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STATEMENT
by Rutgers-Newark Interim Chancellor Philip L. Yeagle

For press conference announcing Rutgers’ International Institute for Peace as a UNESCO Category 2 Center

Madame Director General, Madame President, Ambassador Killion, Honorable Excellencies, distinguished guests, mesdames and messieurs, bonsoir.

I am very pleased to be here and to represent Rutgers University on this illustrious occasion, and to bring special greetings from our Rutgers campus in Newark, New Jersey.

Thank you to UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova and to Ambassador David Killion and to all who have worked on making this very special affiliation and this ceremony possible.

Today the entire Rutgers University community and I honor UNESCO as we celebrate the designation of Rutgers’ International Institute for Peace as a UNESCO Category II Center.

In Rutgers University, Newark and UNESCO we have what I believe is a perfect match: a public university with global reach and global aspirations for education and advancement, and an organization
whose mission is for advancement and peacemaking around the globe.

Rutgers-Newark’s affiliation with UNESCO is so very fitting, as it might be said that Rutgers-Newark is a microcosm of our global community. We are the most diverse national university in the United States, with students representing more than 100 nations, taking classes, conducting service and research projects, all under the guidance of a faculty also celebrated for its diversity. We see diversity not as an end in itself but as a vital bridge toward cooperation, harmony, thriving economies and indeed to peace.

Rutgers is the only American university to have a Center with UNESCO designation. We are very pleased to be in this unique position. This is of course a reality only because of the critical and innovative work of Professor Aldo Civico, Professor Sherri-Ann Butterfield, and colleagues.

Professor Civico came to Rutgers from Columbia University in 2010 with a passionate interest – as a scholar, a teacher and an activist – in conflict resolution, on a global scale. Working with faculty colleagues and students, he founded the International Institute for Peace last May at Rutgers-Newark, on the eve of Newark’s Peace and Education Summit, convened by the Dalai Lama and hosted by Newark Mayor Cory Booker – a conference attended by dignitaries and peace activists from all over the world. It was there that Professor Civico’s work attracted the attention of one of our country’s most distinguished actors, Mr. Forest Whitaker, who is bringing honor to his own profession for his activism as a UNESCO goodwill
ambassador.

Since last May, Professor Civico and Mr. Whitaker have made great strides launching the Institute’s agenda, which is designed to study and promote conflict resolution from our own city streets in Newark to areas around the world. I am pleased to note that in doing this, the Institute’s work well exemplifies the Rutgers University motto of “Jersey Roots, Global Reach.” We are immensely proud of what these leaders have accomplished.

May I say to you here at UNESCO: I was inspired and moved these last two days by the spirit and dedication exemplified by all we met for the high mission of this great institution.

Again, let me state how grateful we at Rutgers are for this extremely important affiliation with UNESCO, which opens up so many opportunities for us as we, through the work of this institute, advance the cause of peace and conflict resolution. The honor that UNESCO has bestowed on us reinforces our common commitment to achieve what is best for all global citizens.

Thank you again, to Professor Civico, to Ambassador Whitaker, Madame Director General, Ambassador Killian and to everyone assembled here today. My signature on this document confirms a commitment that Rutgers University will vigorously support the work of the International Institute for Peace and UNESCO.