by 2050.
- More countries will need to take in-migrants to sustain their economic viability and social service systems.

Migration poses challenges on many levels to governments and societies. All of us will need to increase our attention to:

- balancing the need for workers with the need for work – organized labour migration;
- assisting the development of societies and economies through rational use of acquired skills and earnings;
- managing migration to encourage respect for law and the human rights of migrants;
- helping societies cope with the challenges of diaspora and multiple allegiances, including the particular dilemma of statelessness; and
- minimizing social and political problems through intelligent and humane efforts to welcome strangers among us.

Whether as ‘melting pot’ or as ‘salad bowl’, every society will increasingly be required to cope with the integration of newcomers. Successful integration normally implies assistance to migrants through language acquisition and orientation in social and cultural aspects of the host. Religion can help unite migrants from different countries and ease integration problems. It can also be manipulated to create tensions and problems. Different national communities in the same host country have differing integration experiences, thus, even in one country, one single model cannot always be applied. What may work best for one individual may not work for another individual of the same national group. Several elements are vital in successful integration:

- acceptance of change by host communities
- acknowledgement of the positive contributions that migrants bring.
- education of the younger generation of host communities and of migrants; and
- using the arts as a method of promoting mutual understanding across language barriers.

This conference offers a timely opportunity to focus attention on the lessons of the past and reinforce a world-wide effort to use migration for positive economic and social change.

Giandomenico Picco

*Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General
for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*

To many the idea of dialogue among civilizations may seem like wishful thinking, an unreachable ideal. Most will say, as they have said to me on several occasions, that it cannot be achieved because it has never been achieved. Indeed there are entire institutional cultures based on the perception that we cannot pursue what was not previously achieved; and indeed there are institutional cultures that are based on the concept of 'following precedents'. And yet it is exactly the challenge of pursuing something new, something that we do not even know that exists as the very basis of the work of scientists and researchers.

When I was a young man, and wiser and elder people at the United Nations told me not to engage in adventures with no precedents, I could not understand it, for those challenges seemed to me the most attractive ones. And so I followed my instinct and yes, I believe I pursued what had not been done before. If scientists are allowed to continue their quests for the unknown, why then should such quests be forbidden to me? I think that, as a result, many lives were saved and at least my life became more meaningful. Too many times elders bequeath to the young a degree of skepticism that they mask under the false pretence of experience. Perhaps it is not realism that we communicate to the young in that way, perhaps what we call experience may simply represent our failure. To the new generation, I do not wish to communicate any reluctance to pursue new enterprises, to discourage aiming for what has yet to be achieved, or to provoke them to abandon their aspirations and dreams.

Even if the dialogue among civilizations proves to be an impossible feat for our generation perhaps it will not be so for the next generation or the one after. So it seems to me that the journey starts with each one of us now. One can hardly pursue the ambitions and goals of a dialogue among civilizations without a certain belief in the power of the human spirit to transcend barriers, divisions and obstacles that may have existed for centuries. Dialogue is above all a mindset that appreciates diversity as an element of betterment and growth, thus overstepping the old paradigm that perceives diversity as a threat or, worse yet, as a synonym for the 'enemy'.

The dialogue among civilizations undoubtedly has many meanings. As such it may be useful to focus primarily on one meaning if we do not wish to get lost in the vagueness of an everlasting conversation without

direction. If the focus of our dialogue is on changing the mindset that perceives diversity as a threat, its ultimate objective may well be the elaboration of a new paradigm of international relations based on that change. This is the ambitious goal that the Group of Eminent Persons, established by the Secretary General, has set for itself. A new paradigm will include the following elements:

- A re-assessment of the concept of 'enemy.' Can we aspire to leaders who can lead without an enemy?
- It will include alignments based on issues rather than alliances based on ideology (even good friends can agree on some issues and disagree on others).
- It should recognize the concept of stakeholders in an interdependent world rather than superpowers or medium powers (a century ago major powers could easily influence minor powers, today even small nations can affect superpowers as we have seen in the financial sector – not to mention what terrorism can do).
- Finally, a paradigm based on collective decisions but also on individual responsibility, because individual responsibility has been absent from the institutional and legal frameworks of the international system. It can be argued that if we do not take individual responsibility, the commitments to collective decisions may be very weak indeed.

The group's reflections in this regard will, later in 2001, be presented to the Secretary-General, who will in turn convey them to the members of the General Assembly. Dialogue across a divide is not a new discovery. Beyond words and good intentions, dialogue appears to be most successful when individuals across a divide 'build something together'. Building something together is, at the end of the day, the real form of dialogue. When we build something together we will likely use the different talents we have for a common purpose. When we have a stake in a common task, we have a stake in a common future. I am speaking of building physical structures, or joining in common projects or in institutional building. Constructing takes time, requires stamina, determination, courage and wisdom. And though much can be said about the material construction of structures across divides, clearly school programmes and uniting forces to fight against common diseases and natural disaster are equally important.

Building something across the divide may in the end defeat the arrogance of power, which has been the core malaise of local and international societies. Beyond respect, tolerance, and cultural and

intellectual acceptance of the other, building across the divide gives a sense of lasting to a dialogue. The dialogue among civilizations, the way the Secretary-General and I see it, is thus a dialogue between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who see diversity as a step towards betterment and growth. If there is one skill that we may all have to refine or learn better, it would be how to manage diversity.

Ataollah Mohajerani

Director of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations, Tehran (Iran)

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

First of all, on behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Director-General of UNESCO for convening this prestigious event. I wish to hold a dialogue with you on diverse pluralistic identities and common values in this increasingly globalized world.

The history of civilizations and nations is replete with cultural interactions. These interactions take place without undermining the diverse and pluralistic identity of nations; the material and moral achievements of cultures have blended and merged without prejudicing the independent identity of civilizations. We can even claim that through these mutually beneficial interactions the unique identity of each nation has been strengthened. This blending and melting of different cultures creates the ground for comparison; it is through this comparison that elements peculiar to each culture and ethnic grouping are identified. Iran is a good example and is a microcosm of diverse pluralistic identities and common universal values. For centuries in Iran diverse ethnic groups with different dialects, languages, traditions and mores have lived side by side. This concord and peaceful co-existence have taken place despite the fact that Iran has its own common identity that has served as a solid foundation on which the civilization and culture of our nation is built. This has also always existed as a strong and enduring attachment to this shared national identity.

The history of Iran shows that tolerance and a sense of mutual accommodation, which have evolved in Iran among different ethnic groups, can be the key to the resolution of the problems of a world moving ahead at a dizzying speed towards uniformity and homogeneity. Today, the major challenge that faces us all is how to manage and promote diversity as a positive force. The Iranian culture of ethnic co-existence and tolerance provides us with a great paradigm and lesson in helping to keep up with the rapid pace of globalization and to protect us against its pitfalls.

In most cases, cultural homogeneity, especially in language and religion, brings about zealous and excessive nationalistic and ethnic tendencies that lead, at the slightest provocation, to xenophobia, intolerance, the aggrandizement of one's cultural heritage and the humiliation of the values, traditions and cultures of others. Consequently,

the level of tolerance begins to decline and fascist tendencies develop. Iran has had a diametrically different experience.

The culture of ethnic co-existence, the acceptance of a common Iranian identity in the face of pluralistic identities, and the building of the Iranian civilization on the contribution and shared references of each ethnic community are all indebted to the vividly visible tolerance that has existed here through the centuries. This diversity and pluralism that have shaped the culture of our nation have made Iran a melting pot for those who occupied Iran, absorbing them into Iranian culture and civilization with the passage of time.

Another example of unity in diversity is the religion of Islam, which for many centuries and during the Islamic Caliphate, when it extended from China to North Africa and Central Europe, was a homogenous system that fostered peace, concord and prosperity.

The above-mentioned points can be better understood against the backdrop of the perils stemming from globalization. Although the process of globalization apparently moves towards the creation of a single global market, it is based on the immense advances in communications and satellite technology. The 'satellite culture' has made much more probable the threat of global homogeneity during our lifetime. This threat is so real that many scholars openly speak of the death of languages and indigenous cultures. Along with this growing homogeneity, individualism is seriously on the rise and tolerance of others is fast disappearing. Humanity seems to be entering a more dangerous era of racial and ethnic animosity and civil wars. Globalization is also polarizing nations into a small minority of the super-wealthy and the poor masses. Under these circumstances, dialogue will be impossible.

There are numerous challenges facing mankind. Preserving common values, creating new universal values and emphasizing the plurality of identities while protecting the unity of the human family are a bare minimum to reduce the pace and gravity of the deleterious consequences of globalization. We must turn satellite technology around and make it a positive force for the preservation of pluralistic cultural values and identities. Through mass communication with its vast global network we can rediscover and familiarize ourselves with diverse cultures and collective identities. This will help us to protect cultural identity in the face of the homogenizing forces of modern technological civilization. Our aim must be to contribute to the pluralism of the entire planet as well as to the persistence of plural identities in each nation. When able to see the richness in cultural diversity and collective identities, the peoples of the

world should refrain from thinking of their own culture, values and collective identity in absolute terms, and social tolerance and respect for others will thrive. Our aim must also be to combat the culture of exclusion, and the remaining traces of the culture of obscurantism, absolutism and all forms of intolerance.

We must also strive to strengthen and institutionalize values that are shared by all civilizations and cultures through this technology of mass communication. There are serious implications and threats from the process of globalization, but one must not overlook its potential benefits. Never in the history of humanity have we been so close to each other; millions of people from all corners of the world can watch the same television programme at the same time. Conditions have never been so favourable for launching programmes for mass education and public awareness at a global level.

There are also very serious threats facing mankind. Due to the advancement in technology, we have the tools to overcome these threats. In these master plans for public awareness, the introduction of diverse cultures, analysis of the components of each culture and the revelation of the secrets of their endurance and survival, the introduction of the identity of ethnic groups and indigenous cultures, and the discovery of our shared values should figure prominently. These shared values relate to compassion for others, the unity of the human family and other great human attributes. We must all realize that despite the differing and at times contradictory appearance of cultural elements, deep down they are all identical. We must also not forget that at the heart of all cultural and civilizational elements lies the important principle of the human essence.

The importance of the institution of the family, procreation, love for our offspring, the preservation of our natural world, the knowledge of the capacity of the ecosystem and its sustainability, the interrelationship of all components of the ecosystem, the interdependence of all humanity and our shared responsibility to protect the global environment are just a few of the values shared by all humanity. Better education, the enhancement of collective wisdom, understanding the importance of tolerance, sympathy and indulgence for the views of others are the attributes that will pave the way for the true unity of humanity while preserving plurality. No doubt tolerance is the key to the problem. This is an issue that we ought to take up at our meetings; we must also try to find true manifestations of tolerance in indigenous cultures and discover common ground and elements that can be translated into shared universal values.

Javier Wimer

Writer (Mexico)

Since the first men started to wander the African territory, humanity has not ceased to grow and diversify. Families, tribes and original peoples who traversed or shared the same physical space were configured into greater and more extended social units, until they became integrated into nations and empires – nation states, as we know them today.

The characteristics of each people form the basis of the cultural richness of humanity, but their fanatic exaltation has been the cause of many aberrations, such as various forms of discrimination, segregation, persecution, servitude, slavery and death to which the weakest were subjected, all done in the name of an alleged ethnic or religious superiority of the strongest.

History abounds with examples that show the fast conversion of collective identities into aggressive identities. The Book of Genesis tells how the separation of the descendants of Adam – each one according to his language, according to their families, in their nations – was quickly achieved, and how, shortly thereafter, only the names and the perverse actions of enemy tribes appear.

The path of real truth is strewn with corpses. We are constantly reminded of the innumerable crimes that have been committed in the name of Jehovah, Christ and Mohammed, or in the name of communism or capitalism. At the dawning of this millennium, ETA members and the militia of Greater Albania still sow terror in Europe, while the Taliban in Afghanistan destroy an artistic heritage that belongs to us all.

It is for this reason that it is necessary to affirm the right to diversity and to the mixture of diversities, with full recognition of this phenomenon at the biological, social and cultural levels. This intermixing is a phenomenon that is common to all the countries and is particularly highlighted in the interpretation of American history.

The discovery of the 'New World' was not an isolated event, but a process or a sequence of events that, little by little, confirmed the existence of a continent hitherto unknown. The first of these events was, of course, the landing of colonists on Guanahani Island in 1492. The second was the expedition of Vasco Nuñez de Balboa that crossed the Panama Straits to arrive in the Pacific Ocean.

In this relationship of successive discoveries of America, I must mention the circumnavigation undertaken by Magellan and Elcano in 1522, as well as the discovery of a maritime current called a 'tornavuelta',

or, literally, a 'return half-turn' which, in 1565, allowed ships leaving American ports to return from the Orient. The protagonist of this prowess was the sailor Andrés de Urdaneta who, having had already entered monastic life, was obliged to leave it by order of Emperor Charles V. This discovery by the navigator-monk made it possible to establish a maritime sailing channel which, throughout two and a half centuries, connected the port of Acapulco with Manila. Thus the New World became central for communication between the East and the West, and was the first stage towards globalization.

The geopolitical importance of this episode – or this chain of episodes – is retained only for intellectual purposes. The existence of America was a fact for which the old world was not prepared. It was a bomb that exploded at the centre of Western thought, removing any sense of reality. But as the nature and the significance of the phenomenon were cleared up, America and its Indians were born into history stripped of their titles of legitimacy.

America was envisaged neither in the Bible nor in the books of traditional science. Its appearance represents a true anomaly in the heart of a debate begun in the sixteenth century and which has not yet finished.

The discovered lands remained unnamed for a long time. In the absence of precedent, they were recognized as being close to either China or India. In remembering these confusions, the native inhabitants of the continent were designated through the use of the generic name of Indians. The British still speak of the West Indies . . .

These natives, these Indians, and also, by extension, all those who were born on the American continent, attained the first globality only with difficulty since their human condition had been categorically refused. Theologians, scientists and humanists justified extreme forms of conquest and exploitation under the guise of an absent role within the divine plan, or by claiming that they were simple creatures of the demon, more closely related to animals than to humans, and living outside universal or world history.

Juan Ginés de Sépulveda excelled in this exercise of insults and degradations while maintaining that the Indians did not have a soul. The Count de Buffon, more tolerant, was satisfied to notice the poisoned condition of a continent where all forms of natural and intellectual life were diminished. I paraphrase Hegel when he stated that in the Philosophy of History America and its civilization, in particular Mexico and Peru, would perish as soon as the Spirit had approached it.

The controversy over America had various effects on the European

conscience. One of them, which passes generally unperceived, is the failure of memory about internal intermixing as compared with the importance allotted to external intermixing which obviously takes place every day in the New World. Suddenly, all Europeans became representatives of a superior race and of a pseudo-scientific caste system based on the colour of one's skin for which it became fashionable to add psychological attributes corresponding to each person's skin colour.

While the word 'Metis' was originally used to designate the child of a white person and an American Indian, it is currently used to indicate the child of a couple from different cultures and, by extension, the cultural products proceeding from the mixture of various traditions.

American roots can, therefore, be found in all corners of the planet. The Indians' ancestors were Asian and there are traces of small groups which arrived from Australia onto the continent. After the conquest, European and African migratory currents followed suit. Intermixing is, therefore, the largest mark in American history.

The isolation of the continent and the clarity of its contacts with other cultures after the discovery of the New World makes this intermixing archetypal. The conquerors imposed their law, but their efforts to form Spanish districts separate from the Indians and to create an imaginary division of labour based on the supposed aptitudes of the castes appeared to have been useless. As proof of this, certain museums house portraits of the castes, a term which designated families formed by people of different ethnic origins.

Intermixing thrived despite all forms of exclusion and genocide practised since the colonial period until the first decades of the twentieth century. The passion inspired by 'purity of blood' had succeeded in eliminating Indians from certain areas, but the forced movement of a slave or semi-slave labour force filled demographic gaps with other groups and accelerated the growth of a new ethnic composition.

This growth of intermixing constitutes a core part of the globalization process. This is neither an assumption nor a myth, but a reality. Equally, it acts as a positive reality, owing to the fact that it affirms the essential unity of mankind and that it assumes encounters and exchanges between its various families as dynamic ways of enrichment, synthesis and cultural renewal.

However, the idea of 'purity of blood' and superiority of certain 'races' over others is nothing but the instrument of the power, which, like all forms of fanaticism, filled the history of the world with corpses. The negation of the other, the differences of strangers and barbarians, are the

most significant factors in internal conflicts and international wars. People, communities and individuals are the true characters of dialogue among civilizations; not states, governments or international organizations that are responsible only for the creation of the political and social conditions necessary to contribute to the bringing together and exchange between institutions and peoples.

Society must demand that governments create an education policy to eliminate all forms of intolerance. Governments must respect the identity of each group within its society while facilitating knowledge and mutual recognition among all within it. We are all supposed to expel the demons of intolerance; we must destroy the dens where fear, contempt and hatred of strangers and the unknown are incubated. Encounters between different cultures must be edified as a fundamental value of the human community.

Globalization cannot continue to function as a simple network of financial currents, rather it must become the engine and the framework for the entirety of all exchanges suitable for human activity and a particular way for those who are favourable to direct contact and the mutual understanding of different peoples. These exchanges would confirm that we form part of a global community and can contribute to the construction of an active culture of peace.

Alphonso Lingis

Professor, Pennsylvania State University (USA)

Today the great centres of wealth and power that derive from the production and control of information – Houston, Silicon Valley, the Ruhr, Lyon, Milan, Tokyo-Osaka, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Mexico City, São Paulo – drain off the brain power of the outer zones – the scientists, writers, architects, artists and musicians. The planet has never before seen such immense migrations of poor peoples; so much of it forced or illegal. These people may bring only low-tech work skills, but they also bring their cultural identity. The great cultural capitals of proud nation states – Paris, London, New York, Sydney, Bangkok, Singapore – have become multi-ethnic and multicultural.

But that has always been the case. Mohendo-daro, Memphis and Thebes, Mahabalipuram, Angkor, Djenné Djeno in the Sahel, Teotihuacán, Cuzco – all the centres of great cultures had been cosmopolitan cities, with markets full of foreign merchants, but also with whole quarters of settled foreigners. What we have come to know as distinctive and dominant civilizations – Egyptian, Persian, Chinese, Roman, and Mongolian – were the result of drawing toward themselves resources, artefacts, inventions and concepts from the most diverse ethnic areas and cultures. Anyone visiting Angkor Wat is struck to see altars on which Hindu deities dance around altars with seated Buddhas; friezes depicting everyday life so obviously carved by sculptors who had come from or gone to Borobudur; Chinese guard lions.

‘Different cultures within a region appear to be commenting on one another,’ anthropologist Shirley Lindenbaum wrote, ‘chamber music performances, with each group attuned to the sounds of their neighbours.’ The understanding that one culture has of others is a piecemeal affair; it is the appreciation of the utility or taste or beauty of things in neighbouring or far-off cultures. The appreciation is not necessarily that of the utility of something in the culture it came from, but the likely different utility it will have in the culture, which adopts it. Thus Brahminic priests and court rituals were imported into the court at Sukhothai and especially Ayutthaya in fifteenth century Siam, without bringing in the caste system to that Buddhist kingdom. Hindu priests and court rituals were imported into Bali in the fourteenth century, without bringing in reincarnation across species; a Balinese who dies will be reincarnated only in the children of his own family.

A culture is then an open-ended framework where ever more

insights, inventions, and customs can be accommodated, to provide an ever richer environment for a people inhabiting a particular place. A culture is comprehensive and comprehending – it supplies people with a framework that gives meaning to fragments of experience and direction to lives. It is also comprehensive and comprehending in that, in the measure that it is vibrant and expansive, it assimilates elements from surrounding cultures. This kind of understanding is partial, fragmentary, and also creative: by assimilating foreign elements it endows them with new and different significance.

And it is membership in a vibrant and expansive culture that produces in individuals the will to understand other cultures. How eager to meet and hear travellers, merchants, and religious teachers were Kublai Khan, Jayavarnan VII, Genghis Khan and Moctezoma! And today it is the sense of being in a centre of a vibrant and expansive culture that motivates both scholars and ordinary travellers there to understand other cultures.

Yet it is also true that the centres of wealth and power today generate racial and ethnic oppositions. Often the poorer people in a society, and the poor people who come into a society, are viewed across racial and ethnic stereotypes. But today dialogue between peoples is especially obstructed by racial and ethnic stereotypes that are created for political and military purposes, and that can be created overnight. Sociologists have shown that in the United States before the Second World War, Arabs were perceived as being good fighters and exotic desert lovers with harem girls. Before the Second World War, there was little American political involvement in the Middle East. The defence of Israel and the struggle for control of the oil reserves changed all that. Now Arabs are depicted as cruel, weak and decadent. A whole population that had no idea at all who or where the Hutus or Kosovars or Tamils are has fixed images of them a week later as people with whom dialogue is impossible.

The production of such stereotypes is a much more important part of political and military initiatives than before. For there has been an immense change in warfare in the past century. In the First World War, 90 per cent of the killed and wounded were soldiers. In the Second World War, this figure fell to 40 per cent. In the wars of the last decade, 90 per cent of the killed and wounded were civilians. In today's civil wars and guerrilla wars, the civilian population is in fact the principal strategic target. But when a superpower launches military initiatives in which, in principle, not one of its own soldiers is to be killed, then the civilian population is likewise the real target. 'smart' military technology is not aimed at defeating the enemy troops, but instead at destroying the civilian

will to resist. Thus, depicting an entire civilian population of the target country as fanatics with whom one could not carry on dialogue is an essential element in contemporary political and military offensives.

To go to another land is so often to go to another time. It is almost impossible to go to Istanbul without encountering, on sighting of the great mosques which the Ottomans built on the seven hills of Constantine's Nova Roma, the Ottoman Middle Ages. Almost impossible to go to Peru without encountering the Tuantinsuyo of the Inca. The Spanish mansions of Cuzco are the second floor built over the great mortarless walls of the Inca city. It would be almost impossible to leave the urbanized coast to cross the Australian outback without encountering aboriginal Australia. Last summer, contemplating the skeleton of Lucy in the little anthropological museum of Addis Ababa, how moved I was to see our remotest ancestor – that is, a member of the earliest generation of our species. How everything that we find out about the ancestors of the present *Homo sapiens* moves and concerns us!

Whenever we go to encounter a past civilization, we have the sense of encountering our past, our forebears. Even when we encounter a culture that did not precede ours, which instead our culture destroyed, and a people from which we are not descended – for example, when we encounter the Inca world, we feel we are returning to an earlier world from which our world has come, an earlier world that, however vaguely, gave birth to our world.

Thirty years ago, this return to our common ancestors motivated a good deal of ordinary travel. In the face of the thermonuclear arms race and policies concocted in think-tanks that turned out to be disastrous, people who went to Japan, to Bhutan, or to the Amazon were seeking places where layers of older civilizations still persisted; they were seeking the 'wisdom of the past'. They were seeking the way people lived, and lived together.

Today the very nature of the media sweeps away the past. The instantaneous nature of television reporting holds our eyes gaping upon the immediate future. Newspapers and magazines keep us breathless in the expectation of new inventions in cancer research, in mineral sciences, in energy production, in genetically altered food crops. The marketing industry excites us for new comfort and safety in personal transportation, new facilities in home cooking and entertainment, new pleasures in furnishing and clothing. As a result, we have the sense that the mergers and contracts being made, the inventions patented in Houston, the Silicon Valley, the Ruhr, Lyons, Milan, Tokyo-Osaka, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Mexico City, and São Paulo are important and will determine our lives.

Societies that are still clinging to the allegedly discredited socialist or welfare state, or that are not speeding up allegedly needed market reforms, are dismissed with impatience. More than that: new advances in communications, and also genetic engineering and cloning have made us think that human relations will soon be radically different from everything they have been until now. As a result every society where layers of past civilization persist seems 'backward' and gets discredited.

There is another factor: it is that our immediate past forms a black wall that cuts us off from our forebears and our ancestors. The immediate past of the rich countries is the two wars in which they embroiled the whole world. And since then so many lands where layers of older civilizations persisted have slaughtered their populations in the same way. So many millions of people gassed, incinerated, buried in mass graves, have disappeared. There are today so many of us who have no idea where or how our parents were disappeared. And since so many of us no longer communicate with our fathers and forefathers, we no longer hear what they learned.

A culture, we said, is an open-ended framework where ever more insights, inventions, and customs can be accommodated, to provide the richest possible environment for a people inhabiting a particular place. And a culture has a desire to be understood by others. But a culture is also the means whereby a people in a particular place assert its singularity. On the island of New Guinea, in a population of a million and a half Papuans, some seven hundred languages were elaborated, and the most diverse practices – in initiation rituals, in spouse exchange among moieties, and in ritualized homosexuality. Among them, all Papuans, all living in very similar ecological situations and using very similar tools, there is the most astonishing diversity of cultures and languages. Peoples living in close proximity institutionalized opposing notions of what constitutes legitimate marriage and what constitutes incest – conceptions which today Westerners think of as defining what is natural and moral and what therefore must be valid universally. Every culture has to be seen as a formulation of the identity of a people, a statement of its distinctiveness.

Javanese dance, Mongolian throat singing, the griot singing of West Africa, the male initiation rites of the Asmat in Irian Jaya – these belong only to that people. Japanese often say that the Japanese language communicates through allusions and silences in ways that no other language does, so that one who does not know the Japanese language cannot really understand many of the ways Japanese interact and many of the forms of Japanese art. An occasional foreigner can learn Japanese Sumo

wrestling or Spanish flamenco or Sumba island double Ikat weaving, but it would take so long and involve such a total immersion in the training and culture that very few ever do.

We can revel in the spectacle of human diversity, the spectacle of people quite differently than we are, encased in different material conditions, driven by different ambitions, possessed of different notions as to what life is all about. We can be energized and exhilarated by the unending array of human possibilities – even if we are not tempted to adopt any particular one of them for ourselves. We may well deplore the levelling of differences in the everyday life of peoples being produced by the global marketing of mass-produced consumer goods.

But some of the traits produced by a culture produces to mark its singularity and distinctiveness may well be found morally objectionable or repugnant. A culture may in fact do things in order to be not understood by others and by us. A society can affirm its distinctiveness against its neighbours. It may banish foreigners and burn foreign books and artworks. In Sri Lanka, Sinhalese security forces burnt the Jaffna public library; Serbian gunners shelled and destroyed the National Library in Sarajevo. A society can affirm its distinctiveness against the rest of humanity – indeed, against humanity. A society asserts its distinctiveness in rejecting the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or dialogue with any other society. A society may even assert its opposition to the whole rest of humanity. Was there not something of that in the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan? Everyone who knew about them as part of our common world heritage esteemed those fifteen-hundred-year-old works. To destroy them was something the rest of humanity could not understand, could not accept.

Religion is one of the characteristic ways by which a culture, indeed a civilization, affirms its distinctiveness. We seem particularly unable to deal with, or even understand the fact that today when conflicts become genocidal, they so often take the form of religious wars. Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims in the Balkans. Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Hindus and Buddhists in Sri Lanka. Muslims and Jews in Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories. Muslims and Christian-animists in the Sudan. Christians and Muslims in the Celebes. We can see that when one people makes conflict with another people – a conflict which is perhaps territorial or economic – into a religious cause, they readily find material and military support from co-religionists in distant lands. But beyond that: could it be that religion is about the only form of thought that can induce peoples who had perhaps for centuries lived

together in cities and towns to now rise up and butcher their neighbours and set fire to their homes? Could it be that religions can absolutize economic and ethnic conflicts and make them genocidal?

When a people finds itself confronted with a culture which affirms its distinctiveness by setting out to destroy the fundamental values of their culture, understanding cannot issue in an all-encompassing view in which each culture has its place and its legitimacy. Then must we say that the only way to recognize the distinctiveness of the culture that negates us, the only way to respect it, is to wage war on it? Anything less than that is not to recognize what it is the other culture affirms. Only force recognizes an action set forth in order to be not understood.

But to wage war effectively, it is necessary to know one's enemy, that is, to understand him. War against a culture that sets itself outside of or above the rest of humanity also requires understanding of that culture, and thus dialogue with it. Such dialogue always harbours the hope that the other party may begin to understand us.

Aleksandr N. Yakolev

Director of the Presidential Commission for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression (Russia)

First of all, when I think about encounters and the dialogue among civilizations, I ask myself which looms larger in my mind: doubt, fear or hope? I do not yet know the answer. I do not know because the history of humanity, with which we are all familiar, is full of conflicts, bloodshed, religious divisions, selfishness, social, political and spiritual intolerance, xenophobia and other dregs of existence. The life of humanity is shot through with hypocrisy and lies. We erect monuments to the 'victors' of wars, that is, the officers and rulers who killed more people than anyone else. Those who were defeated – those who saved human lives – have fallen into oblivion.

In essence, dialogue is the transition from barbarism to civilization. As a result of this transition, we come to understand that ceasing to kill is what constitutes civilization. As usual, we humans are in thrall to atavism and our own illusions, for instance, that the Earth's resources are infinite and will last forever. The twentieth century, with its unprecedented scientific and technological explosion, brought to life an artificial body, the world economy, which is slowly but inexorably poisoning and destroying us. The most important natural resource – the capacity for self-regeneration – is already almost exhausted, humanity has crossed a fatal boundary. The path of environmental ignorance on Earth is a tragic one and the flow of cheerless figures is unending. As I have already said in New York, we must not endlessly lie to nature¹. We need to move on a planetary scale to a fundamentally new stage in the material and spiritual progress of civilization. I call this 'ecodevelopment'. This has immense significance for global dialogue.

I should like to draw the attention of this distinguished audience to just one fact, which for some reason is not often highlighted publicly. I am talking about the problem of the Baltic Sea and the fate of the countries around the Baltic. The problem is that after the Second World War, the Allies dumped Germany's stores of chemical weapons into the Sea, in the hope that the containers would function indefinitely. However, according to the findings of Russian scientists, disaster will strike as soon as in 8 to

¹ The Round Table on the Eve of the United Nations Millenium Summit, 5 September 2000. See *Dialogue among Civilization*, Paris, UNESCO Publishing, p. 97.

10 years – the Baltic Sea will die and there will be nobody with whom to engage in any sort of dialogue.

I wrote a letter on this subject to the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, who agreed with the scientists' concern. I sent letters to the leaders of all the Baltic States, but as yet have had no reply. I am appealing to the intellectual community to pay very serious attention to this matter, and also to the continuing criminal war waged by humanity against nature. I say again that I am inclined to view the problem of our habitat in the context of the vast problem of the encounter of civilizations, for they both concern co-operation among all people worldwide.

Secondly, I wonder whether we are ready to reconcile our psychology, with its leitmotif of violence and selfishness, to the problem of the unity of civilizations in the new information age. The words spoken about the encounter of civilizations are magnificent; the ideals and goals are inspirational and humanist; and the hopes are great. But may we reconcile social idealism with the cruel pragmatism of life? In essence, global realities have become bogged down in exclusively mundane affairs.

The problems consist of simple questions:

- What should be done to ensure that everyone is healthy, eats their fill, is clothed, shod and housed, and has a minimum level of education, and at the same time to refrain from sowing the seeds of total dependence, or depriving people of their motivation to act?
- How may we defend those who need defending without turning their defence into a source of mass social parasitism?
- How may we recompense people for their labour and talent, but at the same time avoid excessively sharp social stratification, which is liable to engender violence?
- How, without falling into the extreme of any persuasion, be it fascism, bolshevism or aggressive nationalism, may we reconcile or balance society's principles with those of individuals?
- How may we arrive at genuine popular self-government and place power in the hands of the people, for it is people who create power and not power that creates people?
- How may we be rid of war, violence, conflict and weapons without appearing defenceless in the face of criminality, adventurism and extremism?

These and other issues are inseparable from the problem of the encounter of civilizations; they are interlinked, given that their resolution leads to the pacification of all that is aggressive, conflictual and adventurist

in people, of everything that prevents veritable mutual understanding in human life. Naturally, the world will not stand still, its development objectively will lead to the resolution of the vital, everyday problems to which I have referred.

It seems to me that the victory of the 'noosphere', the sphere of reason, is nigh. A new master will inevitably reign on Earth: His Majesty the Intellect. Politicians will gradually hand over their power to intellectuals, for a crisis of authority is at hand. Industrialization, in its contemporary towering form, will inevitably die out. Even now, the growth of megacities, of megapolises is falling off, and here and there they have started to die. The new information technology will not need cities as much as in the past; the crisis of urbanization is plain for all to see. The borders between states will fade away, and the need for visas and customs barriers and other inventions dreamed up by bureaucrats will disappear. Militarization will sink into oblivion.

The development of biotechnology is leading us to an era of optimization based on accurate methods of identifying and satisfying the needs and wishes both of individuals and of the entire global community. Since art, applied crafts and service will by then have acquired particular value in people's eyes, so, with the help of the new technologies, anybody may be occupied by work which will bring him or her pleasure, knowledge and creativity. Science and culture will lead people to relative harmony with nature and society. There will be a growth in understanding of the phenomena of spiritual life, which to an ever-increasing extent will be determined by psychogenetics, which in turn will open the door to a new epoch. Individual autonomy will become all the greater, given that the transition to a natural society will begin on this basis. Humanity will come right up to an age of global change, in which the struggle for survival, and hence the leitmotif of violence, will disappear. People will gradually become Earth patriots. To varying degrees they will start to see themselves not only as Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Lithuanian, American, Italian, German or Nigerian, but as Earth-dwellers, for there is one biosphere for all of us. And one Earth, one Pacific Ocean, one atmosphere.

All of the above, however, is in an ideal world. Being the convinced advocate of an all-encompassing rapprochement of civilizations, I cannot escape asking whether globalization will not in some way hold back the process of bringing civilizations closer together.

In the first place, we say: people are born free. This is axiomatic. At the same time, they have thus far remained in confrontation with authority, defending their own freedom. Social progress resulted in a historic

compromise. People accepted for themselves only two limitations: ethics – through culture, and democracy – through the law. However, people are mysterious, strange and paradoxical. They dream of being limitlessly free, and at the same time are not against holding sway over other people, turning them into slaves, serfs or hired labourers, in a word – subordinates. Every slave wants to be a slave-owner. The threat to dialogue here is obvious.

Second, it is not futile to feel apprehensive about the possibility of the gradual universalization of life and its values: not about globalization, which is legitimate, but specifically about universalization. But what will become of culture in the broadest sense of the word? Will it maintain its mission as the custodian of the ideals and values shared by all humanity, the bearer of immortality, or will a purely technological civilization, capable of extracting the living soul from people, gain the upper hand? Are national cultures not losing their lustre in their information environment? The world is both one and diverse, and hence full of the colour of all its races, nations and nationalities. I say this because there never was and, I hope, never will be a single unified culture for everyone. There has been and always will be a single culture made up of thousands of ethnic cultures. Unity in diversity is the most durable form of unity. It is therefore extremely important, when demythologizing the aggressive nationalistic aspects of frontier cultures, to show concern and care for the original contribution of each national culture to the global treasure-chest of civilizations.

Third, humanity's potential for integration is evident and incredibly rich. The question is how to unite the genetic intellectual potential of the East with the technological, financial and economic might of the West. Any unilateral solutions by the West are doomed to failure. Furthermore, I dare say that, in my opinion, the positions of the West are vulnerable, for they rely on the financial and economic system of a single country. However, the economy of that country is under pressure and facing a crisis that threatens to bring down the entire system that makes up the world order. Under these circumstances, maxims such as 'cutting off dead branches' and 'overloading the boat' are extremely dangerous. This is what civilization is. This is why I observe with trepidation the formation of a new 'cold war' configuration, including the blocking by this process of movement towards a spiritual renewal of humanity on the basis of the dialogue among civilizations.

In view of all the factors outlined above, I cannot rule out a repetition of the tragedies of the twentieth century. However sad it may be,

in the century that has just drawn to a close, there were three civil wars in the old Christian world: two world wars and a 'cold war'. This cannibalism noticeably undermined the material and spiritual potential of the Christian world. In addition, the wars engendered social disasters, in particular in Russia. The leaders of states showed neither worldly acumen nor strategic thinking.

In the period of transition to world peace, the crisis of a change in cycle may in theory be lying in wait for us. Any major phenomenon of life may provide the signal for the beginning of the counter phase. The experience of history demonstrates that over the generations, in societies in which the process of natural historical selection is launched, as it were, in the opposite direction, morally deficient forces and tendencies have prevailed. It would be naïve to suggest that these processes have already ceased to operate. This is why it is still possible to have a world that is constructed on the usual dogmas, for it is not so important whether people worship capitalism, socialism or democracy, live with the market or without it, in a law-abiding or totalitarian state, because a world based on fanaticism sees people as just a renewable resource, but in no way as higher beings.

Trying to look to the future, I cannot help wondering how Russia is approaching the twenty-first century. It is approaching it with food, a poverty-stricken economy, wild social norms, and anarchical outlaws in politics. Russia, having broken free, rushed to the other extreme, which had been ripening in the old, pre-perestroika society; into the total monetarization of body and soul. What was fair in people has gone grey, what was good has faded, what was charitable has become vulgar, and altruism is considered to be eccentric. All this is true, but I am convinced that it is no more than a temporary feast of base instincts. I understand; this is heredity. The Soviet Union no longer exists, but Soviet men and women remain. Slaves of the regime, slaves to lies and to envy, for they were always degraded by poverty. Lazy, since they were debarred from free labour. I understand all this, but do not accept it. Scratch today's nomenklatura, and under the thin veneer of democratism, you may easily find a thick layer of red. This is why the pressure of bureaucracy is growing stronger and expanding. The pressure of lawlessness. The pressure of unscrupulousness, which is becoming a symbol of strength.

Nevertheless, I am an incorrigible optimist, for I am convinced that pessimism is the killer of all that is human in people, the killer of dreams. I believe in Russia's future.

Everything I have said about the future, about my doubts and hopes

– these are just my personal feelings of conservative apprehension, but at the same time of reassuring hope regarding the transition to a completely new age. Unfortunately, we are not yet ready for it, for we know little about what awaits us. We need thousands of meetings like this one, the mass education of people, thorough studies and much else besides in order to understand ourselves and to prepare our descendants for the unexpected developments of the new world.

Rekha Menon

Philosopher and artist (India)

Impacted by Western modern colonial incursion, contemporary India attempts to reclaim its tradition, and yet it is confronted by an unavoidable hermeneutic that adds various sedimented Western conceptions. Do such conceptions completely suppress traditional India, or does the term Indianness carry more than what a colonial reading can suppress? In my presentation, I shall argue that despite the suppression, there are aspects that constantly assert themselves, even in a modified version that must be accepted both by the Indian and the colonial traditions. In this sense, the discussions and research into traditional and contemporary India have opened a mediating expressive domain, which offers a mutual ground that cannot be deconstructed, despite different readings, and regardless of variety of its interpretations.

The very notion of dialogue among civilizations requires the understanding of the interfacing of traditions at a level which both can share. Yet the sharing requires a precise understanding of the transposition of frameworks, such that the reading of one tradition and its subsumption in the hermeneutical context of another be made transparent. This is the sense of cross-civilizational dialogue: if we do not understand that the reading of one tradition in terms of another may constitute a misunderstanding, then there shall be no dialogue and hence no common ground. In turn, the tradition that is being subsumed into another may begin to interpret itself in terms of that Other and resultantly lose its own self-understanding. In either case, the interpreted tradition may appear as inadequate and hence to be either rejected, or as completely 'inhuman'. A sort of final species racism.

I propose that civilizational awareness reveals the possibility of two radically distinct and yet mutually understandable positions that comprise a common ground for both. This understanding is composed of the expressive domain that is prior to any metaphysical and socio-cultural interpretations. I wish to demonstrate that at the corporeal expressive level, there is an intercivilizational dialogue that is understood by people who would otherwise be in antagonistic confrontation. I suggest that there is a domain of expressivity wherein the human encounter can be understood to be in dialogue prior to language and to cultural restrictions. If there is to be a dialogue among civilizations, it will have to be at the level of immediate mutuality of experiencing of what I and the Other speak to each other in direct communication.

Indian tradition offers an interpretive framework that is distinct from Western metaphysical and ontological traditions; Indian tradition thinks cosmically and thus has its own interpretive requirements. Yet such requirements were subsumed under the colonial interpretation; the latter turns out to be a framework that has become indispensable for interpretation. In turn, such an interpretation also becomes subsumed by the questions that the Indian tradition has raised. In this sense, the Indian tradition becomes a challenge and more than the colonial imposition, and thus shows up as the Other and must engage in a dialogue offering a leeway that allows a mutual ground for both.

What Indians may regard as cosmically sacred (the kamic, love, lilaic, play, shaktic, power, mayaic, etc.) the West may read as psychological, and in turn as moral-immoral, etc. What is important for India is the option to open up in art, since all philosophies of India are essentially stories, sculptures and paintings, the excessive domains that cannot be subsumed under any definition. Art in India is the domain that opens the cosmic factors that comprise a cosmic attraction of all to all, and in Western context, of the attractive exotica for scholars and tourist. Here there is a dialogical encounter between civilizations where two domains, the assumed delimitation of all things in their limits, Western, and the overflowing, excess domain of the East. Apart from the cosmic erotic overabundance in India, the understanding of India in terms of it being exotic is equally unavoidable. In this sense, one does not get rid of the Exotica, the Other; the conqueror only places the Other in the lower, darker, threatening regions as the dislocating Other. The forms of the Other, in this case the contemporary Indian art/artists are located in the nether regions as Exotica, they attract gaping tourists, and at times reassert their presence and haunt the purported higher civilization, the West.

Nakedness, and naked bodies in contemporary Indian art, are judged within two different hermeneutical contexts. The theme is a focus of excessive psychological, ethical, social and gender judgements. By nakedness I do not mean just the nude body or the sexed body/body-ness, but nakedness in all its ambivalence. The volatility of nakedness includes diverse aspects: values, cultural/social norms, which, in their colonial reading, stripped us of our traditions, our discursive practices, and regarded our values as shameless, disgusting and naked; thus we were asked to dress ourselves in the rhetorical garb of the globalizing West, specifically the British moralizing and Elizabethan mode. The latter comprises an ambivalent transition between our Indian tradition and our British 'enculturation'. We Indians seem to live this transition in everyday

life and make judgements about our tradition and ourselves and thus my interest is to see the logic of the gaze toward nakedness. So it is not just our body that was colonized and stripped, but our very being and by extension its aesthetic existence, of who we are today. All these aspects cannot be read without 'nakedness' being clothed in expressivity and the world, whether such expressivity is erotic, or socio-political and moralizing.

The interest is framed in a multiple and hence ambiguous consciousness. First, our judgements about arts of traditional India, for example, the sculptures which are on the eleventh to twelfth century temple facades, are, in the main, seen as naked, exotic, vulgar, to the extent that they are stripped of their multiple dimensions of expressivity. Second, if expressivity is understood, then the expressive bodies of our tradition as erotic are stripped of this expressivity as immoral and hence read as 'pure naked bodies' engaged in 'obscene' sex. Third, our traditional arts are to be seen as a depiction of 'bodies as things' and not as a nexus of cosmic dimensions, from play through time. Fourth, our contemporary creations are ambiguous to the extent that we inadvertently borrow styles that separate events in terms of social-modern requirements: gender differences and political battles. Fifth, our contemporary arts that depict 'nakedness' are also wrought with ambiguities to the extent that such bodies are regarded as sexual and thus liberating in the postmodern sense. Sixth, this liberating sense is also designed to be morally challenging and is an attempt to show the hypocritical nakedness of the social-modern norms.

In traditional ancient Indian texts it is mentioned how the body without clothing is a way of being connected with the cosmos without barriers, without distance, where the 'wind of cosmic forces' moves one to perform a cosmic dance, a ritual, a way of becoming dissolved in the ALL. The naked body is not objectified. Rather it is sacred for them, in the sense that one is a direct participant in the profundity of the play, of the freedom from self and other, a total positivity without bounding taboos, social constrictions, and metaphysically enclosed bodies. The sculptures are displayed as unashamed of their nudity; they are dressed in space, full of cosmic glory whose gestures sent favours and erotic ardour across the face and posture of all events. As seen in these sculptures according to Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 'In the embrace of his beloved a man forgets his singular self and immerses in the winds of the whole world.' After all, one prays without clothing so that the cosmic wind may caress him without barriers. 'In the very same way, he who embraces the self knows neither within nor without.' In traditional Indian art, the idea of total bliss is portrayed symbolically as the act of love, which is chosen to suggest the

way of being such that the individual and the universal are no longer separate. Total bliss suggests, more directly, the moment when the self, atman, becomes merged through release with the impersonal cosmic play.

These beautiful, immense sculptures, which portrayed the cosmic-kamic union, were thoroughly misinterpreted and taken out of Hindu context by being called pornographic in the colonial period. The carved imagery is designed to articulate the kamic, erotic connection of all events, things, mythical figures without social gradations. They form, so to speak, an entire universe connected by erotic attraction. Yet, this blissful cosmic nexus is denigrated as the art of the inferior Other and, hence, located in the unspeakable and uncivilized region of immorality, sexual promiscuity, bestiality, and hence, is deemed not deserving the title of art. The colonial period, indeed, brought the question of morals, moralizing, gender, and genderizing issues into art.

The British regarded these aesthetic images as indecent and obscene, and thus to be judged morally, and not aesthetically. Once again, the significant aspect of this art, its cosmic nexus, the cosmic union, the cosmic aesthetics are excluded and thus inserted into an entirely different context, where sexuality is perceived as something different, excessive, Other. These images are regarded as a thing with bio-sexual characteristics and the cosmically understood body is projected as a nexus of exotic sexual fantasies to enflame dark passions. Approached as a textual system, the bodies point to an erotic, hypersexual aesthetic objectification of bodies as an idealized form of homogeneous type, thoroughly saturated with a totality of sexual predicates. The cosmic energies which symbolize both creative and destructive forces impinged on British imagination the wildest proclivities of India and the Indians. For the British, the Indians gave evidence of depravity and intimacy, the forces of darkness. Such imaginings of the cosmic energies were viewed by the British as ritualized sexuality, suggesting that Indians should be feared as subjects who had the dark forces, playing as perverts, threatening to invade and seduce, rape the white world. A visitor to India during the 1930s was warned by a seasoned British woman: 'You'll never understand the dark and tortuous minds of the natives . . . and if you do I shan't like you – you won't be healthy.'

But they did colonize us and our art, and even how we ourselves perceive art today. They have inbred us to subjectify, genderize, personalize art and limit us to things, objects, sex, biology, gender. And this, in turn, has made us look at our own culture as the immoral Other, as inferior, barbarous, uncivilized, without aesthetics although laden with immoral pornography. The art of the Other, just as the difference of the Other, is

held to belong to the natural landscape, but not to be art. The images, just as the native naked bodies, are judged on the grounds of morality, as lacking of cultural elevation, and hence as belonging to mere nature. After all, the very term 'native' suggests that those so designated live merely naturally. Thus they even taught us to view our art as indecent and naturally sexed and to consider European art as superior.

Today, in the art world in India, the Mithuna sculptures, the kamic excess, and lilaic figures, have taken on a major shift in interpretation with the entrance of colonialism. The forms/figures were pushed into the background and their visage became transformed in meaning. The colonial period seems to me to have introduced the emotional response to art: the fear, disgust, anxiety, and indeed, abstract feeling of approval and disapproval of pleasure and or displeasure. The emotional reading of art shifted the gaze away from cosmic passions and their serene appreciation. Since contemporary Indian art is dressed in moral space, Indian artists are in a quandary.

Artists have tried to bridge the in-betweenity of tradition and contemporaneity, but the mythic iconic prototype of Indian art has been rendered in a new garb. The cosmic awareness, though present, is read at the level of reaction, defence, negation, strategy or identity: after all, it is rooted in a space that was colonized and it is difficult to read it otherwise. In the artists' hands the divine figures and images become expressive, but not with cosmic expressivity, even if its relevance is surely present. In some work, tradition is used to defy, and the images, cast anew, convey a sense of corruption and ennui. At times, it is an identity galore of the exotica. Works of different artists use the Kali image (the divine mother) or the Mithuna images, to portray the kama, desire, love and lila, thereby depriving the images of their cosmic expressivity. The divine images are no longer divine, but are objectified and subjectified, and thus, portray different interpretive context. It is not the cosmic essence, but the representation of the cosmic as coloured and toned with prudish British moral attitude.

In literary works, one notes that aesthetics, especially the aesthetics of contemporary Indian art, encompasses ambivalent expressivities. There is a search within, but the search becomes trapped by the questions of tradition/modernity, local/global, identity/exotica. Internationally, Indian contemporary art is gaining in recognition, but the question is, What kind of Indian art? Just as the growing popularity centred on Gandhi, gurus, yoga, sati, dowry, curries, mehndi, henna, chai, tea, the art, which is catered to, is the exotica. An extension of this interest in Indianness can be

seen in the Herwitz collection. Collectors Chester and Davida Herwitz have the largest collection of contemporary Indian art in the United States. Such is the trap into which a few contemporary Indian artists have been falling, thus reducing themselves to a tourist trade. Traversing through Cosmic essence and coming to the present contemporaneity, we ask: Where are we today? Do we know?

So, it is not just our body that was colonized and self-colonized and stripped, but our very being, and by extension, its aesthetic cosmic existence. Who we are today is a hinge between a British substantiated metaphysics of entities with their characteristics and moral-social codes, and the cosmic openness that disregards such closed beings. I contend that our bodies were not naked substances, limited by the skin; they were dynamic postures that were enveloped in expressivity whose primacy we read directly and whose solicitations transgressed individual postures. And this direct reading offered us our understanding of the all-pervasive expressive phenomena that we regarded as cosmic. All these aspects cannot be read without extending the permeability of nakedness that seems to have an undeconstructible sphere. This is to say, the notion that there is simply a naked body is never a given. The body is always in excess of itself, always expressive and hence trans-body. The expressivity is accepted even by those who object to naked bodies. After all, the body as thing would not have any force unless it was inspiring, soliciting, attractive, in short, expressive and hence excessive over its own.

Reflecting upon myself, my work, my education, and even my creative process, the loss of cultural innocence is deemed unavoidable. Assuming this inescapable context, colonialism has introduced and formed the Other and therefore the Indian, and with it the Indian 'Exotic Third Space', leaving no choice but to remain in this Exotic Space, always striving to catch up. In turn, the colonialist, and myself as a post-colonial artist and scholar equally, have no choice but to take the Other into account: we have an interpretive context where the two belong to each other. While this context exists even for me (me being a colonial body) I have acquired an awareness of the subjugating force of my own post-colonial being, and therefore I am in a position to open up the difference between my tradition and the colonial presence that allows me to rearticulate both. Although I cannot choose not to choose, since I now face the options and attempt to make sense of it all, I find myself constantly facing the questions who am I? What am I to create in order to note the difference and the mutual otherness between my tradition, and my post-colonial self? Should I create naked glory Clothed with the World?

Yves Plasseraud

President of the Groupement pour les droits des minorités (France)

Contacts between civilizations have always taken the form of a struggle for the control of resources and identity. Present-day globalization can thus be seen as a combat by the West to impose its cultural and economic identity on the rest of the world. The ethnic and national disturbances that we are now seeing everywhere in the world are in fact less due to uncontrolled outbursts of excessive identity, as is sometimes claimed, than to a refusal by the weakest to have the identity of the strongest imposed on them.

One of the characteristics of modern societies is their atomization in a nebula of small groups that gradually lose their sense of basic solidarity, and this contributes to the breakdown of social mediation mechanisms, which are part of the fabric of national life that was slowly woven together in earlier times. At the ultimate stage of evolution, as foretold by Alexis de Tocqueville, individualism triumphs and individual egotism leads to a complete lack of interest in public affairs. Electoral abstentionism is one of the first symptoms of this ailment.

It is difficult to combat this tendency, although a number of states have been trying to do so for some time with various degrees of success. Experience in this regard shows that if we allow that the characteristic of human beings as social animals is to create differences (Castoriadis), given that differences provide the vital cement that binds together the social group, it is paradoxically these differences that ultimately act as the strongest unifying agent for the group in question. Local culture and history, the products of an age-old habitus borne of the link between a human group and a territory, are what shape this necessary difference. The example of *négritude*, proclaimed by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor, which helped to restore dignity to the blacks of Africa and the Caribbean, clearly illustrates this phenomenon of positive self-identification (in this case by overturning the stigmas).

For a group, this collective identity is a factor for cohesion and a powerful ingredient for social integration. In the case of countries with minorities, if the host group is not aware of its own collective personality or does not have confidence in it, then its ability to welcome the other will be very limited, not to say inexistent.

On the other hand, a sense of belonging, a distinct pride in one's origins and a well-adjusted cultural identity are solid foundations for successful integration into the surrounding social fabric. A people with a

clear perception of its own personality, that is able to develop it peacefully, is more likely to live happily than a nation whose sense of identity is thwarted or which is engaged in a painful search for itself.

In addition, full recognition of the social importance of minority groups and especially 'new minorities' is nevertheless important and desirable. Acknowledgement of the collective identity of ethnic or national groups, and even the deliberate enhancement of a certain sense of rootedness, today often seems like a 'moral' antidote to the excesses both of 'identity-based' fanaticism and of growing urban brutishness.

Beyond this rather banal observation, another observation may be made about something often less clearly perceptible. The quest for homogeneity, today the more or less avowed goal of many states, has as an inevitable corollary the search for 'purity', ultimately leading, in highly critical situations, to the temptation to engage in ethnic cleansing, given that some groups always appear to be more undesirable than others. Whenever there is an upsurge in inward-looking and aggressive identities, the cultural expressions of groups traditionally not discriminated against may act as a 'shield' warding off those of communities that are more vulnerable and less well integrated.

If the various differences have been brought simultaneously to the attention of the majority of people, the stigmatization of one or the other among them is likely to be more difficult. Furthermore, a defensive form of solidarity between 'aware' individuals is bound to replace the individualistic and consumerist indifference that currently prevails. It would seem vital not to leave the populist parties with a monopoly on the idea of cultural identity, which they currently use in an admittedly abusive, but unfortunately effective way.

In order to get back to a more harmonious form of cohabitation in many regions of the world where tensions between communities or among neighbours remain within controllable limits, the emphasis should be on the need to establish (or preserve) mixed ethnic zones with a certain degree of multilingualism – these existed in the past when multiculturalism was spontaneous. Knowledge of the neighbour's language has always greatly facilitated cohabitation between transmitters of different cultures, and multilingualism – which is beneficial at the cognitive level – has constantly been a factor for internal and external peace.

On the other hand, monolingual (or more precisely mono-cultural) societies or those composed of several monolingual blocs, and which lack the 'meta-cultural' awareness that constitutes the richness of multilingual groups, weaken, decline and, occasionally, embark on the path of

xenophobic nationalism. With regard to inter-state cohabitation, the worst threat that hangs over a state today is probably the successful achievement of the state's theoretical ideal, that of a national, mono-cultural state.

However, the maintenance of biodiversity is now unanimously acknowledged as a basic precondition for the survival of our world. If we are to cope with the challenges of the future, we now understand that nature's 'toolbox' must be kept as varied and as full as possible. The natural impoverishment resulting from increasingly frequent selections is suicidal. Above and beyond the modern world's inevitable specialization, we all know that it is useful to keep the various species present in a given biotope alive together. Things that are taken for granted when it comes to natural seeds or insects (each has its own role to play in the ecological chain) are often unrecognized as far as human beings are concerned. Yet cultural diversity, as Pierre Bourdieu, in particular, has shown, is as vital as biological diversity, and it would seem to be necessary to introduce a kind of cultural ecology.

Recent studies clearly show that biodiversity and cultural diversity are not only correlated, but are also directly and, as it were, organically linked. There can be no cultural diversity without biodiversity. We are living in a world that is changing so rapidly that the ability to change, and hence to innovate, has become synonymous with the ability to survive. The possibility of getting away from established routines and well-marked itineraries in order to think freely, and hence often differently, is greatly facilitated if distinct cultures and diverse sensitivities co-exist in the same place, enabling social operators to consider issues from fresh angles and with a spontaneous sense of curiosity.

As is well known, inventors and creators of various kinds are usually somewhat marginal people in relation to the prevailing environment. The Vilnius of the 1900s was an unrivalled centre of cultural creation thanks, to a large extent, to the magic of cultural contacts. Similarly, American Nobel prize-winners – most of them with recent non-American origins – come primarily from border regions or minority communities (in particular Jews from Central Europe).

Under these circumstances, it is essential to preserve linguistic diversity (cultural diversity is nowadays expressed chiefly through languages). In fact, each language corresponds to an original vision of the world; taken together they thus constitute so many ways of speaking and so many different aptitudes for apprehending and interpreting reality. According to a popular saying, 'you become a new person with each language you learn'. This multiplicity of ways of perceiving reality within a

single society gives rise to a diversity of ways of looking at the world's problems, and this is in itself an irreplaceable source of creativity and social flexibility.

While identity can be a remarkable social cement and a crucial ingredient in the ability of societies to evolve, it also turns out to be an effective economic agent.

Some years ago, for example, European agriculture seemed to be inexorably committed to productivist development, but an inverse process has been under way for some time now. An increasing number of consumers are shunning industrial foodstuffs, including those produced by soil-less methods, given that they are said to be insipid, unsafe and dangerous for the ecosystem (the question of GMOs has played a crucial role in building public awareness), and are turning instead to what they feel to be authentic and of good quality. This makes traditional, 'typical' produce with high added value both attractive and relevant. Produce from small farms, which are labour-intensive and based on regional traditions, are clearly in tune with today's public taste.

The new enthusiasm for the idea of terres d'excellence ('farmlands of excellence'), offering ample room for local initiatives, seems set to revive the premium or ancestral skills and to restore the dignity of local communities worn down by years of rural exodus and cultural contempt. Only a rural economy based on sustainable development and which reconciles agricultural production with the environment is capable of squaring environmental concerns with economic and social development (reference is nowadays made to the multi-functionality of the rural world).

The legal and administrative tools exist; they form part of the arsenal of industrial property. These include collective brands and labels of quality and origin, provided for under the Industrial Property Code: the *Appellations d'Origine Contrôlées françaises* (AOC) (controlled origin labels) and the *Indications Géographiques Protégées* (IGP) (protected geographic labels) at the community level. All these instruments, which have proved their usefulness, help to give prestige to the best and most typical country produce by informing and reassuring consumers. This system of transparency, against which ultra-liberalism, let it be said in passing, is powerless, is beginning to receive initial recognition from the United Nations.

More generally, an identity-based concept of the economy has been developing in Western Europe since 1992, especially in Corsica. This new approach to research seems to be promising: with produce bearing labels of regional origin, various forms of cultural tourism, a broad range of

handicraft creations and the use of ancestral skills, we see emerging almost everywhere strategies for identity-based development.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that for centuries, minority languages, described as patois, and local cultures, dubbed superstitions, have been scorned and mocked. As is well known, the preservation of lesser-used languages and associated cultures today fortunately forms an integral part (in theory at least) of the international corpus of human rights. Denying indigenous nationals of a state the public recognition of their traditional language is as inconceivable for most Europeans as is the desire to continue to massacre protected migrating birds flying over our territory. It is not always widely or clearly understood just how abnormal and perverse such antagonist attitudes are. However, it would seem to be a matter of urgency for serious thought to be given to this matter. Contrary to what continues to be claimed by certain worshippers of the nation-state, the cultural rights of differentiated groups must imperatively receive effective protection at the global level. As with the environment, our negligence with regard to cultural matters has lasted far too long: the world's languages are now disappearing at an increasingly rapid pace.



Vilnius University, location of the conference

Vilnius, panorama





Left to right: Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania; Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland; Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania; Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine



Left to right: Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania opening the International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations. Brunson McKinley, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland and Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine



Left to right: Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine; Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland; and Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania



Left to right: Doudou Di ne, Director, Division of Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO; Penda M'Bow, Former Minister of Culture of Senegal; Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania; Ahmed Jalali, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO



Vilnius, downtown



Left to right: Mrs L. Kuchma; a member of the Presidential Suite; Mrs Alma Adamkiene; Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine; a member of the Presidential Suite; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the International Organization of the Francophony; Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland; H lène Carrère d'Encausse, Permanent Secretary of the Académie Française; Brunson McKinley, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration; Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania

Part III

Round tables

Reciprocal knowledge and interaction

Moderator: Yves Plasseraud (France)
Participants: Jerzy Kloczowski (Poland)
Byong Ik Koh (Republic of Korea)
Xin Ru (China)
Kaveh L. Afrasiabi (Iran)
Anatoli Mikhailov (Belarus)
Mohamed Sayed Ahmed (Egypt)
Rapporteur: Olga Weber (UNESCO)

The discussions brought out that history is indispensable for understanding the situations and conflicts of the past, and that a critical reading of history is necessary. The experiences of the past must be known in order to establish a dialogue for the future. A programme of dialogue among civilizations should therefore be developed within each country as well as with neighbours. In the context of globalization, the opportunities for dialogue brought about by intercivilizational relations are numerous and mutual comprehension is fundamental, but a more constructive approach is necessary, which can come only from a political approach by political elites or else within international forums.

At the same time, a particular ethics and deontology of dialogue must be recognized and adhered to. As a primary goal of dialogue among civilizations, attitudes must change, human diversity must be recognized,

mutual understanding must be fostered, and tolerance for the diversity of civilizations must be generated. Each civilization is unique but different, and diversity within unity is essential for co-existence. Yet, dialogue can also contain many traps, especially if theory and practice are dissociated. Dialogue may facilitate 'reactive capacities' by making people more aware, but this cannot occur if monologue continues to dominate in human interactions. Hence, moving from monologue to dialogue will require the effort of learning other languages and using language truthfully; in this sense globalization and mass culture can be considered as genuine threats to language diversity.

Today, one generally speaks of a unipolar world with one single legitimate source of power. There is in fact also a 'hidden' pole, composed of all forms of violence ranging from ordinary protests to terrorism, and all of these must be channelled to avoid violence and achieve dialogue. A third way to fight against new forms of conflict would be to make room for thoughtful reflection, using information technologies as well as scientific discoveries, changing mental attitudes, and using a holistic approach while being conscious of the relativity of knowledge. This, in fact, is one of the primary educational roles of UNESCO.

Emphasizing the usefulness of confidential dialogue in certain cases, the participants highlighted a number of issues, such as the need to generate a genuine self-critique when engaging in dialogue. Attention was drawn to the sometimes unequal exchanges in dialogue, as when women become 'hostages' of incomprehension between cultures, or in the case of debates over the international migration issue.

The creation of a kind of 'responsible universal citizenship' at the level of culture was proposed, and the role of artists in inter-cultural dialogue was emphasized in view of the fact that emotions are a shared human value.

Among the measures mentioned which are – or could be – implemented by UNESCO were the promotion of linguistic diversity, education for a culture of peace, the promotion of sports as a factor in dialogue among people, the provision of support to relevant NGOs, as well as the creation and dissemination of history manuals to remedy stereotypes and prejudice.

Globalization and cultural plurality

Moderator:	Steve Austen (Netherlands)
Panellists:	Halina Kobeckaite (Lithuania) Rein Raud (Estonia)
Rapporteur:	Ann-Belinda Preis (UNESCO)

At the beginning, a notion of 'circles of personal identity' was proposed. 'Ethnic' identity was identified as the first stage of the broader category of 'cultural' identity, which combines with a 'national' identity understood as based on citizenship. Dialogue, it was then asserted, is easier to define than civilization. Emphasis ought to be placed on culture rather than civilization, as there is no value judgement in the notion of culture, which in fact signifies relationships and meanings. Hence it is possible to participate in local, regional and global culture simultaneously, although tensions may still arise.

In the discussion about the constructive aspects of a national culture, a key issue in new democracies, the focus was mainly on cultural plurality. It has become clear that globalization allows people to choose self-identity, although personal success is an important criterion in guiding choices. Notions like 'European culture' must be further debated, since it is questionable whether they are desirable. Culture could be better defined as certain forms of communication in and among groups. In addition, multi-layered identities are significant, as reflected in the modernity debate about

plural identities, which assumes importance from the point of view of a search for global communication. It was pointed out that each language bears different values, since no two languages deal with issues in the same way.

Shifted slightly away from strictly European topics, the point was made that global culture is everything that can be measured; values fall outside of this scope. From this, it becomes clear that two diametrically opposed concepts characterize globalization. It may be negatively perceived as a world-wide, mass-culture lowest common denominator, or it may be positively seen as 'internationalization' in cases like translations of works into all languages. From a certain point of view, it might be said that in globalization there is no free competition of ideas, only a free exchange among the organizations who back things financially.

Some opinion was expressed that multiple and mobile identities have always existed, and that globalization, far from being a new concept, is a mere construct with no substance. The real danger of globalization may reside in 'faceless bureaucracies'. On the other hand, globalization is a reality for the World Trade Organization, and certain countries are engaged in a struggle to defend their own cultural heritage. Globalization opens opportunities that did not exist previously. When national ideologies suppress local identities, globalization, in spite of some dangers, represents an escape. The inherent challenge of globalization is to constantly re-invent the world.

In conclusion, it was emphasized that a more plural environment must be created. National culture is important, but must include the notion of access to international organizations and to a global world. This implies a new definition of national cultural policies taking into account that globalization also means communication at the world level.

Plural identities and common values

Moderator: Yersu Kim (Republic of Korea)
Participants: Siarhej Shupa (Belarus)
Benvienido Agueta (Guatemala)
Aleksandr N. Yakolev (Russia)
Rapporteur: F.W. Russell (UNESCO)

Coming to terms with the concept of plural identities and common values can be accommodated only through an evolutionary or incremental thought process based on one's own lessons learned, experienced and lived. This workshop provided the fodder to formulate concrete ideas for the concept of the dialogue among civilizations. In fact, dialogue can no longer be considered a choice, it is a necessity in this day and age. Ethics, it was noted, stands at the front of all thought on the dialogue among civilizations. Equally, it was posited that ridding oneself of hindrances – and a need to clarify the basis of discord hindering such dialogue – would lead to truer inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue.

A concrete example of such dialogue among cultures and civilizations was presented through a historical description of the development of the city of Vilnius. Peaceful co-existence between several cultures, it was observed, has occurred during the past centuries, despite several occupations and administrations – eleven in the past century alone! However, the current movements and processes observed within the city

are threatening this idyllic picture. These movements and processes include a rise in nationalism and a greater homogeneity of society.

In better understanding plural identities and common values, it is important to take national identities and cultural differences into consideration. This requires creativity and flexibility. One challenge is to ask whether it is possible to trace common components for all universal values. When finding common values one must also include the ability of tracing and accepting difference. Understanding plural identities and common values is not only about the need to understand the 'other'; it is also the ability to understand oneself. It is in this regard that globalization should be challenged. In the search for common values, one could think of co-existence among different systems without attempting to homogenize, as this only weakens cultural identities.

The quest for common values poses a dilemma between attempting to reconcile differences, or local values, with those deemed to be universal. The notion of 'common problems' might be a possible basis for an approach to 'common values'. While civilizations may experience common problems, the approaches to these problems may differ in differing societies. 'Common universal values' were not seen as immutable, but as evolving in an incremental, evolutionary manner. Such values must always be taken within a certain context. In general, more empirical research was needed in this area.

It was concluded that, as UNESCO has the ethical and international clout to do so, it ought to establish priority areas of research on the concept of dialogue among civilizations. Also, as researchers are still struggling to understand what the term 'civilization' means, it was suggested that this be a possible starting point. It was noted that the Organization was the only arena in which to provide the forum for such research on dialogue to take place. Finally, it was suggested that UNESCO concentrate on the role young people play in society and their understanding of the concept of a dialogue among civilizations.

Trade, science and cultural exchange

Moderator: Peter Curman (Sweden)
Participants: Andree Suzy Romamonjisoa (Madagascar)
Mahmoud Doulatatabadi (Iran)
Arnold Mikhnevich (Belarus)
Rapporteur: Olga Weber (UNESCO)

One of the greatest risks of globalization is in endangering culture – an essential element for dialogue. An effort is needed to promote solidarity between dominant cultures and endangered cultures, particularly in market terms. The production and distribution of artistic and scientific work must be organized to circulate in more equitable markets. New market behaviour must evolve, along with a new ethics, since without sustainable development no dialogue can exist. The international community should, in this light, analyse current tendencies, threats and opportunities in the arts market; conduct research based on the needs of sustainable human development; create a strong movement to organize equitable markets for producers; place more value on cultural industries to create revenues in poverty areas and to reinforce strategies in technology; and reinforce networks for the circulation of information.

Lessons from the twentieth century must be learned if we are to avoid the errors of a new obscurantism, and before conducting dialogue

among civilizations, it will be necessary to learn 'internal' dialogue within civilizations. The role of intellectuals is to break stereotypes.

Increased cultural contacts, and hence dialogue, presuppose the existence of many languages as instruments of interaction. Culture, taken as a variety of forms and manifestations, is a sign system; hence national semiological programmes should be developed to address questions of language and linguistic barriers in a search for cultural polylingualism to foster cultural dialogue. Questions that should be addressed: how many and which semiological systems does a nation need to provide for its most adequate integration into world culture, and into the process of international cultural interaction? At the same time, what languages are needed by an individual to be socially advanced?

The debate highlighted the conflict between commercial and cultural interests, for example in copyright problems for authors and composers, as well as in the inadequacy of negotiation and free trade agreements in the exchange of cultural goods. Local knowledge and know-how are in conflict with high technology, and small industries are not well positioned in a globalized world. There is a great need to protect local production, but also to advocate an active, endogenous development and encouragement of markets for local products.

UNESCO should develop its role as forum for discussion and international dialogue. The protection of endangered cultures and local artisans, as well as traditional knowledge, must be increased. A profound social mobilization, the means for producers to be more strongly structured and activities for the management of the heritage of artistic and scientific achievements must be encouraged. Education programmes on citizenship to educate for participation and tolerance, starting from a base of organizing commercial exchanges, are essential, as well as programmes to promote local revenues through the transformation of natural resources.

Otherness

Moderator:	Arthur Cromwell (United States)
Panellists:	Cherif Khaznadar (France)
	Mohiaddin S. Mesbahi (Iran)
	Ahmed Jalali (Iran)
	Irena Vaisvilaite (Lithuania)
	Ingemar Lindahl (Sweden)
	Uwe Friesel (Germany)
	Zafimahaleo Rasolofrondraosolo (Madagascar)
Rapporteur:	Ann-Belinda Preis (UNESCO)

It was argued that every individual has multiple identities and that it is the very consciousness of this multiplicity that allows one to understand others. Efforts must therefore be oriented towards becoming conscious of one's multiplicity. Many present-day conflicts are linked to questions of identity, which is currently on a double stage, as has been pointed out by French sociologist George Balandier: certain countries take all the initiatives in globalization, while others are submerged by it. The resulting 'identity crisis' caused by the meeting of these two universes is leading to a search for cultural roots, cultural relations and cultural values – which may contribute to the resolution of the crisis.

It was pointed out that labelling and stereotyping, usually of foreigners, fall under the heading of 'national security matters'. All

civilizations engage in 'securization' to mobilize their own public and ensure internal security. They engage in a 'demonization' of the other, and the illusion is that this process is controllable. But it is not, and it assumes a life of its own, as evidenced in almost all past and present political struggles; hence what might be termed 'national trapping' is in fact the trapping of words. A new code of international public conduct is needed, and this is a matter not only for UNESCO but for the entire United Nations system.

In the discussion of 'we' and 'the other', it was noted that a knowledge of history is needed to grasp the fact that each individual has a pluralistic set of identities. For example, Iranian and Western cultures have been portrayed in an oppositional manner, but history reveals that in the Middle Ages, philosophers from both civilizations were concerned with the same questions through their Greek and Hellenistic common identities. History should therefore be written as the history of dialogue, not of conflict, and the term 'civilization' should be used as a metaphor for an organic, open-ended entity. Discussions of otherness, it was subsequently pointed out, often sidestep questions of religion. A dialogue among religions is going on parallel to a dialogue among civilizations, but they never meet at the international level.

For dialogue to occur, there must be respect for the other. Collective dialogues, i.e. among political or social relations entities, produce some results. But real dialogue can take place only among those who are the 'products' of a civilization, not among those who represent it. Genuine dialogue requires self-knowledge, and poetry is an excellent vehicle for dialogue, since it does not encounter definitional problems. It was emphasized, however, that political dictatorship tends to define art as a denunciation of the state, and hence artists are treated as 'demonized others'. Attention was drawn to the importance of UNESCO's work to promote artists, the revision of school textbooks and the use of new technologies to enhance intercultural dialogue.

Concepts of civilization for the twenty-first century

Moderator: Leonidas Donskis (Lithuania)
Participants: Algis Mickunas (United States)
Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux
(Honduras)
Tamotsu Aoki (Japan)
El-Sayed Mohamed Yassin (Egypt)
Armen Darbinian (Armenia)
Rapporteur: F.W. Russell (UNESCO)

The purpose of the workshop was to examine contemporary concepts of the term 'civilization' and how dialogue among civilizations could move this debate into the twenty-first century.

In the past, the philosophy of history and culture was not able to cover a large expanse of human experience, consequently, a historical concept of civilization could have served as a means of symbolic or real exclusion as well as inclusion. It was observed that West European scholars and politicians went so far as to divide Europe itself on the grounds of a polarity between 'civilization vs. barbarity'. Therefore the resulting civilizing mission was ascribed to Western Europe, whereas Eastern Europe was inscribed on the map of civilization as the vast land of

barbarity, ambiguity, ambivalence, chaos and uncertainty. One participant noted that a persistent dichotomy existed between the civilizations of East and West, both conceived as moral categories, rather than as sheer geographical terms or historical references.

From a differing perspective, it was noted that the term 'civilization', for the Japanese, was defined in secular, technical and scientific terms. 'Culture', on the other hand, was described as a very inward, reflexive or traditional concept.

It was agreed that much remained to be done to foster the comparative study of Western and non-Western concepts of civilization, and indeed the concept of the term 'civilization' for that matter. To that end, it was suggested that perhaps a person could participate in many civilizations and cultures at the same time – it is not possible to separate civilizations into isolated units. It was also suggested that cultures could be considered as hybrids of many cultures. A definition, therefore, of civilization which refers to a conscious way of understanding oneself and one's relationship with others was needed.

When discussing the term 'dialogue', it was generally felt that it could only occur when one recognizes the 'Other', not as a threat, but as the only means through which one can understand oneself and the world around them. It was said that dialogue should emphasize values rather than self-interest and that, through a post-modernist approach, one could examine the term 'dialogue' based on certain values, notably: pluralism, horizontal relationships and co-operation between societies, leading towards a world of dialogue, tolerance and plurality.

However, when discussing the two concepts together – i.e. dialogue among civilizations – it was understood that dialogue implies the ability of a person to question and situate oneself within a civilization or parts of several civilizations. It was also observed that one should not centre one's research on the concept of dialogue among civilizations solely within the context of globalization. Inherent to the concept of dialogue among civilizations is the fact that one ought to be discussing the human being as an individual member of society, and not only as an insignificant entity within a globalized context. It was stated that there can be a global civilization, but not a global culture. It was posited that one should reflect on 'glocalization' – globalization and local cultures working together – rather than globalization.

The workshop participants concluded that any discussion on the use of the word 'civilization' should not be reduced to a semantic approach to the term. It was also agreed that the spiritual dimension of life – its ethics

– ought to be considered as well. It was recommended that the notion of the hybridization of cultures could be further studied and that UNESCO may have a role to play in this regard. Equally, UNESCO could provide advice to Member States concerning educational and cultural reforms where dialogue among civilizations is concerned.

Reflections for the Future

Leonidas Donskis

Professor, University of Montevallo (USA)

The UNESCO conference, Dialogue among Civilizations, held on 24-26 April 2001 in Vilnius, Lithuania, was arguably a major intellectual and political event in the world. It served not only as a kind of summing-up of the United Nations Year of the Dialogue among Civilizations 2001, but also as a powerful reminder of humanity's need, more than ever, for dialogue, understanding, tolerance, and respect for human life and dignity. The Vilnius Declaration may become a call to create, or at least not to oppose, a world where human creativity and diversity, as well as the uniqueness of all major religions, civilizations and intellectual traditions, would be respected and cherished.

The Vilnius Conference stressed the implications of a sinister propensity to carry on political or ideological struggles in the name of great religions and major civilizations. Moreover, it warned humanity about the danger which comes from the tendency of political interest groups to speak in the name of faith, history and civilization. More than one participant of the Conference raised the voice against the widespread tendency to twist the concept of civilization, to exploit that concept politically or otherwise misuse it, and, finally, to advocate the idea of the alleged incompatibility of civilizations. The UNESCO Conference and the Vilnius Declaration addressed a world about to burst into violence. From the perspective of the

11 September 2001 tragedy in New York and Washington, D. C., the Conference and the Vilnius Declaration were extremely timely events.

The image of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center in New York is very likely to signify and symbolize the arrival of the twenty-first century – the century of new divisions, tensions, uncertainties, hopes, animosities – and also of the new forms of hatred. It may be suggested that the outbreak of global terrorism, fanaticism and hatred has proved Samuel P. Huntington's acclaimed theory of the clash of civilizations right – an assumption that I believe is grossly misleading. At the same time, it may be said that it was Hollywood movies, rather than sombre 'dystopias' of the twentieth century, that predicted the reality of today's world. Sadly and ironically, this seems to have been so.

Yet nothing comes from the void or out of the blue. What is happening today is a chain reaction of strong resentment against the modern world that the modern project evoked in many parts of the world, including Western societies themselves. We cannot forget this if we want to go to the root of the problem and resist the temptation to over-generalize, over-simplify and pigeonhole it as a clash of civilizations. The disturbingly wild imagery of the modern world, created by the troubled imaginations of individuals scattered across the world and intensely hating modernity, is strikingly similar to the imagery produced by the conservative and radical forces of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recycled imagery of social evil and of demonized adversaries that circulated widely in Europe in the past two centuries had eventually reached other parts of the world. We have to study these overlapping sets of images, visions and sentiments very closely if we do not want to be trapped in new sensationalist, yet simplistic and dangerous theories.

No wonder, then, that the nineteenth century was a century of hatred. The twentieth century was a century of hatred and also of the most ferocious forms of the modern troubled imagination, too. However sad it might be to admit this, the twenty-first century, in all likelihood, will be a century of the troubled identity, troubled imagination, and hatred as well. Modernity came into being marked by hatred and contempt for what was thought of as the backward and superstitious world. Inevitably, the excesses and challenges of modernity resulted in a retaliatory hatred that the defenders of the old regimes and traditions felt for them. If this vicious circle can end in a kind of modernity with a human face, it is possible only through the polylogue of civilizations. Ultimately, such modernity with a human face can be reached only through tolerance and a moral logic that comes to bridge individuals and societies, rather than the logic of the

triumph of the new over the old or of 'us' over 'them'.

There should consequently be some hope for the future, and this is precisely why forms of hatred can be replaced with forms of hope. There should be a moral logic, which makes dialogue possible between individuals and peoples. Otherwise, we will be doomed to remain merely partisan tools of opposing vocabularies, conflicting ideologies, creeds, value systems, modes of discourse and politically mobilizing patterns of collective memory. The more aware of the differences and affinities of humankind we become, the greater the possibility that the revealing forms of non-manipulative human exchanges and of sensitivity will prevail over the seemingly unbridgeable gulfs of consciousness and over the wildest fantasies of the troubled imagination.

The Vilnius Declaration sends a message to the world, arguing that we can achieve the degree of reciprocity, respect and tolerance which will allow us to cherish and appreciate every culture and civilization. A crucial reminder of human incompleteness, this statement calls for dialogue among human individuals, peoples, cultures and civilizations. Every civilization reveals itself only through a dialogue with other civilizations, and the discovery of the Other is never anything but self-discovery –this is a great truth that the Vilnius Declaration recalls about our fragile, vulnerable and tragic, yet wonderful and hopeful world .

It was deeply symbolic that the UNESCO International Conference, Dialogue among Civilizations took place in Vilnius, a city famous for its historic tradition of religious tolerance and multiculturalism. At the same time, it was a sign of hope for the future of Lithuania, a country whose history invites us to reconsider Eastern Europe as a boundary region open for the polylogue of civilizations, rather than as a home of ethnically and culturally homogeneous actors of history. Most importantly, it was a sign that a Central Eastern European country could host a forum for peace and dialogue, thus meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Doudou Diene

Director of the Division of Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO

The Vilnius Declaration and the rich harvest of ideas and thought produced by the various workshops of the Vilnius International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations mean that the Conference was one of the most fruitful intellectual contributions of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations 2001.

The Conference took up the major challenge of dialogue among civilizations in a radical way, by refusing to reduce the concept of dialogue to its mere ideological, political or rhetorical dimensions. The Vilnius Declaration invites us to raise questions, to wonder about and to seek conceptual clarifications rather than to issue tautological, moralizing and bombastic declamations. I would like, therefore, to propose the following avenues for reflection as a contribution to elucidating the territories and paths of dialogue opened up at Vilnius.

What kind of culture or civilization is needed for genuine dialogue? I should like from the outset to point to an initial misunderstanding on the subject of the dialogue: culture. The misunderstanding stems from the primacy generally accorded to the aesthetic dimension of the concept of culture. The readability, exchange and indeed ranking of cultures has always concerned cultural products, creations and expressions. The primacy of the visible, and often the massive or concrete, has led, for instance, in the field of heritage, to the view that the Château of Versailles is superior to a Dogon mask; the tangible is superior to the intangible. I propose to clear up this initial misunderstanding by means of a more profound acceptance of the notion of culture that would embrace not only the aesthetic – in other words, human productions and achievements – but also the ethics, values and objectives which form the basis of human action, and the spiritual which gives meaning to human life. In order to gain a profound knowledge of the various cultures, dialogue must consequently involve these three inseparable dimensions.

The dialogue must also be geared to the cultural long term. This means taking into account the important fact that cultures and civilizations are constructed over time, for it is over time that aesthetic, ethical and spiritual aspects combine and, fed by external influences, slowly and thoroughly structure identities. The traditional and modern dimensions of culture should not therefore be separated. The heritage, physical or intangible, must also, in this context, be illuminated by the challenge of dialogue. To put it more precisely, in order to avoid nationalist or identity-

based appropriations of the heritage, it must be seen as a dynamic expression, in a specific territory or space, of deep-rooted interactions among cultures and civilizations.

This vision seems to me to be fundamental in order to avert the destruction of the heritage of the Other on the grounds that it is simply reducible to the identity of the adversary of the moment, as current cultural conflicts show. It is in this sense that the notion of the common heritage genuinely constitutes a major advance in promoting dialogue.

Revisiting identity: the notion of identity, both in the way it is perceived and in its relation to the Other, is at the heart of the process of dialogue. The entire history of relations between peoples reveals the crucial nature of the misunderstanding about identity. A Janus-like concept, identity may be at one and the same time an affirmation of self and a denial of the Other. Therefore, identity is the other central concept that will have to be recast in order to clarify the territories of dialogue. In the light of the long memory of history, and in particular the major fact of the dialectic of movement/encounter/interaction that has structured all civilizations and cultures, I propose to redefine identity (ethnic, cultural or spiritual) so that it is not an obstacle, but rather a factor conducive to dialogue, and no longer conceived of as a ghetto or basis for isolation, but is understood, assumed and exercised as a process, an encounter, a dynamic synthesis. This means, in a context of retreat into identity where – as most current conflicts demonstrate – today's enemy is yesterday's neighbour, that people must be made to see and understand that identity is texture, interlinkage, movement. Identity would consequently express that mysterious alchemy by which a people receives, transforms and adopts influences from elsewhere in a dialectic of giving and receiving. It means, in the final analysis, promoting the idea that identity may be the foundation of an ethics and a rediscovery of proximity, and thus of dialogue. From diversity to pluralism and universality: we must first of all recall two key pieces of information about diversity. The first, which is common sense, is that diversity is an established fact, an expression of life. The second, which comes from the history of thought, is that, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and even now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, theories concerning diversity (of races, species, etc.) have been used to underpin theories of discrimination, hierarchical ranking and domination. Diversity must therefore be transformed into something of worth, thereby promoting the value of pluralism defined as the recognition, respect, promotion and protection of diversity. However, in order to ensure that diversity alone is not experienced as a freezing of identity or an irreducible

difference, and enable it to constitute a factor conducive to dialogue, it is imperative to ensure that within each society and at the international level, the fruitful dialectic of unity and diversity prevails.

Ultimately, this means ensuring that dialogue facilitate familiarization by stimulating recognition. In other words, the cultural equation that all societies, as well as the international community, must solve, is how to link the protection of and respect for specific features (ethnic, spiritual, communal, etc.) to the acknowledgement of shared values that include those features and go beyond them. The equation could be solved by putting into practice the pairing multiple identities-shared heritage.

With this in mind, I propose that the dialogue among civilizations draw inspiration from the basic lesson of biodiversity, which states that the existence and interaction of different species is a source of life and a prerequisite for it, and that the disappearance of any species is fatal to the ecosystem in its entirety. Transposing this lesson to the plane of 'living together' helps us to understand that cross-fertilization between different cultures is an essential condition for the vitality and even the survival of humanity as a whole. The dialogue among cultures and civilizations would thus be the expression of a kind of 'bio-culture'.

Universality must be rethought in this context. This does not mean promoting the 'mirror universality' of the old imperialisms, but rather seeing universality as a collective construct. The specific, whether cultural, spiritual or other, would thus be conceived of as a stage in and a condition for the construction of the universal. It is in this sense that universality, as the collective construct of all peoples, would be the antithesis of globalization, which stands for standardization from the centre. Universality would thus be linked dialectically to pluralism.

The instruments of the dialogue: history is the theatre or arena in which cultures, civilizations and peoples have constructed their identity and their relationship to the Other. Particular attention must therefore first be paid to this terrain, a source of countless misunderstandings, antagonisms, friendships and enmities, in relation to the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

The terrain of memory, and indeed, the long memory of history, thus enable us to read and go back to the deep-rooted sources of the processes, mechanisms and expressions of dialogue and conflict. We therefore need, here and now, as a matter of urgency, a revision of the writing, content and teaching of history by each people, and all the peoples together, as a fundamental factor in the dialogue.

Education and teaching are, in the long run, the principal avenues leading to the transformation of minds. These are where knowing, knowledge, ethics and perception are built. Consequently, these are the fields in which the ethics of dialogue must be inscribed first, and more importantly, in depth. Intercultural education is in this sense a catharsis that forces each people and each culture to look at itself critically, to call into question certainties and to break open enclosures and confinements. This is why communication, by which the image of the self and of the other is constructed and transmitted, must also be intercultural in order to express, in concrete fashion, the need for exchange and dialogue within the meaning of the wonderful expression of Sean McBride, 'many voices, one world'.

Economic exchange is also a key instrument of dialogue. In every age and on every continent, trade has been a vehicle for encounters, and for cultural, artistic and spiritual dissemination and interaction. We therefore need to go beyond the seductive but erroneous theories of antagonism between culture and trade, and engrave the value of dialogue in the innermost reaches of the exchange that is at the heart of trade. Development and growth should then no longer merely obey particular market forces or models, but allow a full reproduction of the polyphony of ways of being and living. In the final analysis, the challenge of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations should constitute an obligatory component of negotiations on trade and the world economy. Cultural ethics would thus be capable of attenuating the negative aspects of the law of the market.

The challenges of the dialogue: Getting to know one another has often been thought of as the only response to ignorance and cultural antagonisms. The history of recent cultural conflicts shows, nevertheless, that for ideological, political or religious reasons, yesterday's neighbour, person, community or culture, may suddenly become today's enemy, who must be destroyed.

Careful analysis shows that there often lies at the heart of such conflicts an exacerbated identity-based closure which is ethnic, religious or cultural in nature. We must therefore, in the context of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations, enrich and add to our knowledge of one another by highlighting and becoming aware of interactions among cultures, civilizations and spiritual traditions, and so on. This dimension of interaction has not been sufficiently analysed, understood or explored. Nonetheless, it is where the deep-seated dynamics of all cultures and civilizations are to be found. The movement of people, goods and ideas is

the mainspring that shapes cultures and civilizations. It highlights the vital process of encounter-exchange-transformation. Interaction is thus a decisive factor in the readability of interlinkage and cross-fertilization.

The dialogue should thus be articulated around these two fundamental and intimately linked dimensions: getting to know one another, and becoming aware of interactions between cultures, civilizations and spiritual traditions. Knowing one another implies identity and difference; interaction expresses proximity.

In the final analysis, the royal avenue to dialogue passes through the understanding and practice of culture as 'culture', which is to say culture as the expression and fruit of the dynamic cross-fertilization of various elements.

In conclusion, I should like to draw on ancient African wisdom and propose that the dialogue among cultures and civilizations be inspired by the old African proverb, which says: 'In the forest, when the branches of the trees quarrel, their roots embrace one another'. The challenge consists in ensuring that the branches, in other words, the diversity of cultures and civilizations, are nourished by the profound and often invisible vitality of ethics and spirit that is the common possession of humanity, of any man and woman, indeed of all men and women.

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-General¹;
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

¹ A/54/546

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; o 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

² A/55/492/Rev.1

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.

VII. United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001

Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/22 of 4 November 1998, 54/113 of 10 December 1999 and 55/23 of 13 November 2000 entitled 'United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations',

Reaffirming the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, which are, inter alia, to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace, and to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Underlining that all Members have undertaken to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

Reaffirming their commitment to the fulfilment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and as a source of inspiration for the further promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms – political, social, economic, civil and cultural – including the right to development,

Underlining that all civilizations celebrate the unity and diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilizations and that, despite obstacles of intolerance and aggression, there has been constructive interaction throughout history among various civilizations,

Emphasizing that a common humanity unites all civilizations and allows for the celebration of the variegated splendour of the highest attainments of this civilizational diversity, and reaffirming that the civilizational achievements constitute the collective heritage of humankind,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000², 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, has underscored that globalization is not only

1 Resolution 217 A (III)

2 See Resolution 55/2

an economic, financial and technological process which could offer great benefit but that it also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilization,

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 that human rights and fundamental freedoms derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person and are thus universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and that the human person is the central subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, consequently, should be the principal beneficiary and should participate actively in the realization of these rights and freedoms,

Reaffirming that all peoples have the right of self-determination, by virtue of which they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development,

Emphasizing that promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression and a collective commitment to listen to and learn from each other and to respect cultural heritage and diversity are essential for dialogue, progress and human advancement,

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,

Recalling its resolution 55/254 of 31 May 2001, which calls upon all States to exert their utmost efforts to ensure that religious sites are fully respected and protected,

Emphasizing the need to acknowledge and respect the richness of all civilizations and to seek common ground among civilizations in order to address comprehensively common challenges facing humanity,

Welcoming the endeavours of Governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and countless individuals to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations,

Welcoming also the efforts of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and of the Group of Eminent Persons established by the Secretary-General,

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

Proclaims the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations:

A. Objectives, principles and participants

Article 1

Dialogue among civilizations is a process between and within civilizations, founded on inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue.

Article 2

Dialogue among civilizations constitutes a process to attain, inter alia, the following objectives:

- Promotion of inclusion, equity, equality, justice and tolerance in human interactions;
- Enhancement of mutual understanding and respect through interaction among civilizations;

- Mutual enrichment and advancement of knowledge and appreciation of the richness and wisdom found in all civilizations;
- Identification and promotion of common ground among civilizations in order to address common challenges threatening shared values, universal human rights and achievements of human society in various fields;
- Promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and enrichment of common understanding of human rights;
- Development of a better understanding of common ethical standards and universal human values;
- Enhancement of respect for cultural diversity and cultural heritage.

Article 3

Pursuit of the above-mentioned objectives will be enhanced by collective commitment to the following principles:

- Faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small;
- Fulfilment in good faith of the obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹;
- Respect for fundamental principles of justice and international law;
- Recognition of diversified sources of knowledge and cultural diversity as fundamental features of human society and as indispensable and cherished assets for the advancement and material and spiritual welfare of humanity at large;
- Recognition of the right of members of all civilizations to preserve and develop their cultural heritage within their own societies;
- Commitment to inclusion, cooperation and the search for understanding as the mechanisms for the promotion of common values;
- Enhancement of participation by all individuals, peoples and nations in local, national and international decision-making processes.

Article 4

Dialogue among civilizations provides important contributions to progress in the following areas:

- Promotion of confidence-building at local, national, regional and international levels;
- Enhancing mutual understanding and knowledge among different social groups, cultures and civilizations in various areas, including culture, religion, education, information, science and technology;
- Addressing threats to peace and security;
- Promotion and protection of human rights;
- Elaboration of common ethical standards.

Article 5

Participation in dialogue among civilizations shall be global in scope and shall be open to all, including:

- People from all civilizations;
- Scholars, thinkers, intellectuals, writers, scientists, people of arts, culture and media and the youth, who play an instrumental role in initiation and sustainment of dialogue among civilizations;
- Individuals from civil society and representatives of non-governmental organizations, as instrumental partners in promoting dialogue among civilizations.

Article 6

Governments shall promote, encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations.

Article 7

Regional and international organizations should take appropriate steps and initiatives to promote, facilitate and sustain dialogue among civilizations.

Article 8

The media has an indispensable and instrumental role in the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and in the fostering of greater understanding among various civilizations and cultures.

Article 9

The United Nations should continue to promote and strengthen the culture of dialogue among civilizations.

B. Programme of Action

1. States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, are invited to consider the following as a means of promoting dialogue among civilizations in all domains, within existing resources and also drawing upon voluntary contributions:
 - Facilitating and encouraging interaction and exchange among all individuals, inter alia, intellectuals, thinkers and artists of various societies and civilizations;
 - Promoting of mutual visits and meetings of experts in various fields from different civilizations, cultures and backgrounds, which provide an opportunity for discovering commonalities among various civilizations and cultures;
 - Exchange of visits among representatives of the arts and culture and the organization of cultural festivals through which people will have a chance of getting acquainted with other cultures;
 - Sponsorship of conferences, symposiums and workshops to enhance mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue among civilizations;
 - Planning sports competitions, Olympiads and scientific competitions, with a view to encouraging positive interaction among youth from different backgrounds and cultures;
 - Reinvigorating and encouraging translation and dissemination of basic manuscripts and books and studies representing different cultures and civilizations;
 - Promotion of historical and cultural tourism;
 - Incorporation of programmes to study various cultures and civilizations in educational curriculums, including the teaching of languages, history and socio-political thoughts of various civilizations, as well as the exchange of knowledge, information and scholarship among academia;
 - Advancement of research and scholarship to achieve an objective understanding of the characteristics of each civilization and the differences, as well as ways and means to enhance constructive interaction and understanding among them;
 - Utilization of communication technologies, including audio, video, printed press, multimedia and the Internet, to disseminate the message of dialogue and understanding throughout the globe and depict and publicize historical instances of constructive interaction among different civilizations;
 - Provision of equitable opportunities for participation in the dissemination of information, with a view to achieving an objective understanding of all civilizations

and enhancing constructive interaction and cooperative engagement among civilizations;

- Implementation of programmes to enhance the spirit of dialogue, understanding and rejection of intolerance, violence and racism among people, particularly the youth;
 - Utilizing the existence of migrants in various societies in bridging the gap of understanding between cultures;
 - Consultation to articulate effective mechanisms to protect the rights of all people to maintain their cultural identity, while facilitating their integration into their social environment.
2. States should encourage and support initiatives taken by civil society and non-governmental organizations for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations.
 3. States, international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, are invited to develop appropriate ways and means at the local, national, regional and international levels to further promote dialogue and mutual understanding among civilizations, and to report their activities to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
 4. Governments, funding institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector are invited to mobilize the necessary resources to promote dialogue among civilizations, including by contributing to the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General in 1999 for that purpose.
 5. The United Nations system, including, in particular, the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, are invited to continue to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote dialogue among civilizations in the activities of the United Nations in various fields.
 6. The Secretary-General is requested to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of this Global Agenda and Programme of Action.

List of Participants

Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi (Iran, residing in United States), scholar

Tamotsu Aoki (Japan), anthropologist, former president of Japan Ethnological Society, member of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

Bienvenido Argueta (Guatemala), Professor of Cultural Studies, Rafael Landívar University

Steve Austen (The Netherlands), scholar, Director of Felix Meritis Foundation

Roland Bernecker (Germany), scholar, representative of the German National Commission for UNESCO

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the International Organization of the Francophonie

Byong-Ik Koh (Korea), member of the Korean National Academy of Sciences, Chairman of the Korean National Cultural Properties Committee

H I ne Carr re d'Encausse, Permanent Secretary of the Académie Française

Arthur Cromwell (United States), documentary-TV-radio producer; professor, Ohio University Columbus; member of National Communication Association, African-American Communication and Culture, American Studies Communication, Ethnography Division
Peter Curman (Sweden), writer, poet

Armen Darbinian (Armenia), former Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia

Doudou Diene (Senegal), Director of the Division of Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO

Sello Dithebe (South Africa), Member of Parliament, Member of Parliamentarian Committees: Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Joint Monitoring Committee on the Status and Improvement of the Quality of Life: Children, Youth and Disabled Persons

Leonidas Donskis (Lithuania), scholar, Cultural Studies and Philosophy

Mahmoud Doulatabadi (Iran), novelist

Wojciech Falkowski (Poland), Secretary-General of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO; Professor, Warsaw University

Uwe Friesel (Germany, residing in Sweden), translator, writer, member of P.E.N. and VS (German Writers' Union)

Ahmad Jalali (Iran), Professor of Philosophy, Permanent Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO [since UNESCO's 31st General Conference, October–November 2001, President of the General Conference]

Ugn Karvelis, Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of Lithuania to UNESCO

Charif Khaznadar (France), President of the Culture Committee at the French National Commission for UNESCO, Director of Maison des Cultures du Monde, director of Festival of the Imagination, Researcher

Yersu Kim, Professor of Philosophy, Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO

Jerzy Kloczowski (Poland), Director of the Institute of Central and Eastern Europe; chairman of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO; Professor, Catholic University of Lublijana, Chair of the History of Polish Culture

Halina Kobeckaitė, Ambassador of Lithuania to Turkey, scholar, representative of the Karaim Community of Lithuania

Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine

Aleksandr N. Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland

Serge Lazarev (Russia), Director of Tolerance and Non-Violence Unit, UNESCO

Ingemar Lindahl (Sweden), writer, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Alphonsi Lingis (United States), Professor, Department of Philosophy and Cultural Studies, Pennsylvania State University

Ko chiro Matsuura, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Penda M'Bow, Minister of Culture, Republic of Senegal

Brunson McKinley, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux, Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Honduras to UNESCO

Rekha Menon (India, residing in the United States), philosopher, artist, art historian, dance choreographer

Mohiaddin Messbahi (Iran), scholar, Florida International University

Algis Mickunas (United States), Professor of Philosophy, researcher, Ohio University

Anatoli Mikhailov (Belarus), philosopher; culturologist; rector, European Humanitarian University

Arnold Mikhnevich (Belarus), philosopher; culturologist; director, Institute of Cultural Problems of Byelorussia

Ataollah Mohajerani (Iran), advisor to the President of the Republic of Iran, Director of the International Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations, Tehran

Ehsan Naraghi (Iran), scholar, journalist

Ana Maria de Oliveira (Angola), Member of Parliament, former Minister of Culture, member of the Bureau for the Slave Route Project

Giandomenico Picco, Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

Yves Plasseraud (France), president of the Groupement pour les droits des minorités

Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo (Madagascar), sociologist, musician, writer, singer, Member of Parliament

Rein Raud (Estonia), Professor, Japanese Studies, University of Helsinki; Professor of Asian and Cultural Studies, Estonian Institute of Humanities; translator, essayist

Andr e Suzy Romamonjisoa (Madagascar), psycho-sociologist; researcher and teacher, Literature and Human Sciences Faculty, Antananarivo University; General Secretary of the Centre for the

Xin Ru (China), Chairman, Academic Committee, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; professor of philosophy

Mohamed Sayed Ahmed (Egypt), journalist and writer, Al Ahram
El-Sayed Mohamed Yassin (Egypt), counsellor, Centre of Strategic Studies,
Al-Ahram

Siarhej Shupa (Belarus), journalist, translator

Irena Vai-vilait (Lithuania), scholar, journalist, Radio Free Europe,
Prague

Javier Wimer (Mexico), writer

Aleksandr N. Yakovlev (Russia), director of Presidential Commission
for Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression; honorary chairman,
Board of Directors of the Russian Public Television Ltd.; President of
International Democracy Foundation; member, of Russian Writers' Union

The question of the scope and potential of dialogue among cultures and civilizations is achieving unprecedented significance, especially in the present international context. More than ever before, dialogue poses a fundamental challenge and must be based on the unity of mankind and commonly shared values, the recognition of the world's cultural diversity and the equal dignity of each civilization, culture and individual. This publication underlines the need to prevent the emergence and nurturing of new prejudices and stereotypes.

Dialogue among Civilizations: the International Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania, 23–26 April, 2001, is the second publication in UNESCO's Dialogue among Civilizations series. It contains the proceedings of a major event organized by UNESCO during the United



United Nations
Year of Dialogue
among Civilizations



International Conference on the Dialogue among Civilisations

Vilnius, Lithuania – 23–26 April 2001

2001 – The United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilisations

Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001). The Vilnius Conference brought together heads of state, political decision-makers and diplomats, distinguished scholars, academics and artists to debate about the complex issues of culture and civilizations in the contemporary world.

For more information about UNESCO's activities related to the Dialogue among Civilizations, please consult the following website:

www.unesco.org/dialogue2001