



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Address by Irina Bokova,

Director-General of UNESCO

**on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the 4th World Forum on
Intercultural Dialogue “Advancing Intercultural Dialogue – New Avenues
for human security, peace and sustainable development”**

Baku, 5 May 2017

His Excellency Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to participate in this *4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue* -- I recall well my participation in the successful 2nd Forum in 2013.

I wish to thank President Ilham Aliyev for his longstanding leadership in promoting intercultural dialogue.

This is embodied also in the tireless engagement of the First Lady, Ms Mehriban Aliyeva, as *UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Oral and Musical Traditions*.

All this reflects Azerbaijan's long history on the Silk Road as a centre for exchange, scholarship and art.

We see this embodied in Baku's Walled City, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and Azerbaijan's rich intangible cultural heritage -- including the ancient art of carpet weaving and the celebration of *Nowruz*, jointly inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List.

We need this leadership more than ever today.

Across the world, we see conflicts tearing countries apart, with civilians hit hardest.

We see the rise of violent extremism and ‘cultural cleansing.’

We see mosques, churches and other temples destroyed and cultural diversity threatened.

We see education under attack and children forced out of learning.

We see freedom of expression threatened, journalists attacked.

We see societies closing against perceived ‘Others’, minorities persecuted.

We see the rise of ancient hatreds, antisemitism, racial discrimination, intolerance.

In this context, we have no choice -- we must remain true to the compass setting of human rights and dignity, and we must respond.

‘Hard power’ is not enough.

We need the ‘soft power’ of education, knowledge, culture, communication, the sciences, to strengthen the values we share and recognise the destiny we hold in common.

All cultures are different, but humanity is a single family, bound by respect for human rights and dignity for all.

This is our vision of the world -- UNESCO’s vision.

We are rebuilding mosques in Timbuktu – this is our vision.

We are defending humanity’s shared heritage as our commonwealth -- this is our vision.

We are promoting new forms of global solidarity, global citizenship -- this is our vision.

For UNESCO, peace “*must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.*”

Tolerance is not enough.

Passive coexistence is insufficient.

We need solidarity, we need understanding, we need respect for diversity as a source of confidence and belonging, a wellspring for creativity and innovation.

Diversity is a reality -- we need new policies, based on human rights, on democracy, to make the most of its power for all.

These goals guide all of UNESCO's activities, including our partnership with the Alliance of Civilizations and with ISESCO, and our cooperation with partners here today, including the Food and Agricultural Organisation and a wide range of private sector actors.

These goals underpin the international standards UNESCO sets for safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage and cultural diversity.

They guide our leadership of the *International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022)*, to promote “*interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace.*”

They inspire all UNESCO's action to prevent violent extremism -- through global citizenship education, through resources to support teachers in promoting peace in classrooms, through support to the Internet as a force for human rights and dialogue, to prevent the radicalisation of young women and men, to bolster media literacy.

This echoes the determination of the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to lead a ‘*surge in the diplomacy of peace.*’

In his words:

“*We need a global response that addresses the root causes of conflict and integrates peace, sustainable development and human rights in a holistic way, from conception to execution.*”

Mesdames et Messieurs,

La construction de la paix passe nécessairement, aujourd'hui, par un effort nouveau pour l'éducation, la connaissance, le dialogue des cultures

C'est le cœur du mandat de l'UNESCO et c'est pourquoi nous travaillons à renforcer les capacités des éducateurs en Albanie, en Bosnie-Herzégovine, en Serbie, au Kazakhstan, au Kirghizstan, au Tadjikistan et en Ouzbékistan.

Nous menons le même travail en Afrique de l'Ouest, avec l'*Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*.

Nous soutenons l'éducation pour la prévention de l'extrémisme violent au Maroc, en Mauritanie, au Sénégal.

C'est la raison pour laquelle, l'UNESCO lutte dans le monde entier pour l'éducation à l'Holocauste - nous devons enseigner cette histoire pour ne jamais oublier, pour lutter aujourd'hui contre le racisme et la haine et pour éviter de nouveaux génocides demain.

Protéger la culture va bien au-delà de la préservation des bâtiments et des pierres.

Protéger la culture, c'est parler de valeurs, défendre des principes, soigner des identités, nourrir un sentiment d'appartenance et ce que les peuples et les citoyens ont de plus cher.

Il s'agit de fortifier le dialogue, la compréhension et la paix.

C'est le message de la résolution historique du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies adoptée le 24 mars sur la protection du patrimoine culturel en cas de conflit armé.

C'est le message du «Processus de Bakou».

La diversité culturelle est une chance, c'est une force pour les sociétés, une source de résilience, d'adaptation et de fierté.

C'est l'esprit même de l'Humanisme - qui s'appuie sur cette sagesse ancestrale de la poétesse azerie, Mahsati Ganjavi, dont le 900e anniversaire a été célébré par l'UNESCO en 2013.

Je la cite,

« Quand je me suis dépassée,

Le chemin s'est finalement ouvert à moi. »

Ce chemin est devant nous – il conduit vers les autres pour dialoguer, c'est l'essence même de la recherche de la paix.

Je vous remercie.