



21st November 2010

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization would like to thank the Forum for the 21st Century for initiating the discussion and organizing the conference on global cultural issues. It is through a dialogue that the world can achieve global visions of sustainable development encompassing observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which are at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities.

It is UNESCO's principal goals to attain quality education for all and lifelong learning, mobilizing science knowledge and policy for sustainable development, addressing emerging social and ethical challenges, fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace, building inclusive knowledge societies through information and communication.

After an in-depth analysis of the second draft proposed by the Forum for the 21st century UNESCO would also like to offer its suggestions:

1. Global English as lingua franca

You suggest using English language as the lingua franca for the communication on international level. Taking into consideration the fact that English language is already unofficially considered as an international language used worldwide, UNESCO prefers focusing on promoting and preserving those individual languages that are endangered. UNESCO still believes that promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity, including the safeguarding of endangered languages is a crucial task in maintaining cultural diversity worldwide. However, one of its goals also include providing the necessary resources and take the necessary measures to alleviate language barriers, so we have developed several processes in science and literature that include translating and disseminating scientific materials and international literature work to communities to overcome language barriers. One of the six educational institutes of UNESCO implementing these goals is **the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)**. UIL provides services in literacy, non-formal education, adult and lifelong learning to UNESCO's Member States, NGOs and grassroots and community organizations. UIL responds perfectly to your demands and could serve as



a supervisor with its Board made up of outstanding specialists in the educational field from different regions of the world. Nevertheless, concerning the creation of the commission budget, UNESCO does not agree with 1% of GDP participation of each its member country. You offer to start a relatively small project, that will probably expand in the future to other areas or languages, but UNESCO considers 1% of GDP too much in comparison to what countries already contribute to education, culture and science combined. Besides the networking, publications and technical services that UIL can offer, UNESCO are willing to offer a part of our budget assigned on education.

2. Secularization and Harmonization of Religious Differences

For some cultures, religion is a way of life, permeating every human activity. For others it represents the highest aspirations of human existence. In still others, religions are institutions that claim to carry a message of salvation. Religions have contributed to the peace of the world, but they have also led to division, hatred, and war. UNESCO agrees that religions must not identify themselves with political, economic, or social powers, so as to remain free to work for justice and peace and that it should respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as you have stated in your draft. UNESCO maintains its ground saying that a total secularization is not possible to achieve all over the world. Your idea of religious individualization presented as believing without belonging, is not practicable in all member states of our organisation that practically identify their religion with their culture. UNESCO does not consider creating a fiscal system that allows citizens to devote part of their taxes as a financial support to the church they belong to as a reasonable idea. There are already many devoted people, who give some donation to their church, without being obliged to do so. You cannot force all the believers and non-believers to equally contribute to their church if you call for secularization.

Regarding establishing a system of bilateral or multilateral agreements between different religious associations, it is similar to the interreligious dialogue that UNESCO tries to promote. The idea of these agreements is promising, but the process of negotiation of concrete treaties between concrete religions will be very difficult. UNESCO is afraid that the process itself will increase interreligious conflicts in some countries.



3. Multiculturalism and Importance of Common Values

UNESCO, which main goal is still the promotion of dialogue in the service of peace – in order to build “peace in the minds of men”, agrees with your proposal of creating a special body, functioning under the Ministry of Culture that will be responsible for the research on the cultural, historical, political, social, psychological, educational and economic factors, which facilitate the peaceful coexistence of different cultures. This special Body with financial support of Ministry of Culture could present the outcomes of their research in form of publications and presentation in the media on documentary basis comprehensible for all social spheres. These documentary films could be presented to students in primary and secondary schools to increase awareness of different cultures.

The proposed concept of democratic multiculturalism is considered as necessity, regarding the fact UNESCO thinks that politicians too have to be concerned with the topic of multiculturalism. In the future it should not only be the topic of discussion between NGO's and international organisation.

4. Intercultural dialogue as Prevention of Intra-national Conflicts

You are suggesting to create an international entity that would consist of scholars representing each member state, selected by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture that would try to bridge the gap in knowledge about other cultures. This proposal is very similar to your former offer as the goals are basically the same – that is promoting different cultures. UNESCO has the same goal, i.e. the promotion of cultural diversity – the "common humanity heritage" has become one of the most pressing contemporary issues and, for this reason, is central to the Organization's mandate.

Forum for the 21st century proposes to create a common budget of the organization with a contribution of 1,5 percent of GDP from each state. UNESCO agrees that certain financial contribution from the member states is necessary. It also believes that the diversity of the world's cultures is our wealth and our future and it is time to increase our investment in cultural diversity and dialogue for development. But this is a long term work and UNESCO suggests that now in the time of global crisis, this international entity should cooperate with Ministry of Culture and Education, not in the way of demanding other extra funding, but in the way of offering help and know how about the distribution of the amount of money, that each state already assigns to culture and education.