



Excerpt from the Records of the General Conference

30th Session

Paris, 26 October – 17 November 1999

Resolutions

31 Preparation by UNESCO of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations ¹

The General Conference,

Referring to resolution 53/22, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

1. *Greatly appreciates and endorses* the terms of this resolution, which welcomes the collective endeavour of the international community to enhance understanding through constructive dialogue among civilizations on the threshold of the third millennium;
2. *Recognizes* the importance of the values embodied in the resolution, such as the importance of tolerance in international relations and the significant role of dialogue as a means of reaching understanding, removing threats to peace and strengthening interaction and exchange among civilizations;
3. *Notes with satisfaction* that specific reference was made to UNESCO in paragraph 3 of the abovementioned resolution as one of the international organizations which should “plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject”;
4. *Recalls* that, by the very terms of its Constitution, UNESCO has, since its inception, been fully involved in advancing the relations of the peoples and civilizations of the world;
5. *Further recalls* that the concept of a dialogue among civilizations, in an age of growing intolerance, is concretely illustrated in the Organization’s intercultural projects, such as those promoting interreligious dialogue and interactions among peoples, *inter alia* the programmes “Spiritual convergence and intercultural dialogue”, “The Slave Route” and “East-West Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia”, and the Bayt-al-Hikma project;
6. *Appreciates* the fact that UNESCO is moving beyond the concept of reciprocal knowledge to the concept that interactions between people and civilizations constitute the driving force in the promotion of a dialogue of civilizations;
7. *Considers* that a conceptual interrelation exists between the year 2001, United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and the year 2000, International Year for the Culture of Peace;
8. *Welcomes* the Declaration of Athens adopted by a meeting of representatives of Egypt, Greece, Islamic Republic of Iran and Italy, held to consider issues related to the theme “The Heritage of Ancient Civilizations: Implications for the Modern World”, and in which the representatives of those countries recognize that civilizations emerged from a “complex web of interactions”, and in which they propose the organization of a major international conference in the year 2000 to focus on the second aspect of the theme: the implications for the modern world;
9. *Recommends* that UNESCO play a leading role in the organization of activities of a cultural, educational, scientific and social nature, which aim to facilitate and promote dialogue among civilizations, through, for instance, active collaboration in the organization of special events, conferences and colloquia on themes related to intercultural dialogue;
10. *Notes with interest* the discussion at the 156th session of the Executive Board, and *invites* the Director-General to provide the necessary intellectual and material support for the initiatives taken by the Member States;
11. *Urges* Member States to give the year 2001, the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, all due prominence and to support activities aimed at facilitating and promoting dialogue among civilizations;
12. *Invites* the Director-General to take all appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of activities by UNESCO that will facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Year;
13. *Requests* the Director-General, following the Year, to present a report to the United Nations on these activities.