A convergence of three developments at this moment of history gives UNESCO a unique opportunity to contribute to its Constitutional mandate of constructing peace in the minds of men and women:

1.   Social movements throughout the world are now promoting a culture of peace in the broad sense of the term;

2.   Widespread, inexpensive access to global communication is available for the first time in history in the form of the Internet - especially for young people who "surf" the Internet everywhere with enthusiasm;

3.   Support for the concept and promotion of a culture of peace has been developed in the Member States of UNESCO and the United Nations.

To take advantage of this opportunity it is proposed that UNESCO establish *a globally accessible and comprehensive, participatory in format, constantly up-dated information service on the Internet in everyday and local languages concerning culture of peace activities*.

Today, information on military, political and economic decisions and actions are gathered and disseminated rapidly, efficiently and comprehensively through global networks of electronic and print media - the so-called " information revolution". Unfortunately, this has come to define for most people what is "newsworthy", and it tends towards an homogenization of a single culture and language instead of the cultural diversity essential to a culture of peace. The Culture of Peace Info-Net would help begin to change this "news culture" by giving voice to the events, decisions and actions that promote a culture of peace. It would contribute to a change of attitude which would consider these to be as newsworthy - or even more so - than the traditional "news". At the same time, it would privilege the use of local languages and cultures on the Internet.

The time has come for UNESCO to establish and maintain a global information and facilitation network taking full advantage of electronic communication (Internet and e-mail) and making full use of volunteers and participating partners. The objective would be to network continually up-dated information on actions for a culture of peace on a global level, i.e. *from* all levels and regions including both local and global actions, *by* all levels and regions through use of an open, multi-level, participatory format, and *to* all levels and regions through a central website connected to a network of cooperating regional and local websites which are conducted in local languages and emphasize local approaches to a culture of peace.

This network would include the activities of UNESCO for a culture of

peace, as well as those of UNESCO chairs, ASP and other schools, journalists and other media partners, and a wide range of other institutional and individual partners. It would relate the activities for a culture of peace by UNESCO itself, by governmental and intergovernmental bodies, by local elected officials, women's, youth, religious and other non-governmental organizations (e.g. scouts, IPRA, etc.), military and ombudsmen, etc.

This would require a newly established, highly efficient and highly motivated team of UNESCO that would expand the existing culture of peace Internet website and Access database from their present emphasis on UNESCO activities into a worldwide networking and information service. It would gather and store information, present it on the central website in attractive and easy-to-read format and develop a global network of associated websites with partners - both volunteers and institutions - to seek out and disseminate this information. Technical aspects of the Website and database would be designed in a way allow for extensive expansion - both of the central site and of related sites in regions throughout the world - including open, "participatory" features including discussion groups, multi-language options, and multiple levels of rigour in access criteria, thus enabling correspondents to enter their own information on certain websites directly..

This approach requires extensive decentralization to a network of co-operating local websites in different languages, cultural approaches, and levels of rigour. To some extent this would be accomplished by links to pre-existing partners. In addition, however, there would need to be contractual arrangements. It is proposed to assure this through a new category of UNESCO UNITWIN and Chairs for a culture of peace. As part of the contractual arrangement, these chairs would establish and maintain a website on the culture of peace and integrate it with the study of the culture of peace from the standpoint of local cultures and traditions. With their students and local partners, they would ensure that the website operates in the local language and is faithfully and accurately integrated - through extensive translation - to the central UNESCO Info-Net site.

Linkages at regional and local levels to traditional media (radio, print, television, etc) would be encouraged and made a priority for the long-term development of the project. This would ensure that the news carried on the Culture of Peace Info-Net could be "rebroadcast" in traditional media in order to reach the widest possible audience, and, at the same time, these media could serve as sources for new culture of peace stories. In the long-term, this could have a salutary effect towards reorienting the idea of what is newsworthy, away from stories that emphasize the power of violence and towards an emphasis on non-violent action and philosophy.

An important component of the proposal would be a "media for peace" "discussion space" on the Internet. Reviews would be solicited, published and debated of films, programmes and video games which promote the values and methods of a culture of peace and non-violence. An emphasis would be placed on the involvement in this of young people. By creating a media space for such

a positive debate, it would lay the basis for the development of a market demand for productions which promote a culture of peace. Such a market demand is key, according to the screen writers and producers in Hollywood (December 1996 mission report). Many of them want to make films and programmes that promote a culture of peace, but even when they produce such films, they cannot sell or distribute them because there is no market.

This proposal is a logical next step in the culture of peace at UNESCO:

* Constitutional mandate. It would be based firmly on the mandate of the Organization to build peace in the minds of men and women - through the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. The home page of the Website and all associated Websites would begin with these words from the Constitution, indicating clearly and simply the basic principles of the culture of peace. At the same time, it would make space through discussion pages for an ongoing, open-ended debate on the further development of the culture of peace in theory and practice.

* Yamoussoukro and Seville Statement on Violence. This would be a vastly enlarged version of the "Seville Statement Newsletter" which engaged in a participatory fashion the people involved in these two initiatives between 1986 and 1992. As in that case, the Culture of Peace Info-net would present the "news" in the words of the actors themselves.

* Culture of Peace Programme. While CPP began as a UNESCO contribution to UN post-conflict peace-building, from the beginning it developed characteristics of what the "Mexican document" (Lacayo, Tunnerman-Bernheim, Prera-Flores, Chong) characterized as a global movement. This has outgrown the borders of UNESCO and engaged people throughout the world, as was described for the 1995 General Conference in the monograph "UNESCO and the Culture of Peace: Promoting a Global Movement".

* At a time when the General Assembly has requested elements for a United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, it is appropriate that UNESCO should initiate this project which would coordinate the information and the actors involved in such an initiative. If and when the UN designates a Year for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence, the Culture of Peace Info-Net could either be transformed into, or serve as a major back-up to the organizational unit which serves as a base for the mobilization of partners.

The new project would be synergized with other similar initiatives at UNESCO. In particular, through Jan Visser, it would be associated closely with Learning Without Frontiers, whose approach to participatory learning and use of the Internet is vital to the philosophy of the proposed Info-Net. Through Mario Zamarono and focal points appointed by regional offices, it would be linked to the development of a global approach to the overall UNESCO news-gathering and

news-dissemination system. And through Christine von Furstenberg and the UNITWIN and Chairs programmes, it would be integrated with UNESCO's relations to universities around the world, and especially to the holistic approach which characterizes their contribution to sustainable development.

TIMETABLE

1997 1.   Website fully functioning with news from all regions on culture of peace.

      2.   New brochure on this for General Conference

      3.   Special website page and newsletter concerning follow-up to Beijing Conference - in conjunction with unit for Women and Culture of Peace

1998 1.   Set up of global system, including new UNESCO Culture of Peace Chairs as satellites for information gathering, sharing, translation and dissemination - including major involvement of universities at North American Preparatory Meeting and World Higher Education Conference

      2.   Availability of system in at least 6 languages.

      3.   Set up system of volunteers for info gathering, sharing and dissemination

      4.   Set up linkages with various other partners, including ASP, Scouts, journalists, IPRA, etc.

      5.   Engage Nobel Peace Prize laureates as Advisory Board

      6.   Launch peace media review service

1999 1.   Expansion of all aspects of the system - so that it is truly global, participatory and comprehensive, including news from all countries as well as regions.

      2.   Websites in at least 20 languages.

      3.   Production of a monograph or World Report for the General Conference based on news that has been covered.

      4.   New brochure for General Conference.

      5.   Major exposition of system at World Scout Jamboree, December in Chile

2000+ 1.   Provides basis for organization of UN International Year and Decade for Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (and perhaps a Special UN Session)

      2.   Provides basic contents and structure which could be used in a global UN media network for peace

      3.   National culture of peace action plans functioning in Member States with news covered by Culture of Peace Info-Net