



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

15/05/2009

Ref.: CL/3880

**Subject: International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010)**

Sir/Madam,

The General Conference of UNESCO, at its 34th session (34 C/Resolution 46), expressed the hope that 2010 would be proclaimed *International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures*. The United Nations General Assembly endorsed this proposal by adopting resolution 62/90 of 17 December 2007. One year later, the General Assembly invited UNESCO, "in consultation with Member States, and through extrabudgetary resources, to play a leading role in the preparations for the celebration of the International Year ..." (resolution 63/22 of 16 December 2008).

The new mandate given to UNESCO by the United Nations is a sign of renewed confidence and is consonant with the missions with which the Organization has already been entrusted, particularly the *International Year for the Culture of Peace* in 2000 and the *Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations* in 2001. The new mission comes on the heels of a number of decisions by the Executive Board and resolutions of the General Conference of UNESCO, including 32 C/Resolution 47 on "New perspectives in UNESCO's activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures" (2003) and "the Plan of Action for the promotion of the dialogue among peoples and UNESCO's contribution to international action against terrorism" (2006).

With this renewed confidence, the General Assembly acknowledges the pioneering role and long-term work performed by the Organization which, in keeping with its Constitution, has always sought to "develop and to increase the means of communication between [...] peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives" so as to "construct the defences of peace in the minds of men".

Enriched by its extensive and regularly-reviewed experience, today UNESCO gives greater importance to this topic that is one of the main objectives of its Medium-Term Strategy (2008-2013), which states that "the fostering of cultural diversity and of its corollary, dialogue, thus constitutes one of the most pressing contemporary issues and is central to the Organization's comparative advantage".

The year 2010 will provide a unique occasion to reaffirm the key ideas underpinning our Organization's commitment, based on the paradigm of a plural humanity where cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are mutually reinforcing and whose implications drive all UNESCO's programmes in the fields of education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information.

In this context, UNESCO is required to undertake consultations with a view to drafting a plan of action for preparations for the celebration in 2010. This plan will be a flexible and efficient companion tool, and will underline the added value of intercultural dialogue in local, national and regional policies. To this end, the Executive Board at its 181st session made the following observations and suggestions which you may use to guide your thoughts on the drafting of the Plan of action, which must:

- adopt a holistic approach which incorporates those of other agencies in the United Nations system, States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- take advantage of UNESCO's experience in the field;
- promote positive examples and original projects, particularly on the occasion of political and cultural events, at national, regional and international levels;
- launch a call to raise extrabudgetary funds to finance relevant projects.

The plan of action, inspired by these thoughts, must respond to a dual objective to raise the awareness of the international community of the virtues of diversity and intercultural dialogue, using specific examples to show that all cultures and civilizations derive from and feed into each other, and to fight for human rights and against new forms of racism and discrimination.

Our partners – National Commissions for UNESCO, UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs and UNESCO Associated Schools, Goodwill Ambassadors and UNESCO Clubs and Centres, as well as parliamentarians, locally elected officials, culture, education and the media professionals and youth organizations – are called upon to participate actively in this Year.

I should be grateful if you would send your comments in writing **by 30 June 2009**, preferably by email, to Ms Katérina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, at [k.stenou@unesco.org](mailto:k.stenou@unesco.org) (tel. + 33 1 45 68 43 03), with a copy to Ms Klara Issak, Programme Specialist, [k.issak@unesco.org](mailto:k.issak@unesco.org); (tel. + 33 1 45 68 47 62). In addition, you may wish to fill in the attached form which will be used to create a database of good practices for intercultural dialogue.

Your answers will be incorporated into the draft plan of action to be presented to the Executive Board at its 182nd session in September 2009, before adoption by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 35th session in October 2009.

I hope that your Government will associate itself fully with the preparations for 2010.

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Koïchiro Matsuura  
Director-General

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO  
National Commissions for UNESCO

Enclosures: 34 C/Resolution 46  
Resolution 62/90  
Resolution 63/22  
Form on good practices

**34th session of the General Conference of UNESCO**  
(16 October – 2 November 2007)

**Resolution 46: Proclamation of an international year for the rapprochement of cultures<sup>1</sup>**

*The General Conference,*

*Recalling* the relevant aspects of UNESCO's mandate laid down in its Constitution, including the determination to develop and to increase the means of communication between peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives,

*Referring* to United Nations General Assembly resolutions 53/22 of 4 November 1998, 54/113 of 7 February 2000, and 55/23 of 11 January 2001 entitled "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations" and intended to encourage dialogue among civilizations,

*Also referring* to the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 14 July 2005, which is aimed at facilitating harmony and dialogue by emphasizing the common values of different cultures and religions,

*Endorsing* the aims of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Programme of Action contained in United Nations General Assembly resolutions 56/6 of 21 November 2001 and 60/4 of 1 December 2005 "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", and *taking into consideration* the proposals for the further development of dialogue contained in the United Nations Secretary-General's report prepared in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6,

*Also recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/25 of 19 November 1998 "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)", calling for the teaching of peace and non-violence at all levels of society in all countries,

*Further recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolutions 59/23 of 11 November 2004 "Promotion of interreligious dialogue", 60/10 of 3 November 2005 "Promotion of interreligious dialogue and cooperation for peace", 60/11 of 3 November 2005 "Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation" and 60/150 of 16 December 2005 "Combating defamation of religions",

*Considering* 29 C/Resolution 48 "The contribution of religion to the establishment of a culture of peace and the promotion of interreligious dialogue",

*Further referring* to 33 C/Resolution 38 "Promotion of dialogue among peoples (follow-up to 32 C/Resolution 30)", indicating that particular importance should be attached to the development of universal global consciousness, free from racial, ethnic and social prejudices,

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<sup>1</sup>

Resolution adopted on the report of the CLT Commission at the 22nd plenary meeting, on 2 November 2007.

*Reaffirming* that in keeping with the spirit of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, respect for the diversity of cultures, including traditions and beliefs, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, are among the best guarantees of international peace and security,

*Being guided* by a desire for continued support for the active efforts of the international community to intensify the dialogue among civilizations and to search for fresh perspectives in that regard,

*Noting* that the rapprochement of cultures highlights the links among and the diversity of cultures, and thus promotes the progress of human civilization,

*Recommends* that the United Nations General Assembly should proclaim the year 2010 “international year for the rapprochement of cultures”.



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
25 January 2008

Sixty-second session  
Agenda item 49

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/62/L.17/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

### **62/90. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace**

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

*Recalling* its resolutions 56/6 of 9 November 2001, on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, 57/6 of 4 November 2002, concerning the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, 57/337 of 3 July 2003, on the prevention of armed conflict, 58/128 of 19 December 2003, on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, 59/23 of 11 November 2004, on the promotion of interreligious dialogue, 59/143 of 15 December 2004, on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010, 60/167 of 16 December 2005, on human rights and cultural diversity, and 61/161 of 19 December 2006, on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recalling also* its resolution 61/221 of 20 December 2006, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace,

*Recognizing* that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are a source of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

*Taking into account* that in its resolution 46, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recommended that the General Assembly proclaim 2010 the international year for the rapprochement of cultures,<sup>2</sup>

*Taking note* of the valuable contribution of various initiatives at the national, regional and international levels to enhancing dialogue, understanding and

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-fourth Session, Paris, 16 October–2 November 2007*, vol. 1: *Resolutions*, chap.V.

cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated,

*Taking note also* of the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, with the overall theme of interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, held on 4 and 5 October 2007,

*Affirming* the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders in the interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at the various levels,

*Recognizing* the commitment of all religions to peace,

1. *Affirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on interreligious dialogue in the context of its efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, as well as activities related to a culture of peace, and welcomes its focus on concrete action at the global, regional and subregional levels and its flagship project on the promotion of interfaith dialogue;

3. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

4. *Welcomes* the designation of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to play a focal point role,<sup>3</sup> as requested in resolution 61/221, and pursuant thereto, to interact with United Nations system entities and to coordinate their contribution to the intergovernmental process, and looks forward to its effective functioning;

5. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance, understanding and cooperation, through, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace;

6. *Emphasizes* the need to sustain the momentum generated by the High-level Dialogue in subsequent discussions;

7. *Encourages* the promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or

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<sup>3</sup> See A/62/337, para. 27.

reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;

8. *Decides* to declare 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and recommends that, during the course of the year, appropriate events be organized on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, inter alia, a high-level dialogue and/or informal interactive hearings with civil society;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*74th plenary meeting  
17 December 2007*





# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
16 December 2008

Sixty-third session  
Agenda item 45

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/63/L.24/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

### 63/22. Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

*Recalling* its resolutions 56/6 of 9 November 2001, on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, 57/6 of 4 November 2002, concerning the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, 57/337 of 3 July 2003, on the prevention of armed conflict, 58/128 of 19 December 2003, on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, 59/23 of 11 November 2004, on the promotion of interreligious dialogue, 59/143 of 15 December 2004, on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010, 60/167 of 16 December 2005, on human rights and cultural diversity, and 62/157 of 18 December 2007, on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recalling also* its resolution 62/90 of 17 December 2007 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and the declaration of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures,

*Recognizing* that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are a source of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind,

*Taking note* of the various initiatives at the national, regional and international levels to enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated, inter alia, the fourth Asia-Pacific Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and Harmony, held in Phnom Penh from 3 to 6 April 2008,<sup>2</sup> the Third Global Inter-Media Dialogue, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 7 and 8 May 2008, the Fourth Asia-Europe

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

<sup>2</sup> See A/62/949.

Meeting Interfaith Dialogue, held in Amsterdam from 3 to 5 June 2008,<sup>3</sup> the World Conference on Dialogue, held in Madrid from 16 to 18 July 2008,<sup>4</sup> the Sixth General Meeting of the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”, held in Rhodes, Greece, from 9 to 13 October 2008, the Second Alliance of Civilizations Forum, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 2 and 3 April 2009, the Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development, to be held in Manila from 26 to 28 May 2009, the fifth Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue, to be held in Australia in 2009, the Parliament of the World’s Religions, to be held in Melbourne, Australia, from 3 to 9 December 2009, and the Third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, to be held in Astana on 1 and 2 July 2009, with the participation and technical assistance of the United Nations system,

*Affirming* the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders in the interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue within the appropriate initiatives at the various levels,

*Recognizing* the commitment of all religions to peace,

1. *Affirms* that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;<sup>5</sup>

3. *Also takes note* of the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on interreligious dialogue in the context of its efforts to promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, as well as activities related to a culture of peace, and welcomes its focus on concrete action at the global, regional and subregional levels and its flagship project on the promotion of interfaith dialogue;

4. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup> and other instruments relating to human rights and international law, the universal nature of these rights and freedoms being beyond question;

5. *Encourages* the promotion of dialogue among the media from all cultures and civilizations, emphasizes that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, and reaffirms that the exercise of this right carries with it special duties and responsibilities and may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall be only such as are provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals;

6. *Encourages* Member States to consider, as and where appropriate, initiatives that identify areas for practical action in all sectors and levels of society for the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, tolerance,

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<sup>3</sup> See A/63/510.

<sup>4</sup> See A/63/499.

<sup>5</sup> A/63/262.

understanding and cooperation, inter alia, the ideas suggested during the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, held on 4 and 5 October 2007, including the idea of an enhanced process of dialogue among world religions;

7. *Takes note* of the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the culture of peace, held on 12 and 13 November 2008, during the sixty-third session of the Assembly, in which the President of the Assembly had invited participation at the highest possible level;

8. *Requests* the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, as the focal point for interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational matters, to coordinate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in facilitating consideration of the possibility of proclaiming a United Nations decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;

9. *Takes note* of the Third Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, held on 25 September 2008 in New York;

10. *Invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with Member States, and through extrabudgetary resources, to play a leading role in the preparations for the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, in 2010, taking into account General Assembly resolution 61/185 of 20 December 2006 and the relevant provisions of Assembly resolution 62/90;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*50th plenary meeting  
13 November 2008*

**DATABASE OF PRACTICES TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE:**  
**A learning tool for better mutual understanding and appreciation**

**SUBMISSION FORM OF THE PROJECT**

**1. PROJECT TITLE:**

.....

**Implementing Organization:**

Name: .....

Postal Address:.....

Telephone (country and city code):.....Fax:.....

E-mail:.....Skype:.....

Website: <http://>

Key contact person(s):.....

**2. OBJECTIVES:** Please tick the box(es) from the list below that best correspond(s) to the nature of your project (1, 2, 3..), bearing in mind that the promotion of intercultural dialogue for better mutual understanding and appreciation is addressed through a variety of topics, approaches and actors according to the specific nature of each society:

- Fostering intercultural education and communication, as well as intercultural skills, namely new training needs and opportunities for education, culture, sciences and media professionals;
- Strengthening interreligious dialogue, notably dialogue among leaders of religions, spiritual traditions and humanistic trends;
- Combating racism, discrimination and intolerance;
- Fighting against marginalization and exclusion, namely in urban settings;
- Preventing conflicts that mobilize cultural differences;
- Creating participatory mechanisms with a view to effective citizenship;
- Promoting the implementation of human rights, including cultural rights;
- Enhancing a variety of cultural expressions as well as cultural heritage that could be present or not on each national territory;
- Creating new mechanisms of public debate and awareness raising, namely through the media, to build bridges between ethnic, religious and cultural groups;
- Providing new spaces for intercultural encounters (i.e. museums, cultural centres, web-based dialogue forums notably addressed to the young, etc);
- Other (please specify):

**3. IMPLEMENTATION** (max. 500 words):

**A. Background** (short description, including duration and venue of the event, such as international or national campaigns, World Days, International Decades and Years, etc):

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**B. Geographical scope:**

Intervention level:  International;  Regional;  National;  Local  
Country: ..... Region, city or neighborhood: .....

**C. Target groups** (please specify beneficiaries such as youth, women, minorities, etc.) <sup>1</sup>: .....  
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**D. Partners** (please list the main partners involved in the project, including UN agencies or other international organizations /, NGOs, if any): .....  
...

Name of organization/person in charge:.....  
Address:.....  
Telephone:.....Fax :.....  
E-mail:.....Skype:.....  
Website: <http://>.....  
Type of cooperation<sup>2</sup>:.....

**E. Strategies** (processes, critical stages of the project to reach its objectives, human and financial resources employed, pedagogical and communication tools<sup>3</sup>/methods used, etc.):  
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**F. Difficulties and challenges** (Please share with us the difficulties and challenges encountered in implementing your project):  
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**G. Results and key lessons learnt** (brief evaluation of achievements related to initial expectations, including long-term impact):  
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**H. Follow-up in concrete actions:**  
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**4. Additional comments / suggestions (optional):**

Such as: how the project has positively impacted the lives of the people concerned; why this project stands as an innovative practice bearing an impact on the promotion of intercultural

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<sup>1</sup> Please feel free to illustrate with narratives or testimonies of people concerned  
<sup>2</sup> Type of cooperation: financial, technical or logistical, political, administrative, other (please specify)  
<sup>3</sup> Please, attach any awareness-raising material, reports, CDs/DVDs, photos, etc. that you might find relevant to a full understanding of the project.

dialogue; if that is the case, how the project has allowed for a revision of policies and strategies geared to harmonious coexistence.

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**5. 2010** has been declared as the **International Year for the rapprochement of cultures** by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 62/90 of 25 January 2008), which recommended that activities be organized on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace during the year.

In this regard, do you plan to undertake activities to mark the International Year? If yes, please provide us with information on such activities, referring, if necessary, to paragraph 2 of the form.

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**UNESCO Contacts**

(For questions and submission of the completed form):

by email:

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