

Final Report

International Conference on Education 44th Session

**Geneva
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UNESCO

**International Bureau
of Education**

ANNEX II

Opening address by Mr Federico Mayor Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Madam President,
Madam Minister,
Mr President of the General Conference,
Members of the Executive Board,
Madam President of the Council of the International Bureau of Education,
Ministers,
Heads of delegations, representatives of governmental and
non-governmental organizations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me and a pleasure to open with you the proceedings of the 44th session of the International Conference on Education, whose theme provides me with an opportunity to express UNESCO's renewed commitment to peace, democracy and human rights.

First of all, I would like to express my whole-hearted gratitude to the Swiss federal authorities and to those of the Republic and Canton of Geneva for the hospitality with which they have honoured this Conference for many years. I would like to pay my respects to Ms Brunschvig Graf, Head of the Swiss Delegation and member of the Council of State, and through her to greet all the authorities of our host country.

I also welcome the presence of this exceptionally large number of ministers and deputy ministers. This clearly indicates your concern for one of the most serious problems of contemporary society and also shows that this Conference, by dint of its international character, its remarkable continuity and the way it functions, is the most important international forum for dialogue and discussion concerning education.

I would also like to greet the representatives and observers from non-Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. Their presence is still further proof of the need for work in common, for synergy, and for the building of new partnerships in educational action.

My thanks and my congratulations go to the Council of the International Bureau of Education and to its President, Ms Ruth Lerner de Almeida. The IBE Council, which was responsible for preparing the Conference, took the initiative of introducing very important changes into its organization so that we would have opportunities to talk together in a more fruitful way and with more substantive results. As you know, we will have the chance here to debate some fundamental problems such as how to build a culture of peace and the role that education can and must play in this, how to promote tolerance and the non-violent resolution of conflicts and what kind of citizenship we must fashion for the future. Debate, dialogue, the exchange of information and experience will be the watchwords of our session, where open discussion will be enriched as much by our doubts as by our beliefs.

As you all know, this discussion began before today. In fact, this session of the International Conference on Education was launched a few months ago at the time of the regional preparatory meetings which it was the IBE Council's wish to hold as a further very important innovation in the organization of this Conference. These regional meetings have enabled you yourselves and your experts to play an active and direct part in the preparation of the documents that you will be able to endorse at the conclusion of your work.

What have we learned during this process of discussion and consultation? The first thing is that everyone is concerned at the upsurge of intolerance and extremism, the increasing number of manifestations of racial hatred and the way in which discrimination and violence have become everyday occurrences. No region is free from these problems. The reasons for this upsurge are, of course, not the same in every place, but it is everywhere the product of a complex association of economic, cultural, political and social factors. The gulf that is opening up between rich and poor, internationally and nationally, the collapse of the world order that resulted from the 1939-1945 war, the inequality of population growth rates and the distress afflicting many populations in the North and the South alike are some of the causes of this disquieting trend. Above all, however, one should not forget that this upsurge of violence is the consequence of the oppression in which several peoples have lived for decades. It manifests itself when freedom of expression permits. Freedom is the prerequisite for living together in peace, for understanding others, for equity and justice. Of course, we have some very bad examples but we also have some excellent examples which give us hope - the hope that comes from El Salvador, from the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, from Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa and the Middle East. Yes, we have some bad examples, but we have too some excellent, very recent examples which make it possible for us to tell young people today that the true peace, in justice and freedom, that it is UNESCO's task to construct in the mind of every woman and every man, can be reached through dialogue, through imagination and through concern for others.

We have also learned that education in general, and schools in particular, are not a neutral area and are not remote from these problems. And education, which concerns the family and the media as much as the school, and which concerns the whole of life, must today, more than ever, demonstrate its ability to promote the values and behaviour necessary for the training of citizens worthy of that name, its ability to promote a new equilibrium and the radical social transformation that is needed so urgently as the third millennium dawns.

The discussions held at the regional meetings and the analyses put forward in preparation for the Conference also tell us that curricula relating to peace, human rights and democracy must overcome, as Madam President stressed a short while ago, the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality, theory and practice. We know that many problems stem from the fact that existing curricula are not implemented. Nevertheless, the situation has changed greatly, both within individual countries and at world level. We are living in a time of transition and accelerated change which calls for modifications to the traditional style of education. We must therefore not apply the same kinds of curricula as in the past but chart new courses adapted to the present-day social, economic, political and cultural contexts. We must devise new forms of action by using that ability for creativity which is the hallmark of the human race. In order to do so, let us take inspiration from the extraordinary words uttered by an extraordinary man, Albert Einstein: 'In times of crisis, only imagination is more important than knowledge'.

Madam President,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In major international conferences such as this, we tend to speak of education in rather impersonal terms. We present it as a process through which people pass. Yet, when we reflect upon our own education, we do so in ways that are highly personal. When I recall my own school years, for example, I think of them not as a process, but as an encounter with a series of talented and devoted teachers who not only taught me, but profoundly shaped my values and views - indeed, my very being.

Yet, while each of us reveres the particular teachers who helped us to get a start in life and gave us a sense of purpose and direction, teachers as a group are often forgotten or underestimated. They tend to be depicted as part of the educational problem rather than as our only real hope for solving this problem. The fact is that improving education must go hand in hand with improving the status and the level of professionalism of teachers and the respect that society accords them. Teachers are not only the instrument of education; they are its spirit and its soul. There can be no successful education without devoted teachers.

This is the message that UNESCO hopes to send in establishing today, 5 October, as International Teachers' Day. The launching of this day, as many of you are aware, was decided by the General Conference at its twenty-fifth session. Over 100 Member States have already indicated their willingness - indeed, their eagerness - to celebrate this day annually in a manner appropriate to its purpose. The 5th of October has been chosen because it was on this day in 1966 that the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Teachers was adopted by the international community. The Recommendation recognizes the crucial role that teachers play in ensuring the well-being of society and the importance of giving them the conditions and status to enable them to accomplish their assignment.

In declaring this International Teachers' Day, we would like to tell the teachers of the world, at the same moment in time, that we are thankful to them for their hard work and dedication and for the heavy responsibilities they bear in educating the children of today to become the citizens of tomorrow.

It is especially fitting that we celebrate this first International Teachers' Day on the occasion of the world's most important and longest-established international meeting on education. It is particularly appropriate to do so at this session devoted to education for tolerance, for attitudes such as tolerance are acquired more by example than from textbooks. And what better person outside the family to provide that example than the teacher? If our schools are to teach us to be better people, not merely better informed people, they will need to be able to call upon teachers who demonstrate in life, not merely preach in classrooms, that they truly believe in peace, in tolerance and in justice. The better life that is our hope for tomorrow will not come about by chance. It will have to be learned, and a key setting for such learning is classrooms where the values we cherish and so urgently require are practised and promoted.

UNESCO is facing up to the new educational and cultural challenges with the maturity of experience and the boldness that the complexity of the present situation calls for. It is one of my favourite sayings that risk without knowledge is dangerous, but that knowledge without risk is pointless. This intrepidity is thus more necessary than ever at the dawning of the new century, which promises to be full of hope. Education for international understanding has been

one of UNESCO's priority objectives. We have promoted standard-setting instruments such as the 1974 Recommendation that have played a vital role in the formulation of our educational programmes, we have set up international networks of schools like the Associated Schools (of which there are over 4,000 throughout the world), and, more recently, the inter-university networks programme of co-operation, UNITWIN. We have encouraged innovations and pilot projects, elaborated new teaching materials and endeavoured to raise the awareness of the general public through a large number of publication activities. The new international situation has tested our ability to adapt to emergency needs and we have responded with new programmes aimed at the reconstruction of the education systems in countries devastated by armed conflict or by natural disasters. We have given an answer to reflection about the future and about the function of education and culture in the rebuilding of a future of peace and democracy. All this experience is positive and is the great wealth and great richness that we possess, but it also teaches us that the path we have to tread is terribly long and steep.

One thing we are sure of: the development of a culture of peace, meaning a culture of living together in peace based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, sustainable economic development, social equilibrium, tolerance, solidarity and respect for human rights, is today a more pressing matter than ever before. There is no doubt that the balance based on terror and the threat of planetary destruction that existed until only a few years ago, has disappeared. The disappearance of the opposing blocs and the end of the Cold War have given rise to new expectations of peace and co-operation. But the Cold War must not be replaced by a cold peace. The overcoming of the traditional rivalry that existed has led - precisely because these were countries that were living under dictatorship and oppression - to a resurgence of age-old conflicts and to others of a new stamp. We are daily witnesses to the spectacle of ethnic and racial violence that we all believed overcome once and for all and that is again prevailing in a way that is unacceptable for the stage of development that humanity has reached. At the same time, new forms of tension are making their appearance and new ways of waging war against which we are powerless, not only in practice but also - and this is much more dangerous - from the moral and axiological point of view.

For all these reasons, UNESCO is called upon to play an active role in the development of a culture of peace and democracy, based on the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and equitably, and in the renewal of strategies for action. It is not, and this I must stress, a question of promoting the idea that peace can be based on the absence of conflict. Conflicts will continue to exist and the culture of peace must therefore be defined by the ability to face up to them constructively, on the basis of negotiation and participation. Above all, we must be able to detect them at an early stage in order to deal with them at their roots and, if possible, avoid them.

Our great task is to be the look-outs for the future, since in this way we shall be able to anticipate and prevent. Prevention is the greatest victory since it is what avoids suffering and avoids confrontation. But as a clinician who has worked on the prevention of children's illnesses, I know very well that prevention is invisible. Successful prevention is not seen, and what the eye does not see, the heart does not feel. We must therefore create this new culture of the perception of the intangible and the invisible, and of knowing that to invest in prevention and in the construction of peace is the best and the most profitable of investments. The construction of democracy, peace and tolerance is a question of symbols, values and culture and not only the result of economic or political agreement. Democracy is not given or conferred; it is built day by day in each one of us and in our immediate circle. Democracy implies participation and it is a saying of mine that I exist as a citizen only if I participate; if I do not participate, I do not exist as a citizen. To participate and to count, not just to be

counted, I must have access to knowledge and to education. Education is the corner-stone of democracy because democracy is a way of behaving, a way of being fashioned by conviction, thought, advances and retreats. It is a culture because, for me, the best definition of culture is our daily behaviour. Education must be for all, throughout life and not during a period of schooling, because education is an opportunity that must be available to all citizens, all through life. Only in this way, ladies and gentlemen, will we manage to include the excluded. Only in this way, will we manage to reach those who today are unreachable, all those women and men and all those children living in human settlements that we still cannot reach via the traditional systems of education. When we think of information superhighways, we shall nevertheless think of the narrow tracks of these villages, we shall think of the 600,000 human settlements which still today have no electricity; and we shall approach this problem with imagination. We shall think how we can, using unconventional energy sources, bring them this knowledge and enable them to have interactive education, how we can reach the unreachable and include the excluded.

The task is not an easy one, as you very well know. Achievements in the formation of values and attitudes can be short-lived and require from us constant and renewed effort. Circumstances have changed and that means that we too must change. We are faced with new challenges which are creating new opportunities and therefore we are also faced with the need to devise new solutions and strategies. During this time in Geneva we will have the chance to discuss ideas, get to know opinions and relate our experiences which, I must stress, are the most important thing that we have, and share our worries, concerns and illusions.

Our only strength lies in words. The intellectual organization of the United Nations system has no strength other than words, other than the ability to persuade, to demonstrate in all areas of decision-making that education alone can provide the human resources that are essential for economic growth; that only by providing every woman and every man with control over his or her own destiny can demographic growth be reduced; that only in this way can we lessen poverty; that only in this way can we diminish the massive migrations which are already taking place, which are set to be exceptional in the years to come and which could be a source of confrontation and conflict. We are prepared for the past; we have rockets, aeroplanes and submarines at our disposal for a war which is not even our own; but we are not on the other hand prepared to invest in education at all levels, in continuing education, in the environment to prevent the deterioration of our ecological surroundings and to leave our children and their children with a fully habitable biosphere. We are not prepared to combat violence, the violence which today also takes the form of the pandemics that kill thousands and millions of people every day: malaria and AIDS. We are not prepared to dig a well in every village so that millions of women will not have to go every morning and fetch a few litres of water on their heads. That is our battle today; that is our fight. It is, for example, the fight against the abuse of drugs which kill. They are new wars and new enemies; every day thousands of young people die from addiction to drugs which destroy their brains and their personalities. These are the wars of today which are killing us and in the face of which we are defenceless. A far-reaching transformation is needed so that we can move on from peace-keeping and emergency humanitarian operations which call for a tremendous amount of resources when the suffering has already occurred, to peace-building. We need to be able to carry out the mission that the founders of UNESCO gave to all of us, and especially to ministers of education and to teachers: that of building peace in the minds of the women and men of the world so that conflict and war can be avoided.

Madam President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are opening the 44th session of the International Conference on Education. We have made it the day which from now on will be devoted to paying tribute to educators for their unselfish work in favour of peace, democracy and social development. In a few hours' time we will have the opportunity of making a very important award, the Comenius Medal, to eight individuals and institutions, singled out for their work in education. Nothing could be more appropriate than to conclude this speech with a few words that the great teacher, Comenius, uttered, I should stress, almost 300 years ago. He said:

'If we want inhumanity to give way to humanity, we must seek untiringly the means of achieving that end. The means are threefold: first, people must recognize that it is unworthy of them to burden themselves and each other with hate for futile reasons; they must, in a general way, forgive past disputes, injustices and injuries. We shall call this, **erasing the past**. Second, none shall impose his or her philosophical, theological or political principles on any other person; on the contrary, everyone must allow everybody else to uphold their opinions and to enjoy in peace that which belongs to them. We shall call this **mutual tolerance**. And third, all people must endeavour, in a common effort, to find the best way of behaving and, to that end, must join their thoughts, their aspirations and their actions. And this we shall call **conciliation ...**'. End of quote.

Let us be capable of erasing the hatred of the past, of keeping the future in mind, of allowing everyone to enjoy what belongs to him or her and of finding, all of us together, the best way forward to build a culture of peace.

Thank you.

ANNEX VII

**Closing address by Mr Federico Mayor
Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)**

Mr President,
Madam Councillor of State, Chief of the
Government Department of Education,
Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the work of this 44th session of the International Conference on Education comes to an end, a session that has made its mark in more ways than one, I should like to thank you all for the high standard of debate and for the results achieved. Those results are due in the first place to the authority, courtesy and spirit of understanding with which, Mr President, you have conducted the proceedings of the Conference and I thank you most sincerely. My thanks are also due to the Vice-Presidents of the Conference, the Rapporteur-General, Mr Abdel Fattah Galal, and all those who led the discussions in the round tables.

Allow me to express my gratitude for the considerable amount of work that has been done by the government experts and, more particularly, by Mr Yves Brunsvick, Honorary President of the IBE Council and Vice-Chairperson of the French National Commission, who placed the wealth of his long international experience at the disposal of the Conference. Nor can we forget the efforts of the working groups and their Chairpersons, Mr Akiko Chiba and Mr Peter Whitney, who helped to finalize the texts that you have adopted. Please accept, therefore, distinguished ministers, ladies and gentlemen, my very sincere thanks.

Lastly, a special word of appreciation is due to the IBE Council and its President, Ms Ruth Lerner de Almea, for the innovative spirit in which this new pattern of organizing the work of the Conference was devised and prepared.

This new approach is one of the main ingredients that have made this session particularly meaningful. It is the product of the drive for change conducted by the IBE Council in order to adapt the concept of the Conference - which is a unique world gathering - to the new requirements and new expectations. Although much remains to be done to perfect the new formula and apply it in full, all in all we can be satisfied with the way in which it has been applied during the present session thanks to the efforts of the IBE Council but, above all, thanks to all of you, heads of delegation, delegates and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

One of the main innovations brought in by this new approach is what we have called the 'major debates' with the guests of honour. It has enabled us to have with us the Executive Director of UNICEF, Mr James Grant, and the Chairman of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, Mr Jacques Delors. Their participation and their

contributions have helped to expand our view of educational issues as they interact with other major problems of our time and the challenges that await us in the years to come. Speaking personally and, I am sure, on your behalf, I should like to express our gratitude to them once again.

Perhaps more than previous sessions, this one has mirrored the complexities of our world, the extreme diversity of people's situations, the distinctiveness of their various sensitivities. It has done so largely by virtue of the issues tackled during the session and the eminently ethical nature of the questions raised. And yet it seems to me that we have seen a broad convergence of aspirations and approaches. This is, I think, particularly important if we are to move forward to greater mutual understanding and closer co-operation. The regional presentations, another innovation brought in at this session, have also contributed much in this connection and I should like to thank the chairpersons of the preparatory meetings for the quality of those presentations. At the same time, it is clear that the national reports presented by the Member States at each session of the Conference have lost none of their importance for the Organization and for all the participants, since they represent a valuable source of information on the development of education in the various Member States. It is clear that the new approach seeks to consolidate the collective record of education all over the world that the IBE represents. I therefore urge all ministers who have not yet produced their national reports to do so as soon as possible. Shared experience is our common wealth.

Mr President,
Ministers,
Delegates,

Promoting non-violence everywhere. Encouraging attitudes of understanding and acknowledgement of diversity and differences. A constant awareness of other cultures and future generations. You have spoken of efforts in the sphere of civic education; you have told us how, in every country, training in universal values is being introduced into the educational process; you have explained how you are trying to place these points of convergence, the universal landmarks of justice, liberty and equity, as markers for educational techniques and teaching methods. In short, you have spoken of peace, the kind of peace that must be built in people's minds every day through education, through development, through a fairer distribution of wealth within and between countries and through sharing, so that a context of war may gradually give way to a setting of peace and so that we can successfully manage the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. The line of inquiry launched in 1989 in the heart of Africa at Yamassoukro, where this expression was first employed, has been translated into field programmes through the determination of Member States, and this Conference has just added a noteworthy contribution to that endeavour.

The culture of peace comprises all ethical and aesthetic values, habits and customs, attitudes towards others, forms of behaviour and ways of life that draw on and express:

respect for life and for individuals with their dignity and rights;

rejection of violence;

recognition of equal rights for men and women; and

upholding of the principles of democracy, freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance, the acceptance of differences, and understanding both between nations and countries and between ethnic, religious, cultural and social groups and individuals.

The culture of peace also implies a spirit of mutual respect and acceptance between cultures, ideologies and beliefs.

It is a set of convictions, a moral code and an individual and collective frame of mind, a way of being, of acting and reacting. Neither contemplative nor passive, it can only be active, effective, enterprising and innovative.

The debate that has just taken place confirms that the culture of peace is a vast concept, multidimensional and global. It includes efforts to maintain peace and prevent armed conflicts and violence, and efforts to build peace, not only between States but also between ethnic, cultural and religious groups. This goes well beyond the traditional concept of international peace to incorporate intranational peace. It is also closely linked to efforts aimed at establishing, building up and consolidating the only environment in which this concept can develop and survive: that is, democracy, in which human rights - indeed, all rights - may be upheld. It is with such a prospect in mind that you referred in your statements to the elimination of poverty and its accompanying ills (a real public disgrace), and to the improvement of living conditions for the underprivileged. These are the pre-conditions for the transition in which we are all involved, and you emphasized in that connection the decisive importance of long-term policies and activities for human development in establishing such a culture of peace on a sound basis.

One of you also remarked that the culture of peace was synonymous with a culture of life. Another pointed out that its development was bound up with language policies, with the primary form of cultural expression - language - through which we communicate with our parents, and that this culture implied an unremitting struggle against exclusion and prejudice.

Mr Delors in his address referred to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and of UNESCO. As you know, at its twenty-seventh session the General Conference adopted an important resolution on the subject of that anniversary, setting it in the context of the transition to the twenty-first century: for these anniversaries fall shortly before the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. The great changes that have occurred and that are still under way worldwide are the harbingers of new challenges. For that reason, the General Conference stressed that the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and of UNESCO should be used to full advantage to promote their refoundation and to prepare our organizations for new demands and new aspirations by anticipating these.

I should like to point out in this connection that your new, more dynamic style of conference is already geared to this prospect. I feel that it is important here to stress your unanimous view that the decisive role in the establishment of a culture of peace falls to education in the widest sense of the term, education in every form and at every level, education for all at every age.

How great, therefore, is the responsibility of teachers and educators in general and all those who are assembled here today: your responsibility and ours, all of us together. When you return home, pass on this message to all city mayors and all schools, through the media, of course, but also through your own action. Mr Minister of Bolivia, I have read with pleasure the journal that is sent to all the teachers in your country and I am sure that it is an important vector in this work of promoting awareness. Another essential force is the teachers' association: we have had the pleasure of meeting here the officials of several major associations, and we are aware of the decisive role that they play in the mobilization of the educational community and will be called on to play in spreading the message contained in the

Declaration and the resolution that you have just adopted, as well as in the Framework of Action of which you have taken note.

For a great many reasons, prominent among which is the importance and growing role of education in the broadest sense of the word, the responsibility of governments, educators and, in a democratic system, civil society is constantly on the increase. We must therefore look for new paths and new forms of action, and increase the scope of educational action through new partnerships. Whether at national or at international level, such new alliances will help us to use our knowledge, our experience and our resources to greater effect in implementing the provisions that you have adopted. Now is the time for you, and for all of us, to act.

You have adopted a fine Declaration and taken note of a Framework of Action. The former sets out major policies; the latter recommends ways and means. It is now for each one of us to make them a reality. Let me repeat: now is the time for action.

Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Framework of Action that you have adopted indicates clearly that the strategies cannot be the same in different cultural, economic and social contexts. Familiarity with and adaptation to specific local conditions is one of the prerequisites for the success of our action plans. At the same time, I would insist on one point: means cannot be divorced from ends. In other words, we cannot promote peace, human rights and democracy by using methods and strategies that are not themselves peaceful and democratic. There can be no cultural or economic justification for the use of methods that are violent or coercive, or that promote exclusion.

This call to action is addressed to all but especially to those who are better off. The solidarity about which we have said so much in the last few days should start with the most powerful, at both the national and the international level.

In the last few days, we have had an opportunity to become acquainted with a very wide variety of experience, situations and approaches. One case, however, deserves a special mention: the reconstruction of the Rwandan education system. Rwanda is a glaring example of errors committed by all sides in the past. For that reason, I appeal to the international community to help that country. It has already done so, especially in reaction to the images from Rwanda that have moved us all. And we all feel somewhat involved, somewhat guilty, and have therefore responded with acts of solidarity, even though the cost in lives and suffering was already overwhelming. I therefore believe that the time has come to launch an appeal for the reconstruction of every form of education in Rwanda on new foundations that will express that culture of peace which is our hope for the future.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I hope that the draft resolution which has been formulated in the presence of the Minister of Education and Higher Education and the Minister of Culture representing Rwanda at the Conference, will be adopted unanimously.

Mr President,

This year we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the IBE's integration with UNESCO. The success of this Conference fully demonstrates the role of record-keeper and guardian that the International Bureau of Education can and must play in this great qualitative and quantitative effort - one that fills us with hope on the eve of the new millennium. In

celebrating this silver wedding, the 25 years of partnership between UNESCO and the IBE, I should like to pay tribute to those who, from its inception in the days of the League of Nations, fought boldly for human dignity, before the terrible storm of the Second World War swept everyone away, destroying everything: all those who have worked and work now in the International Bureau of Education, from the least known to the best known, such as Jean Piaget, Pedro Rosselló and Leo Fernig, to name just a few of all those who deserve to be mentioned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is unusual for the Director-General to praise the dedication and efficiency of his colleagues in public. If I make an exception here in referring to Juan Carlos Tedesco and all the members of his team, it is because I consider that his work warrants it and because I hope that this recognition before the Conference as a whole will stimulate his future work and that of those collaborating with him on this task.

Mr President,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

How else could I conclude these remarks except by talking about teachers. From the very beginning of our Conference, the opening of which coincided with the celebration of the first International Teachers' Day, participants have emphasized the special role of the teacher in promoting peace, human rights and democracy and in developing in every individual a sense of universal values and types of behaviour upon which a culture of peace rests. I wish to receive from you as many suggestions as possible in order to enhance worldwide the role and status of teachers. Suggested initiatives, together with those already proposed such as the teacher's oath, could be submitted for further consideration to an eminent group of educationists. I will do my best, I repeat, in order to take into account the suggestions received from each country concerning this tribute to be paid annually to teachers and what they represent not only for education but for national and international life as well.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to thank you all for your presence, for your advice, for your interventions, not only in this hall but also in the meetings that I had with you. My conclusion then will be an expression of deep gratitude. I can tell you very sincerely that I - and my colleagues - have learned a lot from you. We now know better what to do, how to do it, and I think that all of us are better equipped to implement the decisions of this Conference when we return to our offices. I wish you all a good journey home. Tell your colleagues in government, tell the educators, the intellectuals, the journalists of your country, tell your family too, that here in Geneva we have agreed that only through education can we reduce the gap between the haves and the have-nots, only through education can we improve living conditions, curb population growth - in short, only through education can we enter the new millennium with hope rooted in knowledge and dreams. Tell them that we now know that the word is more powerful than the sword. That we will win. That in order to progress in this crucial transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace, we have decided to include the excluded and to reach the unreachable. We have decided to incorporate and reinforce every day in our lives three key attitudes: caring, sharing and daring. Thank you very much for your attention.