

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO TO THE CLOSING OF  
THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

(Manila, 30 November 1995)

Your Excellency President Fidel V. Ramos,  
Mr Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Philippines has developed a most remarkable Culture of Peace Process. The public consultations of the Peace Process leading to the formulation of the Six Paths to Peace, the Social Reform Agenda, the peace zones, all of these are new and imaginative approaches which can no doubt be used in other areas torn by conflict.

You have engaged in a process of dialogue, listening to and learning from each other's experience and that everyone has contributed, from official country representatives, to observers involved in grass roots peace initiatives, from Presidents to children dancing in a festival of peace.

From the very beginning, this Forum has stressed the process of transformation. This marks a significant advance from the position of the First International Forum in San Salvador two years ago which gave us the phrase of participation and concertation, which is now so central to the concept of a culture of peace.

The process of transformation has been highlighted at many levels.

We are challenged to transform conflict, seeking out and fully analysing its roots and taking care that it bears useful fruit.

This means that we take a proactive approach to conflict, channelling it into productive change, into creativity and new solutions.

With the many peace accords of recent years, a new problem has emerged, the problem of demobilized soldiers. But this, too, could be transformed from a problem to an opportunity. They should be given the opportunity to engage in the process of building peace. Yesterday's soldiers of war can become tomorrow's soldiers of peace. In this respect one of our efforts to promote a culture of peace has been the beginnings of dialogue with the military, especially in Latin America.

Education, too, must be transformed, for as we agree, the defences of peace are constructed in the mind. We have long pushed, and the world now accepts, the goal of Education for All. But now it must be extended into Lifelong Education and Education without Frontiers. This demands fundamental changes in the ways that each country meets the challenge of education. And it, too, requires increased resources, resources which can only come from a change in priorities... [considerable ad-lib here on role of education].

The media must play an active role, being itself transformed in the process of taking part in the transformation to a culture of peace. A good example comes from here in the Philippines where the Alliance of Peace Communicators is working to ensure that the media does not sit on the sidelines, but plays a positive role in the Peace Process.

A culture of peace cannot develop in isolation, but only in and integral linkage with justice, democracy and development. And each of these must also be transformed in the process.

I fully agree with the recommendation made here that justice must be seen as a system of healing, rehabilitation and reconciliation, instead of a system of blaming and punishing. The same principle should be followed in dealing with crime. For crime in communities, like violence among nations, is a problem which can only be solved collectively. We must all share in finding the solution. Have we done all we can to eliminate not only physical violence but also the structural violence which lies at its roots?

As you have pointed out, our understanding and practice of democracy must also be transformed. Neither the structures, nor the timetable and pace of electoral reform can be imposed, either from outside or from above. Therefore, we are challenged to help countries find their own new routes to democracy. ....[he added a number of original remarks here on democracy].

Development, too, must be transformed. There can be no peace without development and no development without peace. For too long, development programs have widened the gap of wealth and power which gives rise to the origins of conflict. It has often contributed to conflict instead of to its transformation. Instead of giving rise to new conflict, it reaches out and seeks to embrace old conflict and transform it into cooperation.

Development must be based upon solidarity. Solidarity between rich and poor, developed and developing, North and South. Through sharing of development, through solidarity, a start can be made along the road of reconciliation between North and South.

As this forum makes more clear than ever, the responsibility for peace-building lies with all of us and above all it must become

the concerted priority of the entire international community, starting with the member states of UNESCO and the United Nations. It is important that peace-building be given the priority by national representatives to every institution of the United Nations. In this regard, I was very pleased to hear from the representative of the Group of 77 during his speech to the General Conference of UNESCO earlier this month that the Organization has decided to give a high priority to the development of a culture of peace. And let me reiterate what I said in my message to the opening of this Forum that the international private financial and industrial communities, who benefit greatly from peace by being able to conduct their business, should now help pay the price of this peace.

.....[At this point he added a new conclusion].