



**UNESCO AND THE ISSUE OF
CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Review and strategy, 1946-2004

A study based on official documents

*Revised version
(September 2004)*

DIVISION OF CULTURAL POLICIES AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

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Printing : UNESCO

The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

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Published in 2000 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization
7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP (France)

UNESCO, 2000

Revised version 2004

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Foreword

Cultural pluralism is, by definition, an enduring and central feature of the United Nations Organization. Nevertheless, the way in which cultural differences have been conceived in theory (ideas) and handled in practice (institutions) has varied substantially over the Organization's history. A selective chronological overview of the platforms and programs of UNESCO, the UN agency specifically charged with cultural issues, can offer a guide to some of these developments. While this method of historical sampling may not be all-inclusive, it can prove useful in suggesting some theoretical trends and practical implications of UNESCO's approach to cultural diversity in the past, with a view to reinforcing and refining efforts in the present and future.

Chronologically speaking, four broad periods emerge in the discourse and emphasize of UNESCO documents (looking primarily at Director-General's Reports and, from the mid-1970s, Medium-Term Plans). First, during the period of post-war reconstruction and the establishment of the UN and its related agencies, UNESCO focused on education and knowledge as the key to peace, citing for example the Orient-Occident divide as a major cultural division and source of (needless) misunderstanding and conflict.

This optimistic approach treated nation-states as unitary entities: the idea of pluralism, diversity, or interculturality (these words, although they carry different meanings, are often used interchangeably) was therefore linked to that of international, not intra-national, differences (the terms 'nation' and 'state' also tend to be used interchangeably to delineate both a cultural and a political unit, even though in reality these may have blurred or contradicting geographic boundaries). At this early stage, culture itself seems to have been thought of more in terms of artistic production and external practices than as deeply internalized and identity-creating ways of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and being in the world.

The proliferation of newly independent nations marked the second period, leading to a shift in definitions and emphasis. The unique cultural identities of these nations, a justification for their independence and their international existence, became a central political issue. The concept of culture was expanded to encompass that of 'identity' itself. These developments were accompanied by two forces: a resistance to the homogenizing effects of uniform technology, and a largely unspoken fight against the ideological imperialism of powerful states in an emerging Cold War context. (As it turns out, the Cold War rivalry often gave smaller states additional leverage and allowed them to 'manipulate' the superpowers to their own advantage.)

During the third period, an extension and crystallization of the second, the notion of culture as political power took on added momentum by being attached to the idea of endogenous development. The link between culture and development generated arguments for financial and administrative support to developing countries, which claimed a right to define their 'own' paths of development in order to participate equally and fully in international affairs. While attaching specific dates to these periods is not possible since the evolution was gradual and overlapping, the fundamental shift towards an emphasis on the political and material underpinnings of the concept of culture itself remains clear.

The fourth and most recent period has been characterized by a link between culture and democracy, creating an emphasis on the need for tolerance not only between societies, but within them as well. Evidence of tensions on a variety of levels (local and regional, as well as international) has led to a focus on intra-societal problems, especially in urban centres, and on the theoretical and practical questions of minority rights and the coexistence of diverse cultural communities. This emphasis has not replaced the other discourses, but it has attracted significant attention in response to contemporary needs and developments. As in previous periods, UNESCO's definitions and priorities have evolved to accommodate changing social and political realities.

In this perspective, the major shift is due to the acceleration of the process of globalization, which had not been foreseen during the elaboration of the last Medium-Term strategy (1994-2000). Globalization has brought a radical change not only in the economic and technological order, but also in the mentalities and the ways of conceiving the world. This new dimension requires a redefinition of the type of actions and strategies to be established in order to preserve and promote cultural diversity, in particular at the time when new global markets are being formed and the statute of cultural goods compared to that of ordinary consumer goods is being debated.

This report will look at those periods in slightly greater detail, sketching the evolution of UNESCO's approach to cultural diversity through selected texts. First, though, a small warning: methodologically speaking, documentary analysis has to rely on words, both those that are used and those that are not used (*le dit et le non-dit*). This results in the paradoxical situation of using words to interpret and analyze meaning while maintaining some critical distance from them. A certain scepticism is all the more important when reading political texts like Director-General's Reports, which respond to the demands and concerns of Member States, or declarations and resolutions arrived at through negotiations during which semantic compromises may have been reached to mask conflict in vague consensual language. This caveat does not invalidate this exercise -to the contrary, it makes it all the more interesting and important. It simply points to a need for caution in interpretation, and suggests the possibility of conclusions other than those put forth by this preliminary analysis.

I. Culture and Knowledge

Information as the Key to Peace In UNESCO's Constitution

In the aftermath of World War II, political leaders sought to make it impossible for history to repeat itself. Criticism of the idealism and ineffectiveness of the League of Nations had a direct impact on the way the United Nations was conceived and established. But though the drafters of the United Nations Charter provided more concrete institutional recourse to sanctions and enforcement measures through the UN Security Council than had existed in the League, they did not ignore the role and importance of ideas, as evidenced in the UNESCO mandate. The famous notion that 'wars begin in the minds of men' prescribed a certain kind of approach to conflict prevention, one that focused on knowledge as the key to understanding and peace. Ignorance was identified as the underlying cause of suspicion, mistrust, and war between peoples'. As a result, the key to peaceful relations was the cultivation of the 'intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind' through the efforts of UNESCO. The optimistic faith in the automaticity of this formula: knowledge→understanding→peace was made easier by the relatively small number of delegates to the UNESCO Constitutional Conference (18 governments attended the first London Conference, and 44 attended the Constitutional Conference in November 1945) and by their common agenda, rendered all the more urgent by the horror of the recent war.

The purpose of the Organization they created was thus to 'advanc[e], through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind'. The emphasis was placed on the maintenance, increase, and diffusion of knowledge (art, monuments, books, science, and history) and of information. The spread of 'culture' involved increasing access to this general knowledge base through popular education; 'culture' referred to historical information and artistic production, not yet understood explicitly as a particularistic experience with a specific, identity-forming content. Culture as such was not yet politicized.

The only hint of the future political power of cultural diversity at this stage came in the Constitution's domestic jurisdiction reservation clause. This was a standard formula, designed to reassure Member States that their sovereignty would not be infringed or reduced as a result of their participation in international institutions. Limits were placed on UNESCO's scope and competence with a view to 'preserving the independence, integrity, and fruitful diversity of the cultures and educational systems of the States Members of the Organization'. Again, the rationale behind this clause was primarily a desire to reassure participating governments, not a preoccupation with cultural diversity *per se*. Diversity was understood within

a model of unitary States, each sovereign over its own people and territory (hence the idea that 'in electing members to the Executive Board, the General Conference shall have regard to the diversity of cultures and a balanced geographical distribution'). Governments acted on their peoples' behalf; the idea that UNESCO would reach over the heads of governments and engage people directly was contrary to its mandate and would likely have prevented the formation of the Organization as a whole.

Only the stipulation that 'the responsibilities of the Director-General and of the [Secretariat] staff shall be exclusively international in character' opened up the possibility for UNESCO itself to embody an international community somehow qualitatively different from its individual members. In the 1940s, the idea of this international community as an actor with duties and responsibilities was clearly ahead of its time. But, like the idea of a more politicized cultural identity, it was an embryonic notion that would develop in time.

II. Culture and Politics

From Decolonization to the 1966 Declaration on International Cultural Co-operation

Given its post-war origins, it is not surprising that the overriding goal and *raison d'être* of the United Nations Organization was the establishment and preservation of peace. Culture, like other issues, inscribed itself in this framework. As written in a September 1946 report on 'Les Arts de la Création', 'Arts transcends documentation by interpretation, and helps to give men and nations that intimate knowledge of each other as human beings, living within different conditions, but bound together in one human experience, which is essential for the achievement of a peaceful world' (p. 123). In this report, diversity is acknowledged within this unified human experience, but it is upheld as a source of richness, not of conflict: 'In the human family, each country and region has its own characteristics and its own distinct values, and each makes its distinctive contribution to the common treasure of culture (p. 124). Art, the concrete product of culture, is a means of exchange and mutual understanding: 'Art is a key to the understanding of our own culture and that of our neighbours' (p. 127). With all of these observations, this report echoes the formula in the UNESCO Constitution of knowledge → understanding → peace, with a similar optimism.

Still, as early as the Director-General's Report of 1947 (written by Sir Julian Huxley), there were indications that this variety of human experiences could lead to conflict. In the face of this possibility, Huxley urged a middle ground between standardization and incomprehension, captured in the now-familiar slogan 'unity-in-diversity' (p. 13). However noble, this remained a promise without a prescription, a credo with an as-yet unclarified content. On the other hand, the 1947 Report referred to a 'universal culture'; it did not use the word 'culture' as a metonymy or a substitute for the word 'people' to mean a unique and particularistic group of human beings, as would become common in later years. On the other hand, the project of a 'Histoire Générale

des Civilisations' (plural) implied that there were multiple civilizations, not one single category that could adequately embrace all of human experience.

This second idea, the emphasis on particularism rather than on universality, was reflected in the Director-General's observation that culture is diverse, unlike science whose ultimate goal is unity or even uniformity. This diversity could lead to a certain possessiveness-as in the idea of endogenous development as a people's own path of development arising from its unique culture, rather than a uniform or formulaic path prescribed by the dictates of science-but it was not meant to be isolating. Still, the potential for empowerment contained in this diversity was suggested by the goal of preventing smaller nations from being overpowered by the propaganda of more politically powerful ones, a message clearly related to the emerging Cold War context.

From very early on, then, two major issues emerged in UNESCO's platform, linked to each other and both involving a certain internal tension, if not a contradiction: first, the trade-off between unity and difference, and the idea that one could be obtained without sacrificing the other; and second, the idea of individual paths of development, with the benefits of empowerment balanced against the potential dangers of excessive isolation. These were both theoretical and practical problems. In the realm of theory, UNESCO has earned the title of the '*tête pensante*' of the United Nations, evolving as it did from the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. Huxley's 1947 Report was explicitly aimed to intellectuals and professionals (p. 17), a kind of international 'epistemic community' (to borrow a term from Ernst Haas) designed to facilitate understanding and co-operation through mutual knowledge. But the distinction between theory and practice, intellectualism and geopolitics, would not remain rigid-especially in UNESCO's later years, during which the link between culture and politics was emphasized in order to make culture a higher priority, both rhetorically and in terms of the allocation of material resources.

An overview of some of the section headings in the Director-General's Reports from the 1950's gives a good idea of the way in which culture was perceived and supported. The category 'cultural activities' included: the preservation and protection of works of art, heritage, and artists; international co-operation, and the diffusion of culture. In this sense, culture seemed to occupy an autonomous sphere separate from the social sciences. In 1951, however, subsection 4E of the cultural activities category dealt with 'action in the service of human rights'. Establishing this link between culture and legal rights-'dignité' and 'droits'- was an important step in bringing culture into the political mainstream, making it constitutive (and not simply expressive or a product) of individual and group identity and independence. While it was ECOSOC that was specifically charged in 1952 with the 'Prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities', UNESCO's emphasis on culture and education also necessarily brought its activities into the domain of human rights.

In other subtle ways, the question of international tensions and minority rights made its way into the culture umbrella, rather than remaining strictly in the applied social sciences section of the UNESCO agenda. This

again reflected a realization that culture could not be limited by definition to artistic production. In the Director-General's 1952 Report, subsection VIII B invoked the 'Cultural Bases of International Solidarity', and urged a 'new humanism' that involves patriotism rather than nationalism (assuming that, in this context, patriotism means allegiance to one's country still compatible with duties to humanity as a whole, while nationalism means an exclusive and potentially aggressive or xenophobic attachment). The recognition of fundamental differences between human beings living in different cultures was clear in the collection 'styles de vie', which presented analyses of various 'national characters'. Again, it was by spreading knowledge about these different characters that understanding was to be achieved, as suggested in the 1945 Constitution.

The question remained as to whether this knowledge-based approach would be sufficient. Subsection 4F of the 1955 Director-General's Report on 'Culture and International Understanding', and subsection 6A of the 1957 report on the 'Major Project on mutual appreciation of Eastern and Western cultural values' both sound very positive and important, but what exactly does 'international understanding' and 'mutual appreciation' entail? Only in later years would the distinctions between attitudes and policies of tolerance, understanding, acceptance, constructive engagement, etc. be elaborated in theory and implemented in practice (either constitutionally, through government projects, or through civil society). Already in 1959, however, subsection 5F of this 'Major Project' talked about 'La communication entre les cultures'. Here we find the substitution of the word 'culture' for that of 'people or 'nation' that marks definitively the acknowledgement of culture as an all-encompassing, and not epi-phenomenal, aspect of a particular group.

Several other elements are worth noting in the 1952 Report. First, the question of industrialization and technical assistance was limited by the concern for cultural diversity, as was evident in the goal of 'a balanced modernization, while at the same time preserving their particular cultural and social values' (p. 199). The question of 'social integration' (p. 200) was beginning to emerge, most notably with respect to the 'cultural assimilation' of immigrants-with assimilation being upheld as a positive goal that needed to be achieved so that immigrants could belong to society and fully enjoy their rights, a goal that might be jeopardized by an excessive emphasis on the preservation of unique cultural communities within host societies. This was also reflected in the emphasis on 'measures... to end discrimination and thus accelerate the integrations of groups, hitherto excluded, into the community (p. 206), with the theoretical and practical difference between policies of assimilation and integration not yet clearly developed. On a concrete level, the Yugoslav National Commission was carrying out a study of 'the policy pursued and the results achieved with regard to the integration of national and cultural minorities' (p. 207), suggesting that individuals would need to be treated as members of specific groups in certain political situations, an observation that would take on added importance with the emergence of a discourse of 'the rights of peoples' in later decades.

The theme of mutual knowledge remained important as related to the sciences, as the Report articulated the conviction that if people knew there

was no scientific oasis for prejudice according to ethnic differences, they would automatically become more accepting and support racial equality (p. 204). Of course, while representing an important element of the struggle to promote equality, this position ignores the political motivations for perpetuating misconceptions and constructing ethnic difference as indicative of natural inequality or socio-political distinctions.

Even the cultivation of international solidarity could be a politically sensitive issue, as evident in the section on education in the 1952 Report. In saying that education 'covered the individual's sense of loyalty towards his own country and towards the human community, his consciousness of belonging to one vast family, his confidence in the international institutions which maintain and extend union and peace among all the peoples of the world' (p. 211), the Director-General had to specify that this did not entail replacing national loyalty with international loyalty, but fulfilling international obligations *through* state patriotism and national obligations. This two-level structure, with the state level remaining the most important but not the sole platform for loyalty, was the definition of a 'civisme international', the best an international organization dependent on the support of its member states could hope to encourage at this point. However conservative, this conception was still qualitatively different from a solely inter-state model with each state completely autonomous and self-sufficient. As the report emphasized, international reality ('International relations have been developed throughout the world to such an extent that now the nations are interdependent to a degree hitherto undreamt of') created a 'new field of duties' that states could not ignore. With this in mind, 'The entire programme of UNESCO bears witness to the existence and encourages the growth of community' (p. 213). The Project for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind", unlike that of the "Histoire des civilisations", reinforced the idea of the unity of the human family, and the interconnectedness of progress and development in all areas of the globe.

The 1960 Director-General's Report added two interesting reflections to the 'Major Project on mutual appreciation' between the Occident and the Orient. First, the emphasis on 'Programmes for the general public' (p. 157) highlighted the importance of diffusing culture, not just among the intellectuals of different countries, but to the people within countries themselves. Second, the terms used to describe the process of cultural exchange could equally be applied to *political* exchanges among different cultures, revealing the potential sensitivity of such endeavours: 'The meeting of persons representing various branches of the arts and literature provided opportunities of continuing the comparison of spiritual values and standards of aesthetic appreciation in East and West, due allowance being made for the important differences arising from the personalities of the artists and the fact that they still draw their inspiration from widely varying cultures' (p. 161). Individuals are not determined by their cultures, but their ways of perceiving and being in the world are necessarily influenced by them. Understanding this precise developmental correction and the implications it can have for interactions among people influenced by different cultural backgrounds is just as important as learning about multiple cultures themselves, it is the question of *how* difference can shape behaviour that is important, going one step beyond the mere acknowledgement that people from different cultures may react differently in the same situation.

An important document emerging from 1960s discussions about culture and its influence on international relations was the “Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation”, a resolution adopted at the 14th session of the General Conference, on 4 November 1966 (marking the twentieth anniversary of UNESCO). Not surprisingly, the Declaration targets the ‘ignorance of the way of life and customs of peoples’, maintaining the by-now familiar emphasis on knowledge as the key to peace. Article I establishes the importance of each culture, both for the particular people to which it belongs (Article 1.2) and as part of the common heritage of humanity (Article 1.3). Article IV.4 reflects a similar balance, as each individual is supposed to be able to enjoy the culture of any people, not just his/her own. Again, Article VI evokes this trade-off on a different level, urging both mutual enrichment and respect for the originality of each culture in international cooperative endeavours. The ideals of freedom and openness (Article VII) are upheld alongside the imperative of state sovereignty (Article XI.1) again suggesting an implicit tension between ‘truth’ as a common goal and the confrontation among various ‘truths’ embodied in national states that may or may not be ideologically or practically compatible with each other.

Individual flourishing in accordance with the Declaration of Human Rights could mean flourishing in accordance with so-called ‘universal’ values, or development in a more culturally specific context, also recognised as essential in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration. Asserting that particularism and universalism are necessarily complementary is as hollow as insisting that tensions will always exist between them: for principles to have meaning, they must offer a key to achieving concrete solutions, even if the precise formula may vary on a case-by-case basis. The 1966 Declaration was important in enshrining a political will to co-operate, but it failed to work out in detail the modalities and potential contradictions of this push towards co-operation. The politicization of culture brought it closer to the top of the international agenda, but it also raised the stakes in cultural co-operation and intercultural activities.

III. Culture and Development

From Ideas on Endogenous Development to the 1978 Bogotá Conference on Cultural Policies

The need to back rhetoric up with resources became a priority in the late 1960s. This was reflected in a series of meetings, including the December 1967 Monaco Round Table on Cultural Policies, and the August-September 1970 Venice Intergovernmental Conference on the Institutions, Administrative, and Financial Aspects of Cultural Policies. The Director-General's Report of 1969 (section 3.2.d) indicated a study on the ‘right to culture’, making culture an even more important category by emphasizing an individual's entitlement to it (as articulated previously in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). While aid to Member States for cultural development in the 1969 report focused mainly on translation, literary diffusion, and cultural exchanges, the need for material support for cultural development became increasingly clear as UNESCO

moved into the 1970s. The 1975-76 Director General's Report linked cultural flourishing to the development and well-being of a nation as a whole ('Culture in the service of development', category 4A), the 1979-80 report highlighted that this challenge to the traditional dichotomy between economics and aesthetics was an essential element of the strategy to promote funding for culture (p. 50).

The idea of endogenous or diversified development, a cornerstone of the 1977-78 Report, connected culture to development. For newly independent and developing countries, culture provided the unique direction for an autonomous path of progress that would be both politically liberating and economically empowering. Education subsection 1.2 and Social sciences section 2.1.2 of the 1977-78 Report, both entitled 'appreciation and respect for cultural identity', involved respecting cultural identity as a set of political and economic choices (rather than simply aesthetic ones), a prerequisite for greater equality among nations on the world stage.

Beyond the question of power in international relations, another element was emerging in the study of culture and cultural policies. As noted in the 1977-78 Report, 'the main new feature of the programme for the study of cultures is the importance given to cultural interactions' (p. 40). As part of this change in direction, 'an attempt is being made to study regional cultures' ... and ... 'greater interest is being shown in cultural regions that are in themselves centres of synthesis for a variety of cultural influences and contributions'. The question of intra-societal cultural diversity often had been underplayed or overlooked in the post-war context, when peace and understanding *between* sovereign states was a higher priority for international organizations than peace and understanding *within* those states. This was especially true for an organization like UNESCO, whose mandate explicitly prevented it from 'interfering' in the internal affairs of its members. In fact, it became increasingly clear that many of the same issues arose in intercultural relations within as between societies. In both cases, as noted in the 1977-78 Report, 'the meeting organised led in fact to recommendations relating to plans of action that involve the study of convergent values, without disregarding the need to recognise differences' (p. 40). While the suggestion that strategies might prove useful on both the intra- and inter-national levels would become an important part of the UNESCO platform, this balance between emphasising 'convergent values' and 'recognising differences' proved easier to uphold in theory than it was to implement in practice.

The Medium-Term Plan for 1977-82 identified a number of these same issues. This Plan included some of the following objectives, which help illustrate the priorities in the study of culture during that period:

- Objective 1.2: Promotion of appreciation and respect for the cultural identity of individuals, groups, nations or regions This objective showed that cultural identity could belong to a number of different entities (individuals, groups, etc.), with two implications: first, that interculturality does not simply begin where a state's frontier ends; and second, that respect for cultural identity may entail rights for groups as well as for

individuals, a theme developed in UNESCO's most recent period (see section IV below).

- Sub-Objective 1.2.1: Promotion of cultural identity as a factor of independence and community of interests. This sub-objective reinforced the geopolitical importance of culture as a liberating force on the world stage. But the dual imperatives of independence and solidarity sat together somewhat awkwardly: would the first come at the expense of the second? Would the galvanization of cultural identities, upheld as the central pillar of political independence, help or hinder attempts at international understanding? With the non-aligned, anti-colonial movement defining itself negatively against imperial influence, what positive elements of a common culture could be retained to preserve some cement among diverse peoples, while at the same time avoiding at all costs the colonial excesses of uniformity and domination? The political stakes of this trade-off were clear in this Report, especially given the historical experience of newly independent countries: 'The identity of nations, which is the basis for their sovereignty and a precondition for dialogue, draws its strength from the intensity and authenticity of their cultural life' (p. 11). The Report suggested that cultural affirmation would in fact promote mutual understanding: 'For each nation, whether or not it is its own master politically, whether or not it is a great power, whether it has a full range of resources and skills at its disposal or is still in the stage of development, the assertion of cultural identity is the basis for cultural pluralism. Acceptance and respect for such pluralism, with equal rights and on equal footing, is today manifestly a factor contributing towards peace and understanding between nations' (p. 11). Again, however, such assertions required a certain leap of faith. Even after a theoretically level playing field had been created, the rules of the game still needed to be negotiated and developed.
- Sub-Objective 1.2.3: Promotion of cultural identity within the context of a global development strategy. The link between culture and endogenous development was quite clear by this stage, but it was less clear what was meant by a 'global strategy of development', especially alongside the emphasis on unique and autonomous paths. Could different styles of development be coordinated and complementary without being uniform? To what extent was cultural identity a vehicle for development, and to what extent was it something that had to be protected from the affects of the development process? Despite these potential contradictions, a more sophisticated conception of development did emerge in this period to encompass cultural aspects: 'Thus, the idea, the principle of which had been acknowledged for some time, has begun to be applied, that development cannot be limited to economics alone but implies that the goals of growth must also be defined in terms of cultural improvement, individual and collective fulfilment, and general welfare' (Medium Term Plan 1984-1989, p. 234). But, as with other objectives, the policy implications of this realization remained to be worked out through regional and global agreements. The call for a New International Economic Order upheld cultural identity as an 'essential condition' of endogenous and integrated development, with political liberation and economic growth

representing preconditions for and products of this cultural affirmation, creating a virtuous circle of cultural and economic flourishing. As had been noted early on in UNESCO's history, if not at the very beginning, culture was not just a channel for expression: it was itself constitutive of a people as a political actor on the international stage.

- Sub-Objective 1.24 : Promotion of respect for the cultural identity of individuals and groups, with particular reference to those affected by the social exclusion phenomenon within developed or developing societies. This raises the issue of intra-societal cultural identities, and the question of social cohesion within states themselves, a question that would take on greater importance in the next decade. While the situation of migrant workers had already been studied in this context, a growing realization at this time that state populations were in fact more diverse than had sometimes been admitted opened up a whole new series of questions and priorities. Especially in urban centres, the discourse of marginalization involves both socio-economic and cultural factors, which are themselves often related. This objective evokes the central idea of pluralism as participation and sharing, not retreat or reclusion, as well as the notion of intercultural dialogue-ideas but are just as important *within* multicultural societies as they are between member states of the Organization.

The question of how to encourage identity-affirmation while preventing divisiveness or reclusion was illustrated in the 28 November 1978 General Conference Resolution 4101 on Culture and Communication, which put forth the threefold goals of 'fulfilment-development-solidarity', hoping that these could reinforce rather than work against each other. Earlier that year, at the Bogota Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, it had been concluded that 'there can be no cultural policy without an appropriate cultural policy' (p. 3). The Conference was held from 10-20 January, and the Director-General issued his Report on the conference on 28 July (from which these citations are drawn). The major themes of the conference were cultural identity, cultural development, and cultural co-operation. The fourth in a series of regional intergovernmental conferences on the issue of cultural policies, this particular conference saw 'A remarkable convergence in attitude to the basic problems under consideration'; indeed, the Director-General reported that 'The Conference... marked a turning point for UNESCO in cultural co-operation' (p. 1). The idea that cultural pluralism could be 'the very essence of cultural identity' challenged the picture of culturally monolithic states and introduced the notion, familiar in the Caribbean, of a 'culture de métissage'. Given this tremendous diversity, the conclusion was reached that '...cultural diversity of peoples should be regarded as a stabilizing rather than a divisive factor'. Taking advantage of this potential would 'impels people to regain control over their own destiny, while strengthening their interest in the outside world' (p. 1). Empowerment would lead to exchanges, not exclusions.

The by now well-established idea of culture as the very essence of a people, and not just a product or a means, is clear in the Bogotá Declaration: 'as the sum total of the values and creations of a society and the expression of

life itself, is essential to life and not a simple means or subsidiary instrument of social activity' (p. 1). In the Bogota spirit, communication would ensure 'liberty, authenticity, universality' (p. 3), and cultural co-operation would provide the link between diversity and solidarity, with UNESCO as an institutional facilitator. The conference report is encouragingly positive, but the precise balance between particularism and universalism remained to be clarified. Its optimistic slogans still had to be matched by the implementation and success of more concrete arrangements.

IV. Culture and Democracy

Human Rights and Multicultural Societies in the 1980s and 1990s

The Director-General's Report of 1979-80 expressed a concern that '...the gap between concepts and their practical application is still too wide' (p. 54). It stressed that the relationships between cultural development, cultural policies, and governmental responsibility still needed to be specified. With respect to cultural rights, the Director-General's Report of 1981-83 referred to Resolution 4/01 and encouraged the implementation of the 'Recommendation on Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and their contribution to it', and the studies on national cultural legislation (XXII)'. As indicated above, the management of cultural pluralism was acknowledged as an issue within societies, as well as between them. Hence the 1981-83 report's reference to studies on 'individuals and groups in a multicultural situation' (p. 46), and the idea of migrant workers 'Living in Two cultures'. Cultural rights could be claimed by individuals and groups within developed and developing countries, not just by less powerful states themselves.

The Mondiacult Conference held in Mexico in July-August 1982 was a high point in UNESCO's activity in the culture sector in the 1980s. The Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies included a definition of culture and an explanation of its role, demonstrating the evolution of these concepts since UNESCO's creation. The Declaration noted that 'in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs' (p. 39). According to this definition, the concept of culture itself contains both the universal and the particular: the universal idea of fundamental human rights, and the particular traits, beliefs, and ways of living that allow members of a group to feel a special and unique bond with other members.

The Mexico Declaration also defined the role of culture as broad and encompassing: 'that it is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through

culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognises his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations' (p. 39). This more sophisticated view of culture as a universal faculty, rather than a rigid set of practices, allows the maximum potential for flexibility and transcendence. It builds the ideas of renewal, re-evaluation, and critical choice into the definition of culture itself, pre-empting the criticism that cultural particularism can become a bulwark against intercultural sharing and solidarity. Further clauses in this Declaration reflect the more traditional view of culture as highly specific, thereby preventing the more sophisticated notion of culture as critical evaluation from becoming so open and non-specific that it loses its relevance and potency. This constant attempt to balance affirmation with openness, a central pillar of the approach to culture crystallized in this document, represents an important counterweight to the excessive politicization of cultural identity at the expense of a search for common values. Finally, the realization that cultural diversity needs to be managed within societies themselves, and the recognition that no culture can live isolated in today's interdependent world, underlies this Declaration and its principles.

The Medium-Term Plan for 1984-89 followed up on the theme of specificity and universality. It affirmed that 'each cultural heritage is part of the common property of mankind' (p. 228), suggesting the importance for all cultures of preserving and respecting each one of them. A more detailed study was also envisioned on this general topic: 'the fifth sub-programme (Studies of the specificity and universality of cultural values) involves studies and research aimed at developing the concept of cultural value and of the specificity of cultural values; shedding light on the conditions for achieving balance between the affirmation of identity and the imperative requirements of living together in harmony and the mutual enrichment of cultures; providing a clearer definition, in methodological terms, of a set of common aesthetic and ethical values that are widely shared and establishing the conditions for their recognition by individuals, societies and the international community' (p. 231). A recognition of the importance of these issues was the first step towards developing more thoughtful and useful approaches to them.

On a very concrete level, the situation of apartheid focused attention on the question of diversity and equality. As the Medium-Term Plan noted, the July 1950 Declaration on race 'showed that racism not only had the effect of denying equality to certain populations but also called into question the unity of the human race' (p. 243). The Plan highlighted that 'the basic issue raised by the deliberate policy of apartheid is the choice between the image of man which it is UNESCO task to defend on behalf of the international community and the image which results from that policy' (p. 244) and that 'apartheid represents the logical culmination and final stage of colonialism' (p. 253). The politicization of cultural identity as a potential liberating factor within societies themselves was illustrated clearly and dramatically by these condemnations of apartheid policies, showing the connection between identity and human rights that had been theorized in UNESCO documents.

Liberation was an imperative for groups within society and for societies themselves, even long after the initial wave of decolonization: 'denial of the rights of peoples to self-determination entails denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms' (p. 263). This Medium-Term Plan acknowledged 'the many and varied prerequisites – not only political and legal, but also economic, social and cultural – for the effective enjoyment by all peoples of genuine independence, that is to say, the ability to work out their own future in accordance with their aspirations' (p. 261). The link between culture and politics, dating from several decades earlier, was fortified by the focus on democracy and the promotion of economic, social, and cultural rights both within societies and in the international arena. As always, this affirmation of specificity was tempered by the perennial question, 'Is it possible to identify a significant set of values shared by the whole of mankind?' (p. 234). Even though many of UNESCO's conceptual models and practical priorities have shifted over the years, certain fundamental and enduring questions remain at the centre of its discourse and programs.

On 8 December 1986, at its 100th plenary meeting, the United Nations General Assembly issued the Proclamation of the World Decade for Cultural Development. Its goals were: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development, affirming and enriching cultural identities, broadening participation in culture, and promoting international cultural co-operation. The links between culture and politics, development, and democracy were all evident in these four objectives-again, implicitly, on both the inter-national and intra-national levels. The Director-General's Report for 1988-89 highlighted this connection between the domestic and international levels, stating that 'the effective exercise of cultural and linguistic rights is becoming increasingly important in resolving national and international conflicts and protecting human rights' (p. 77). An international meeting of experts at the UNESCO Headquarters in November 1989 focused on the concept of the rights of peoples, with special reference to the relationship between peoples' rights and human rights, as the latter are defined in universal international instruments (p. 76). An international symposium in collaboration with the Société Française de Philosophie looked at 'Philosophy and the French Revolution-The Universal Ideal and its Limits', while another symposium studied 'The Three Declarations of Human Rights: 1776, 1789, and 1948'. All of these projects showed the desire to achieve universality without imposing uniformity, as even 'universal' human rights have been challenged as culturally-specific and imperialistic by societies who feel threatened by external standards in whatever form.

The Medium-Term Plan for 1990-95 emphasized the unique role of UNESCO and the importance of 'activities that only UNESCO can conduct successfully, for example intercultural projects calling for international cultural co-operation' (p. 80-81). While lamenting a serious insufficiency of financial resources for the study of culture and intercultural studies (p. 84), the Plan demonstrated a keen awareness of the contemporary global situation, summarized as follows:

- The growing interdependence of culture and economies, a process accelerated by the development of modern means of transport an

communication, which foster a sense of belonging to a single universal culture;

- The similarly growing reaffirmation of cultural specificities and identities;
- The persistence and even re-emergence of inward-looking tendencies and cultural prejudice which conflict with international co-operation;
- The development of multicultural societies, which makes the affirmation of cultural identity more complex, though at the same time enriching it.

Given these conditions, the 1952 conception of a 'civisme international' seems equally relevant in the 1990s, combining particular, culturally-rooted loyalties with broader and more universal obligations derived from membership in a common humanity. A primary role for UNESCO in coming decades will be contributing to the theoretical elaboration and practical implementation of these more dynamic, multi-layered concepts.

The Director-General's Report for 1990-91 began to devote greater attention to these areas, with an increasing emphasis on democracy, and on the expansion of peace and intercultural dialogues (X). The September 1991 Prague International Forum on Culture and Development explored 'ways of building a new concept of citizenship, based on greater awareness and accountability, through developing the civic dimensions alongside the purely political aspects'. Related to this project were UNESCO's continued efforts in the area of peoples' rights, self-determination, and cultural identity, with a plan to prepare 'a specific study on autonomy and new political arrangements as well as on multiculturalism as an alternative model to assimilation and integration for dealing with the rights of national minorities' (p. 81). Far from the days when assimilation was regarded as a goal for migrant workers-the only way for them to enjoy rights as members of the host society-this newer model of multiculturalism allowed for a greater preservation of cultural diversity and autonomy within societies themselves, with the hope that the ties of citizenship would hold together those from different cultures within a single state. The questions of how value-free this conception of citizenship could or should be, what degree of sameness or consensus is required as a minimum social cement in a given society, and how multiculturalism can work to hold societies together while at the same time giving free expression to that which might otherwise threaten to break them apart, all remain highly relevant, and largely unresolved, in the present day. The priority of promoting 'the cultural expression of minorities in the context of cultural pluralism' remained central in the early 1990s, for example in the Director-General's Report on 1992-93 (XIII), in the 1994 Seoul International Meeting on Democracy and Tolerance, and in the proclamation of 1995 as the UN year for tolerance, explained by the Director-General in his 1994-95 report as 'promoting the idea, and above all the practice, of "active" tolerance'. But this emphasis did not replace previous ones,

especially the enduring connection between culture and development. In April 1993, a seminar was held in New Delhi on Cultural Identity and Development, and in Hanoi on the Cultural Dimension of Development. 21 May 1993 was designated the World Day for Cultural Development, and the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, focused on development as inseparable from culture in every respect.

The Medium-Term Strategy for 1996-2001 continues to emphasize state wars and conflicts, 'for which multi-ethnic, multicultural or multireligious societies provide the most fertile soil' (p. 6). These conflicts, stemming from 'the fear of differences', menace global security and societal cohesion. The idea that 'the new world taking shape is no doubt much less homogeneous and hence much less "governable" than it appears' (p. 6) highlights an urgent need for concepts and strategies to address and to manage these forces. While the assumption that homogenous populations are more easy to govern than plural ones may not be as self-evident as this statement suggests, the observation that conflicts can erupt along perceived lines of cleavage between populations cannot be ignored. The job of the United Nations, according to the Medium-Term Strategy, is to try to bring order into an international society which is becoming global and yet fragmented at the same time' (p. 6), notably by building and maintaining peace on the bases of 'equity, justice, and liberty'. The key is to find definitions of 'equity, justice, and liberty' that all peoples can accept and live with: in other words, to identify common values that could constitute 'the foundations of a desire to live together' (p. 44). The Medium-Term Plan's high priority, repeated again and again, of creating 'public policies that help to strengthen social cohesion within multi-ethnic or multicultural societies' (p. 45), and its emphasis on the special need to focus on 'the management of intercommunity relations' (p. 45), represent the culmination of a trend that began in the 1980s and that has become increasingly prominent and important in the present day.

As seen above, the connection between culture and knowledge made UNESCO central in the quest for achieving peace; the connection between culture and politics made cultural identity crucial to the quest for political independence, the connection between culture and development allowed new countries to build economic power and to assert themselves on the world stage, and the connection between culture and democracy focused attention on intra-state as well as inter-state cultural relations. Now, approaching the twenty-first century, the implicit connection between culture and security may also serve to reinforce the importance of positive intercultural relations as a cornerstone of international peace, with all of the financial and administrative support this priority requires.

In discussing international security, the Director-General in the Medium-Term Strategy is careful to restrict himself to UNESCO's specific constitutional mandate to 'construct peace in the minds of men – by helping to lay the intellectual and moral foundations of reconciliation between parties to conflicts' (p. 46). In fact, he need not be quite so cautious: a potential historical precedent for UNESCO's role in peace-building has existed untapped for decades. The Director-General noted in his 1952 Report that the theoretical foundations existed for UNESCO to participate in peace-keeping activities (although no

request had yet been made for this service): 'the programme for 1952 for the first time includes a resolution authorizing me "at the request of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and with the approval of the Executive Board, to assist, by means of studies, enquiries or advice of experts in the social sciences, the action of the United Nations, either to maintain peace in areas where conflicts are liable to arise, or, after the cessation of hostilities, to restore the normal life of national communities in areas subject to conflicts" ' (p. 198). This is precisely the kind of action that could be extremely used on the contemporary world stage, if carefully planned and coordinated with the UN and other international bodies. UNESCO has come a long way in the post half-century but, despite certain changes, the continuity in its mandate and mission is also unmistakable. Intercultural relations are, indeed, an international security issue. As UNESCO's history has demonstrated, the need to study and to handle situations of cultural pluralism on every societal level will remain a vital and indispensable focus for the Organization's activities. This attention to cultural pluralism will ensure that UNESCO remains proactive and relevant in the most pressing areas of international relations today.

While taking note of this continuity, it is also necessary to acknowledge that new challenges have arisen during these last years in relation to the extension of the globalization process. This movement brings both unprecedented potentialities of expression and innovation, and the risk of marginalization of the most vulnerable cultures. Taking advantage of the new possibilities being offered by globalization and regulating it are vital actions so that all cultures may achieve full recognition, without undergoing exclusion in an emergent global economy.

In this perspective, UNESCO highlights the necessity to protect tangible and intangible heritage in its plural aspects, as well as the diversity of contemporary intellectual and artistic creation. Cultural goods indeed are not mere consumer goods; they express a vision of the world and the most complete identity of individuals and peoples. Particular attention is paid, therefore, to the commercial exploitation of cultural goods, which are also symbols of identity. This means taking copyright into consideration and remaining vigilant as the respect of intellectual property and the constitution of new global markets. It is equally important, in the view of UNESCO, that the development of new technologies should not weaken cultural diversity. In this regard, UNESCO insists on the need to promote pluralism of media, linguistic diversity and the presence of local contents in the cyberspace. By including the new economic and technological dimension induced by globalization in the definition of its strategy, UNESCO is involved in promoting cultural diversity, when it faces new challenges without supporting cultural relativism or fundamentalism.

The strategy for 2002-2007

After two Round Tables of Ministers of Culture, one on "Culture and Creativity in a Globalized World" (UNESCO, Paris, 2 November 1999) and the other one on "Cultural Diversity: 2000-2010: challenges of the marketplace" (UNESCO, Paris, 11-12 December 2000), an Expert Committee on "the Strengthening of UNESCO's Role in the Promotion of Cultural Diversity in the

Context of Globalization” (Paris, 21-22 September 2000) and intensive debates during the 161st and 162nd sessions of the Executive Board (28 May-13 June 2001 and 2-31 October 2001), the 31st session of the General Conference has unanimously adopted the **UNESCO Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity**, in a most unusual context. It came in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001. It was an opportunity for States to reaffirm their conviction that intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of peace and to reject outright the theory of the inevitable clash of cultures and civilizations.

For the first time, cultural diversity was acknowledged as “the common heritage of humanity”, the defence of which was deemed to be an ethical and practical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. The concept of “diversity” reaffirms that plurality is the reservoir needed for freedoms, that cultural pluralism therefore constitutes the political response to the actual fact of cultural diversity and that such pluralism is inseparable from a democratic framework. Thus, freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equality of access for all cultures to artistic expressions, scientific and technological knowledge, and the possibility for them to be present in the means of expression and dissemination constitute essential guarantees of cultural diversity. Finally, cultural policies, which are the true driving force in cultural diversity, should foster the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services.

The Medium Term Strategy for 2002-2007 reaffirms UNESCO’s specific institutional mandate within the United Nations system, “...with a view to preserving and promoting the fruitful diversity of cultures” (UNESCO Constitution), according to Strategic Objective 8: “Safeguarding cultural diversity and encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilizations”. The extension of the process of globalization, though representing a challenge for cultural diversity, creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations, respecting their equal dignity, based on human rights and fundamental freedoms. On the basis of *Our Creative Diversity*, the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (1996); the Action Plan adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development Stockholm, 1998); and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), UNESCO will pursue its efforts to advocate the crucial role of culture in national and international development strategies. The three documents recommend in particular the elaboration of cultural policies aimed at the promotion of cultural diversity for pluralism, sustainable development and peace. The idea is to channel diversity towards constructive pluralism through the creation of state and societal mechanisms to promote harmonious interaction between cultures. To achieve this goal, both the State and the civil society have an important role to play by promoting equality and inclusiveness, not uniformity, by recognizing the sense of belonging and fostering empowerment, allowing individuals to enjoy the security of individual and plural identities within an accepted social and democratic framework... The protection of cultural diversity is closely linked to the larger framework of the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and its ability to achieve genuine mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation...”

Since the adoption of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, there have been many international initiatives to encourage reflection on the desirability of reinforcing standard-setting action in relation to cultural

diversity. Examples include: the Round Table “Cultural diversity and biodiversity for sustainable development” in the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 3 September 2002), the Summit on the *Francophonie* (Beirut, October 2002), the annual Meetings of the International Network on Cultural Policy (Cape Town, South Africa, October 2002, Opatija, Croatia, October 2003 and Shanghai, China, October 2004) and the adoption of resolution A/RES/57/249 by the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaiming 21 May as “World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development” (20 December 2002).

The question of a normative framework for cultural diversity was debated by various intergovernmental and governmental organizations as well as by international associations of cultural professionals and national academic circles.

At the 166th session of the Executive Board in spring 2003, the Member States deemed it advisable to elaborate a binding normative instrument on cultural diversity.

Four options were proposed: (a) a new comprehensive instrument on cultural rights (b) an instrument on the status of the artist, (c) a new Protocol to the Florence Agreement, (d) a new instrument on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions. This last option was adopted upon recommendation of the Executive Board.

At its 32nd session (October 2003), the General Conference requested the Director-General to submit at its following session (in 2005), a preliminary report and a draft project of an international convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions.

In accordance with UNESCO procedures, a first preliminary draft project of the convention was elaborated between December 2003 and June 2004 by a group of independent experts from diverse fields (anthropology, international law, economics of culture, philosophy etc.).

Their work, inspired by the principles of the Universal Declaration (notably, the links between cultural diversity and fundamental rights, democracy, dialogue and development) was undertaken with the objective of recognizing the equal importance of the cultural and economic aspects of development and the specific nature of cultural contents and artistic expressions; in other words, the dual cultural and economic nature of the goods and services to be covered by the convention. Consequently, they suggested revising the wording of the title without modifying the scope of the convention itself. The proposed title became: “International Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions”.

The preliminary draft convention is divided into seven chapters: “Preamble”, “Objectives and Guiding Principles”, “Scope of Application and Definitions”, “Rights and Obligations of States Parties”, “Relationship to Other Instruments”, “Follow-up Bodies and Mechanisms” and “Final Clauses”.

The ultimate goal as stated in this first version is to give all countries the means to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within and outside their borders. This is necessary to enable all countries, and in particular developing countries, to participate in a more balanced form of globalization and to benefit from the diversity of their cultural expressions in order to ensure long-term development. Cultural diversity is actually a mainspring of sustainable development that States must activate by adopting appropriate measures.

The word “promote” alongside “protect” demonstrates the States’ wish to avoid the tendency to seek refuge in roots or becoming narrow-minded. Instead, they consider that the diversity of cultural expressions implies freedom of expression—guarantor of free creation and diffusion enabling all peoples to benefit from the richness of the world’s cultures—.....

In elaborating this text, we listened very carefully to observations made by professionals in the field of culture and by several international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In the preparation of this preliminary draft, the General Conference entrusted UNESCO with a mandate to undertake consultations with the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to ensure that the Convention be complementary to, rather than in competition with, pre-existing international legal instruments.

The preliminary project elaborated by the experts was sent to the Member States in July 2004 along with a report to be examined at a first meeting of intergovernmental experts from 20 to 25 September 2004.

Following this meeting, the Member States are requested to send their comments and amendment proposals in writing to the Secretariat. A second intergovernmental meeting will take place in February 2005. It will probably be followed by a third meeting to ensure that the draft convention and the final report will be ready for the 33rd session of the General Conference in October 2005 with a view for its adoption by this UNESCO’s governing body. The phase of consultation with government experts is crucial since the various stacks—political, philosophical, economic, legal—will be explored in the course of the debates by the representatives of the Member States, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and cultural professionals.