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## A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY OF UNESCO'S CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAMME

This paper briefly describes the evolution of the culture of peace concept, programme and project of UNESCO. The following marker points may be recognized in its development: 1989 - first elaboration of the concept at UNESCO; 1992 - culture of peace as contribution to United Nations peace-keeping agenda; 1995 - transdisciplinary project at UNESCO; 1997 - declaration and programme of action for United Nations General Assembly. Coming at the end of the Cold War, the initial stage of the culture of peace was a recommitment to the founding vision of the organization - the construction of peace in the minds of men and women. It was then associated with UN peace-keeping and emphasized post-conflict peace-building in association with peace-keeping operations such as those in El Salvador and Mozambique. More recently, it was expanded to engage all of the sectors of the organization in a single synergistic process appropriate to all countries, industrial as well as developing. As a result the culture of peace has grown beyond its original scope and become a global movement involving other international organizations as well as UNESCO and governments and non-governmental organizations in all regions of the world.

UNESCO has engaged in activities to promote a culture of peace from its beginnings, when it was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men and women. However, because of the Cold War, there were severe limits on the ability of the United Nations, including UNESCO, to engage in very specific activities which would have an impact on a global level. With the end of the Cold War and the new political and social world order which followed, it was evident that a new potential was available and a new effort was needed.

The concept of a culture of peace was formulated by the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men which was held in the heart of Africa (Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, 1989). In its final declaration the Congress recommended UNESCO to "help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women". The term was inspired by the 1986 initiative "Cultura de Paz" in Peru. It was also inspired in part by the Seville Statement on Violence, written by scientists from around the world, which stated scientifically and categorically that war is not determined by genes, "violent brains", "human nature" or "instincts", but was rather a social invention and "the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace".

In 1992 the UNESCO Executive Board requested a specific programme for a culture of peace as a contribution to United Nations peace-keeping efforts. These peace-

keeping efforts, made possible by the end of the Cold War and the capacity of the UN Security Council to act by consensus, had recently expanded to operations in El Salvador, Mozambique, Cambodia and other countries. The UNESCO Programme was formulated as the Organization's response to An Agenda for Peace, the Security Council document which provided the rationale for this new stage of UN operations.

Hence, the first stage of the UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme consisted of national programmes in El Salvador, Mozambique and Burundi, in association with United Nations Peace-keeping operations or similar situations. In these programmes UNESCO engages those previously in conflict to work together in the planning, execution and evaluation of human development projects, transforming enmity to cooperation. For example, in El Salvador, government ministries and organizations from civil society including representatives of the former guerillas have together developed a campaign of education for rural women. The campaign centres around the community radio broadcasts "Buenos Tiempo Mujeres" which provides conscious-raising and information on health and women's rights on 40 radio stations throughout the country. This is linked to a grass-roots educational campaign involving voluntary community peace promoters. Since 1992 initiatives for a culture of peace have taken place in many other countries of Latin America and Africa, as well as a culture of peace project directed by the government in the Philippines.

National culture of peace programmes have provided basic lessons for a culture of peace which can be applied everywhere. Peace is seen as more than the absence of war. It must be dynamic, a process of non-violent social change in which everyone participates and from which everyone benefits. A culture of peace is not the absence of differences or conflicts, but is characterized by diversity, pluralism, dialogue and compromise. Differences are to be understood and respected, and conflict, rather than leading to violence, is seen as an opportunity for learning and transformation. Hence, actions for a culture of peace must promote intercultural dialogue, understanding and tolerance.

Actions for a culture of peace must also recognize that peace is intrinsically linked to democracy and development; without justice there can be peace. The deep causes of war and violence must be addressed and eradicated. A culture of peace cannot be achieved through authoritarian, hierarchial processes which deny democratic participation, but must be a process in which all are fully engaged. It must grow out of the beliefs and actions of the people themselves and develop in each country within its specific historical and sociocultural context. It needs to be constructed from the ground up, on the basis of practical local and community actions, as well as changes in values and attitudes.

The 1995 decision to create a Transdisciplinary Culture of Peace Project involving all of the sectors and field offices of UNESCO broadened the concept to address the full range of values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals and institutions which have been shaped by and supported war and violence and to transform them into values attitudes and behaviours which promote non-violent social change and justice. This includes: 1)

changing the concept and practice of power from violence and force to non-violence and respect for human rights; 2) replacing authoritarian structures and exploitation with democratic participation and sustainable human development for all; 3) replacing male domination with full equality of women and men; 4) replacing secrecy and the manipulation of information with participatory communication and the free flow and sharing of information and knowledge; and 5) replacing enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples and cultures.

In a culture of peace, power is redefined not in terms of violence or force, but of active nonviolence. This builds upon the experience of active nonviolence as a means of social change and its proven success during the twentieth century. It is based on respect and active defence of the full range of human rights for every person.

The hierarchical, vertical authority which characterizes the culture of violence and war is replaced in a culture of peace by democratic process in which people participate on a continuing basis in making the decisions which affect their lives.

The exploitation that has characterized the culture of violence and war (slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism) is replaced by cooperation and sustainable development for all. These components distinguish the culture of peace from static conceptions of peace which perpetuate the violence of the status quo, and link it intrinsically with the struggle for social justice.

The male-dominated culture of violence and war is replaced by a culture based upon power-sharing between men and women, especially the caring and nurturing capabilities traditionally associated with and developed by women.

Secrecy and control of information by those in power is replaced by the free flow and sharing of information among everyone involved. The accessibility of information undermines authoritarianism and encourages social change - being necessary for the full participation which is the basis of real democracy.

Finally, people are mobilized not in order to defeat an enemy but in order to build understanding, tolerance, and solidarity. This component, corresponding to the central tenets of nonviolence developed by Gandhi, King, and Mandela, emphasizes the need to liberate the oppressor as well as the oppressed, and places strategies for developing unity among different cultures, ethnic groups, religions and nationalities at the center of deliberation and action.

Violence and war are not inevitable. Like peace and nonviolence, they are choices made by people to achieve specific goals. Peace exists only if it is "constructed," and only if it is "made", by individuals and institutions that persist in their efforts to build it. Unesco's culture of peace project offers a vision, a concrete language, and specific proposals for alternatives to violence. Furthering the process depends upon the cooperation and active involvement of governments, inter-governmental and non-

governmental organizations. UNESCO offers its partnership to all who wish to join in this common task.

Increasingly the agenda of promoting a culture of peace is being adopted by the entire United Nations system. Speaking at the Conference on Global Diversity in Australia in 1995, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said that “a truly global culture of peace - based on mutual respect and creative exchange ... is at the heart of the great historical enterprise that is the United Nations.” And in one of his first major addresses, the new UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has stated that “in the broadest sense, we seek to establish a culture of peace.” Over 70 member states joined in co-sponsoring a resolution at the 1996 UN General Assembly requesting the assistance of the UNESCO Director-General in providing elements for a declaration and programme of action for the United Nations system to promote a culture of peace which will be considered by them in their session in the fall of 1997.

As we enter the 21st Century, there is no more pressing challenge than to make the transformation from the culture of war to the culture of peace. It is not enough to promote this change by post-conflict peace-building in the countries of the developing world. Instead, it can only succeed if it is accomplished on a global scale, including transformations in the developed industrial countries as well as those in the developing world. This is why the interest shown in culture of peace actions by governmental and non-governmental organizations in the Russian Federation is of such great and historic importance. The peoples of the Russian Federation can create a great precedent for the rest of the industrialized world if they move forward on this agenda with enthusiasm and energy.