

UNESCO EXECUTIVE BOARD DEBATE ON OCTOBER 27, 1992
ON CULTURE OF PEACE ITEM

SAYYAD - YEMEN

Some Executive Board members have proposed amendments to the draft resolution, and I have been able to incorporate them into the draft that you have before you. Throughout history, when men are taught narrowmindedness, a country regresses. A culture must be open to free exchange, to free trade and the free exchange must be based on mutual respect and collaboration. On respect for the other, whether the differences are ethnic or religious.. In this way, peace can develop. Thus, in this house, the apostle for peace, John McBride, spoke to us and reminded us that UNESCO's mandate is to construct peace in the minds of men. It is not new for us to say that we need a culture for and of peace, not a culture of war. We are all advocates and apostles of peace. We believe in the peaceful coexistence among peoples, cultures, nations. Our task here today is one of substance. We need a program that is not impossible to implement. This is an opportunity that should not be lost. We need ideas that can be truly implemented. Here is such a programme aimed at implementing these concepts. To set up such programmes, we must participate in their funding, with the goal to eradicate violence, promote democracy, human rights, cultural diversity, and a culture of peace. These are important objectives. We need peacebuilding throughout all the agencies of the United Nations, as the Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed in his document, "An Agenda for Peace." You are all aware of the proposal, in which he invites us to move from the maintaining of peace to the constructing of peace, that is to say, peace-building. The draft before you today is clear as to its size, scope, and objectives. The events and confrontations in all regions of the world today confirm that war cannot help us. We must respect life, freedom, tolerance. We must establish new values, with respect of the other. All these are the objectives for a culture of peace. It cannot become a reality without education and culture - that's why we need a special programme. I've discussed with most of you about the size of this proposal. Some

of you support it. Others have questions. But all reaffirm the importance and the need to implement~ to put into practice a programme of culture of peace We need to concentrate now on the substance, not the details. The draft decision strikes a balance between the enthusiasm of some and the hesitancy of others. It is a consensus proposal, hopefully acceptable to all. It's time to realize that we must further international respect for justice. As the Director-General says in the title of his book, "Tomorrow is too late." The time to act is now. Let us not lose the opportunity. Peace and the culture of peace concern all of us. All! UNESCO is being asked to make its contribution today more than ever.

KROGH - DENMARK

After we received the proposal for a culture of peace, we had an extensive deliberation about it in our Danish National Commission. We really looked into this. Our first reaction was that it is too ambitious, too idealistic. That it is not practical.

Then we looked at it more closely and we went into its substance. We found that here is an idea which is very close, to our Nordic and Danish traditions for peace.

The blue berets can be useful, but they have been peacekeeping, not peace-building.

The important point was not so much the specific points of the proposal but the general thrust. We give our strong support to it in that spirit. It's important to have raised it and to keep it on our agenda. in an innovative and constructive manner. I support the draft decision. The steps advocated seem realistic and practical, not too ambitious. I would think that the explanatory notes are quite novel, including the interview with himself at the end. In fact, the answers are even better than the questions!

ZAIN ASIS - ARGENTINA

I would subscribe to the content of the draft decision in toto, and I believe that should be accepted by consensus. Congratulations to the brilliant exposition by Sayyad. He should be named as part of the world heritage! I have a few minor points to make. I have read very carefully the Boutros-Ghali report "An Agenda for Peace" and recommend it. Boutros-Ghali mentions three axes: preventive diplomacy, restoration

of peace, and maintenance of peace. I ask. "How are we in UNESCO going to take part in this Agenda for Peace, and I know the Secretariat is thinking of this under the direction of Mr Sasson but the ideas are not yet clear. Boutros-Ghali adds a function of "consolidation of peace after conflict" which is where UNESCO can make its contribution. But what is peace? Is it like Tolstoy wrote in War and Peace, just the aftermath of war? Shall we say that peace is simply the consequence of war? The dictionary does not help us when it says that it is just the absence of war. Boutros-Ghali's peace-building is where we at UNESCO can play our role. We can provide education for peace. After a war some win and some lose, and sometimes the peace after a war is just the preparation for the next war. Please add my name to the draft resolution. It is an honor to be listed there. Here we are inviting the Director-General to invite leading experts from outside the organization to help draw up a programme for culture of peace while here on the Executive Board we have people whom we can consult just as well. Why are we here? Could we not invite ourselves to consult? Are we just decoration here? Boutros-Ghali does not leave us much room to avoid contributing to peace-building_ - all agencies of the UN are invited to contribute. We should be there. Maybe we should make an amendment to the draft resolution and invite the Executive Board to make its contribution as well. Another point is that I don't like the term "culture of peace." How can there be any culture without peace? I recall the story of one dictator who said whenever I hear the word "culture" I reach for my gun. An Argentine writer gave a fitting response; he said ?

SEBRA - PORTUGAL

This is an extremely important initiative. This subject of peace-building must be central in our debate. UNESCO should make a contribution in its specific fields of competence to the United Nations system. Mr Sayyad has mentioned this quite clearly. We must spell out some concepts here: the construction of peace, the maintenance of peace, moving from maintenance to construction. In UNESCO we teach people to think peace and to live in peace. I recall the great poet Camoens who

said "Peace great and divine." and similar words from Immanuel Kant. This is where UNESCO can make its contribution. If you want peace, prepare for peace. I agree with Zain Asis, that we must all make a contribution, that peace is not just the absence of war.

Deputy to TENG - CHINA

This is a very felicitous initiative, and we thank Mr. Sayyad for bringing it to us. I fully support the draft resolution. We see the end of the Cold War, but now we have new conflicts arising instead. The world is becoming a global village and all conflicts affect all of the world, having repercussions on the rest of the world. To overcome this situation, we need peaceful method instead of violence of war. We need a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, which is in keeping with UNESCO's constitution. This is no easy undertaking, but involves education, culture science and communication, and cooperation with other UN agencies. It must be a long-term effort, requiring at least 10-20 years of unstinting effort to reach this goal. Together with the other member states. China wants to make its contribution.

QUISUMBING - PHILIPPINES

This is one of the most significant and inspired items we have considered this year. It strikes at the very core, the very heart and soul of UNESCO. Our fundamental mission is to build the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. Please include my name on the draft decision. The background document EX/28 presents a clear 4-point programme, and includes such important details as structure, funding, general functions, and local activities, as well as a timetable. It is a very thorough and well-thought-out presentation. It answers or tries to answer objections. It is something new, essential, dramatic and positive. We should all work together on it to build a culture of peace. I disagree with Mr Zain Asis. We need a culture of peace, not a culture of war. We give our unequivocal support to this decision. It is an action programme, not just a dream. We must implement it. I believe that education for peace is the

most basic tool for culture of peace, a. way of living, feeling, thinking. Please include me on the list of sponsors.

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KEITA - IVORY COAST

I would also like my name listed as a sponsor. I. come from a country of a man of peace, Houphouet-Boigny. and we are honored to have the Houphouet-Boigny peace prize. As he says peace is an attitude. I propose that the attitude of the Executive Board for this draft decision should be one of joy and that we should vote for it with unanimity.

HALMAN - TURKEY

I join in the chorus of praise for Mr. Sayyad for his vision, and not only vision, but a very practical base. This proposal justifies the very basis of UNESCO. It is in tune with the proposed international year of tolerance and will aid the cause of tolerance. Tolerance is a visit into another's mind or heart, or better yet, even living in the mind or heart of another. In this century we have experienced two world wars and a cold war, and now we must have something to prevent such wars. Only UNESCO can provide what is needed. Peace must be stimulated, nurtured, preserved. UNESCO can do this in splendid ways if we all work together. Matafa Ataturk put it this way. "Peace in the country, peace in the world." We must make for the young people a world free from the intolerance of our generation. I hope that the nightmare of this century will end. It is a time for the youth. I would like to see a world youth peace conference. We need dialogue, for without dialogue cultures die. A good example was the recent youth dialogue on French television between Israel and Palestinian youth. We need such programmes throughout the world. We must avoid further tragedies like the one that has unfolded in Bosnia-Herzegovine. Mr. Sayyad's splendid vision for the future of humanity deserves adoption by acclamation.

HAHM - KOREA

I, too, wish to congratulate Mr. Sayyad for his splendid effort. This is a very

opportune moment as the U.N. General Assembly is discussing how to expand its peace-keeping efforts. This proposal is in line with UNESCO's mandate. We have the end of the Cold War, but no end to violence. Social scientists predict that ethnic disputes will be the major problem of the 21st Century. As the United Nations now discusses a permanent peace-keeping force under the Security Council we should support a peace-building program as UNESCO's contribution. Therefore we support Mr. Sayyad's proposals. However, it requires serious consultation: with the United Nations. Pending that, UNESCO should strengthen its own work for peace. Peace is a priority in all aspects of UNESCO's work, education, culture, social science. We have to reinforce these programmes until we have consultations with the United Nations.

EIDE - NORWAY

Mr Sayyad's proposal helps to bring UNESCO back to basics. It corresponds to the initial motivation of UNESCO in the aftermath of World War II. For several decades peace has become a discredited word, being used to exclude others, and even to persecute some. It is time to relaunch our work for peace. Despite our problems, UNESCO has continued its work in peace research and education without a break. The Nordic countries with their peace research institutes will be very interested in cooperating with this proposal. I should also mention the International Peace Research Association, which has been involved through its representative here at UNESCO in courageous steps to bring together people in conflict here in Europe. Courage is needed to highlight where conflicts persist but have not reached a point of deterioration. We must be truly creative and enriching. We must not focus only on the tragic, but look to cases where conflict has been managed. Peace is not just the absence of war as the Italian Danilo Dolci has pointed out. We may define peace as the opposite of war, not just its absence. Peace is cooperation, security, sharing, equity, construction. We have an additional reason now to contribute to the Agenda for Peace of Boutros-Ghali. We must redefine security and counteract the destabilizing effects on society of migration, environmental

degradation, etc. Conflict itself cannot be eradicated, but instead conflicts can be managed and resolved fairly. I am reminded here of our earlier discussion concerning the Intergovernmental Social Science Programme, regarding the importance of conflict resolution. Peace-keeping is making ever increasing demands on us. Norway has now sent 35,000 peace-keeping forces, working with others from Brazil, Nigeria, India, etc. Their participation is helping to redefine the vision of the role of the military in the modern world. But too often these forces only freeze the conflict and does not resolve it. Recently we have had more success in peace-making. If UNESCO wants to strengthen this, we must work over the longer term perspective through education and culture, our fields of competence. Another dimension of the culture of peace is the institutionalization of conflict resolution by democracy and fair legal mechanisms, promoting democracy and human rights. And let me mention one other difficult problem - the upsurge of the culture of violence. This even includes the cultivation of violence via mass entertainment. UNESCO can only counteract this by a critical analysis and development of alternative models. These are just some ideas that I hope the Director-General will be able to make use of as he responds to the invitation that I hope we will now give him.

PRERA-FLORES - GUATEMALA

I add my congratulations to Mr. Sayyad for this proposal, a proposal for pluralism and tolerance, for education and training to live together in peace, for new uses of the media and technology. This is indeed the ethical mission of UNESCO. We must act together in the areas of competence of UNESCO to build a lasting, durable peace, to help the new democracies that have so many obstacles before them. I am in favor of this project, including all its objectives. We must build a culture of peace in order to avoid more wars. I agree with the delegate from Costa Rica that the University for Peace should be included. UNESCO should rediscover its original mandate and update it for today, peace in the minds of modern men who have changed as a result of new technology. We should note the democratization of technology and education and the importance of preserving the environment. The minds of men are no longer in the fields, but in the universities. We should fill the gap between

the North and South in technology. Culture of peace should be a very valuable contribution to our organization. Peace is an attitude and an action to prevent the causes of war an awareness that can build a sustainable peace.

MUSA HASSAN - OMAN

Culture of peace - we often hear this expression, but the question is how to implement it. This is not an easy problem. I am pleased at Mr Sayyad's draft resolution, especially at this point in history. Military force cannot solve the world's problems of violence. Buying weapons does not bring security. I hope that both the new development commission with Perez de Cuellar and the Forum of Intellectual Reflection will examine this question. We must use education, not just words. We need cultural dialogue, information.

AL-ANBARI - IRAQ

We appreciate the initiative of our dear colleague, Mr Sayyad. We support it and would like our country to be included as a co-author. I hope that UNESCO programmes along this line will continue to develop further..... As Mr. Zain Asis has said, peace is not just the absence of war. It is cooperation, understanding, and friendship, a culture of peace in the minds of peoples.

JOUKOV - RUSSIAN FEDERATION

We would like to thank Mr Sayyad for his proposal. I share most of the views expressed here today. The majority of the Board share the views in the draft resolution, as shown by the emotional tone of the interventions. We agree with the consultations provided for in the draft resolution and in the call for an action programme. I believe it will be difficult for the Director-General to prepare this action programme, but I am confident it will strengthen the role of UNESCO. All of us on the Executive Board should reflect on the main lines of what such a programme should be. For example, it could center on youth, on the education of children for tolerance, planting the seeds of peace in the minds for future generations. We endorse the draft resolution, and under paragraph 4, we might

suggest adding that UNESCO should participate fully "within its terms of competence."

KRISHNAN - INDIA

When Perez de Cuellar was here with us last week, we spoke about the increasing problems of violence. I might have asked the Director-General to do a study on this phenomenon of violence~ but I was inhibited because of the fact that we have no money. Today, this question of violence has been addressed. Mr. Sayyad has taken a very very welcome initiative which receives enthusiastic support from around the Board despite our financial situation. While endorsing Sayyad's proposal. I hope that in elaborating this project, violence and conflict in society will be given the attention it merits, not just as a threat to peace, but because of its broad effects around the world. I believe that we should adopt this draft resolution by consensus, and I hope it will be seen by the Director-General as a broad approach, not just cooperation with-the United Nations system. The Agenda for Peace is important, but an action programme for culture of peace should go beyond the situations of peace-keeping by the Security Council. That is too limited. UNESCO should address the problem globally in terms of democracy, human rights, and tolerance and against armaments and terrorism. That is my concrete suggestion. Once again, I thank Mr. Sayyad for his excellent initiative and noble idea for action.

TUNNERMANN BERNHEIM - NICARAGUA

Being a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, I am very satisfied by this debate, and I think we should adopt it by acclamation. This brings us to the core of UNESCO's mission, as well as relating to An Agenda for Peace of Boutros-Ghali. I have agreed with it because it says we will work in cooperation with other United Nations initiatives, like the University for Peace in Costa Rica. As is said, "if you want peace, prepare for peace." Working for peace, studying positive peace seminars, etc. are some of the aspects of the work of University for Peace. We are witnessing the coming of the 21st Century which we should make a century of peace. We have an opportunity for renewal and felicitous initiatives.

SIAMWIZA - ZAMBIA

Very few of the our African countries have known peace either before or after our independence. This lack of peace has more than any other factor contributed to our lack of development. The colonial wars in Mozambique and Angola and the Apartheid wars, even now the war of violence in South Africa have laid waste to our countries. Women and children have been the most victimized. When the Director-General is executing this invitation in paragraph 6, I hope that he will emphasize the problem of functional literacy, especially of rural women, to address the problem of culture of peace. We should sensitize all member states to include in their basic education how to inculcate a culture of peace. The same for sustainable development as a model, which is now in the schools, both at the primary and secondary levels. I fully support Mr Sayyad's draft resolution.

HAULICA - ROUMANIA

After days of tension in our debates, today we have a spirit of unanimity as we speak to the basic work of our organization. This is not agreement on a false basis, but on a vitally important theme, the culture of peace. I commend Mr. Sayyad. for this felicitous initiative and the excellent quality of the text. This is a chance for us to look in depth at our mission. It is as if from space, the astronauts see an idyllic blue earth, but when we are here on the earth, looking at it close up, we see its faults and problems, and we must address them. This resolution can inspire us. It is bold and courageous. In major disasters, it is often the humanists who fall first. In the Cold War there were speeches about waging peace which were demagogy. Now we need a true source of peace. We must address today the danger of overbearing nationalism, and we must be very vigilant. There are certain confusions here. Not all nationalism is bad or aggressive - there are national cultures which are good. Our research must draw this important distinction. The great historian Jurga pointed out that small states often have a balance and an equilibrium which we should study and understand. I agree with Mme. Eide and others that we should struggle against violence in its every aspect.

There is a danger from the presence of aggression in peoples minds. We need a deep bedrock of peace in the world - a culture of peace in the deepest sense: I am reminded of the drawings of Goya, such as May 13 with its cry of the horrors of war. We must foster more creative approaches to the arts against war, as Picasso has done. We think Mr Sayyad for the opportunity to rally around this initiative. and I'd like to join the list of co-sponsors.

TRAVERSONI - URUGUAY

Mr. Sayyad's draft resolution deserves our enthusiastic support and approval I endorse the critical comments of Mr. Zain Asis. We should take advantage of the Executive Board itself, inviting the Board to have a more far-reaching discussion and an opportunity to expand on this idea. The project could have three possible outlines. 1) It could just be something rhetorical on the form of peace, etc. 2) It could just be actions by the Security Council, etc., which is not the work of UNESCO. or 3) It could be our responsibility in the areas of our competence, education, study, research. We live in a moment of history with a predisposition to peace, but the danger of more violence. We should target education and study violence, as Mr. Krishnan has suggested. We need new research. Mme. Eide's suggestions are worthy of study and should lead to creative action.

MIYAKAWA - JAPAN

I am disappointed that I have been left until the end, although I asked to speak earlier. As in my intervention in the general debate. I should like to express my appreciation to Mr. Sayyad for his proposal and to express some reservations. As I said. we must work on this and look forward to a more concrete proposal. The draft resolution has taken into account our comment, and it invites the Director-General to formulate a more concrete proposal for the culture of peace, as it says in the draft resolution, an action programme. This is not confined to Sayyad's original draft in response to An Agenda for Peace of Boutros-Ghali. It now seems to cover a wider area, including "strengthening and co-ordinating activities that have already been carried out." Indeed, UNESCO has been working in this area.

I am prepared to support this draft resolution, but clarification is needed on a few points. 1) Isn't it the cart before the horse to say that we should "establish an action programme"? What does this mean concretely? 2) In paragraph 6 it suggests that we consult leading experts. Who are they? In the Director-General's report, he mentions intersectoral working groups on peace and development. Is this to be a formulation based on the studies of these working groups? Could we also consult outside experts?

RAHAL - ALGERIA

I am a co-sponsor of the draft-resolution, but I don't want to miss the pleasure of congratulating Mr. Sayyad on his proposal. The inspiring introduction that he provided us with conviction and strength has shaped the ensuing discussion. When I received EX/28 several months ago, I wondered why did he wish to introduce this idea now. Who could say that UNESCO has not always promoted peace, for it is UNESCO's aim and goal. It is almost divine doctrine, imprinted in the preamble to our Constitution. It is a fashionable topic, and I am not going to define peace but leave such a question to our intellectual forum. Tolerance and solidarity must be the twin props of peace. The struggle for development can be seen in terms of solidarity. All of UNESCO's programmes work for peace. Thus it has been hard for me to grasp how the "culture of peace" would be something innovative and novel. No one has yet tried to define it. This draft resolution will prompt us to figure out just what is a culture of peace. For me, it is the struggle against illiteracy and for understanding and development. The draft resolution raises the question but does not answer it. What should the action programme be? I would suggest it should combat underdevelopment and that this is what it means to build a culture of peace. This could produce a new public image for UNESCO - as the agency that works most basically for peace. I hope that action for this draft resolution will awaken UNESCO and give the public the image of UNESCO as the prime promoter of peace.

BERNARD~EUNIER - CANADA (PRESIDENT)

I'd like to add my thanks to Mr. Sayyad who has elicited an outstanding debate.

Many of the statements made around the table today are truly worthy of publication, statements of the loftiest nature. They confirm the wisdom of Mr. Zain Asis that the Executive Board has much to contribute. In conclusion, I'd like to turn the floor back to Mr. Sayyad.

SAYYAD - YEMEN

It is with a sense of satisfaction that I have listened to the various statements. They are a clear indication of the lofty intellectual tenor of this Board. I am pleased to have been responsible for it. In drafting the draft decision, I consulted most of you and included your amendments, including those of Mr. Miyakawa and those of the Electoral Group I. I have believed in focusing on what enables us to draw together rather than on that which divides us. The draft resolution is no longer mine, but now it belongs to all members of the Executive Board. I am pleased to see that the entire Executive Board has espoused it. It is the U.N. Secretary-General who called on us to develop this, and our response is clear: Yes! We will work hand-in-hand with all agencies of the U.N. and all other bodies working for peace, United Nations University for Peace, United Nations University, peace movements, as well, to develop a common approach. As Mr. Keita said, one finds that such a proposal should be discussed in a friendly climate, which is what we have given as a collective UNESCO response to the Secretary-General. I would like to express my warmest thanks and gratitude to all of you. And especially to the suggestions of Mr. Krishnan and Mr. Keita that we adopt the resolution by acclamation. presenting a climate of peace and agreement

(General applause)

The President asks if there are any objections. If not, I will rule that it is adopted by acclamation.

(Another round of applause)