



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mrs Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO
to the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University
Global Governance in the 21st Century
The UNESCO Angle**

Cambridge, 3 November 2010

Dear Ms Papoulias,
Dear Professors and Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation.

I am honoured to be hosted by the Kokkalis Program on Southeastern and East-Central Europe. The work of this program to enhance the quality of democratic, governance in this region is vital. As an alumnus of the Executive Education Program, I hesitate out of humility to express how much I support your work.

The John F. Kennedy School of Government and UNESCO have a lot in common. Both are global and forward-looking. Both are dedicated to harnessing intellectual thought for better public policy.

We are also guided by a similar vision.

The Kennedy School was created in the midst of the Great Depression.

UNESCO was founded in the shadow of a "great and terrible war".

Both were born in times when certainties seemed to be crumbling. Both were created from the determination to strengthen a common humanity based on the values of dignity, equality and mutual respect.

In London, sixty five years ago, UNESCO's mission was defined as that of building peace through cooperation in education, science, culture, communication and information: "A peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world ... the peace must therefore be founded, it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind."

This essential humanism guides UNESCO. If wars start in the minds of men and women; it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be built.

As we consider the challenges of global governance in the 21st century, I am convinced that this mission has never been so relevant.

Change is occurring at breakneck speed. Volatile energy and food prices, climate change and the loss of biodiversity affect people across the globe. The crisis that began in this country sent shockwaves across continents, affecting hardest the world's poorest communities. This has led to job losses, increased poverty and hunger. It has led to parents pulling their kids out of school. It has led to budget cuts for education, science and research.

Interdependence has blurred the lines between the 'domestic' and the 'foreign.' The family of states has grown, even as new actors have risen to prominence. Governance has become more complex and more global.

We must look straight at the challenges we face. The world is not safe when over one billion people live in extreme poverty. Societies are not secure when people lack access to education and health services, when unsustainable practices threaten the environment, when women do not enjoy equal rights. Our future is called into question when over eight million children die each year before the age of five – that is 22,000 every day. These are the challenges at the heart of global governance.

UNESCO's mandate to build "international peace and common welfare" remains valid, but *how* do we do this today? We live on the same planet; we need common

answers. How can we strengthen a single community of humanity, one that works together in the direction of peace and development?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not pretend to have definitive answers. But I do have strong convictions, born from personal experience.

I am Bulgarian. I come from South-East Europe. History has made this region a crossroads between Europe and the Middle East, between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. I belong to a generation raised in a divided Europe that was able to draw positive lessons from the past to stand together with the rest of the continent.

In 2000, the Canadian poet, Christopher Levenson wrote about the destruction of the Old Bridge over the Neretva River in Mostar during the war in Bosnia Herzegovina:

Now when so much is gone

that made us human all the world over, where

do we find the heart to begin again?

The people of the region have begun again -- through hard work, through their determination to overcome common problems, through their embrace of democratic values and European aspirations.

The rebuilding of the Old Bridge of Mostar under UNESCO's stewardship embodies the power of heritage to restore dialogue after conflict by building on that which we hold in common. The need to bridge cultures and communities through dialogue is valid for so many other parts of the world.

UNESCO has supported media freedom in difficult times throughout the region. We have fostered regional cooperation through annual Summits of Heads of State. We work in the field to safeguard cultural heritage and to promote pluralism and

dialogue. We can do much more to tap into the wealth of this region in culture and heritage as the means of dialogue and as reminders of all that which we share.

South-East Europe illustrates some of the core questions facing global governance. The essential task we face is to build a single community of humanity that draws on humanistic roots and values as the best means to guarantee sustainability and resilience.

By this, I mean the capacity of individuals, societies and states to respond positively to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation by working together towards long term solutions that are beneficial to all. These have deeper roots than mere financial, economic or material assets.

UNESCO fosters cooperation in education, culture, science and communication in order to enhance the human capacity to respond to the pressures of change and to make the most of the opportunities that it offers. As I see it, UNESCO's role lies in bridging the gaps that exist in global governance, in supporting public goods that fall through the cracks of globalization and that are vital for our common future.

The international community has recognized the need to work in these directions. In 2000, all countries agreed on a set of eight Millennium Development Goals to be reached by 2015. These embody an essentially humanist ambition to surmount inequality and poverty and to lay the foundations for balanced growth.

These are tied to the objectives set in 2000 to achieve education for all children, youth and adults by 2015 – the international campaign that UNESCO is leading. Education does not stand alone. It is vital for achieving *all* of the Millennium Development Goals. Harnessing globalization for development starts in the classroom, and it continues through quality and life-long learning.

We are five years away from the deadline. Considerable progress has been made. But we are not there yet. With little time left, we have to mobilize more political will, more resources, and better policies. This was the message that I took to the Millennium Development Goals Summit last September.

Some 72 million children who should be in primary school are not. Another 71 million adolescents of lower secondary school age are missing out. In 22 countries,

30 percent of young adults have less than four years of education. In eleven countries of sub-Saharan Africa, the number rises to 50 percent. Illiteracy affects 759 million adults – 16 percent of the world population. The situation is alarming in many areas.

'Education for all' should mean just that -- but it does not yet. Being born a girl is still a primary cause for exclusion in the 21st century. Globally, girls are more likely to never enter primary school than boys. Less than 40 percent of countries provide girls and boys with equal access to education. In Africa, disparities have increased at the secondary level over the last decade. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 12 million girls may never enrol in school.

Discrimination is compounded by poverty. In Yemen, 90 percent of young women aged between 17-22 years old have less than 4 years of education. In Nigeria, 97 percent of poor Hausa-speaking girls have less than 2 years of education.

Two thirds of the 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today are women.

Women are making breakthroughs in higher education in all regions, but they still account for only 14 percent of researchers. Everywhere, women remain under-represented at all levels of the political system.

Gender equality is one of two global priorities of UNESCO, along with action for Africa. This is why I support so strongly the creation of UN Women, headed by Michelle Bachelet. This will lead to greater recognition of gender in development policies, in conflict resolution and peace-building processes and in fighting the scourge of violence against women.

Women's rights are human rights that must be promoted, upheld and enforced. Empowering girls and women is also the most powerful way to reach the Millennium Development Goals. Study after study demonstrates the positive impact of girls' education on child and maternal health, on fertility rates, on poverty reduction and on economic growth. In Indonesia, for instance, child vaccination rates are 19% when mothers have no education. Rates increase to 68% when mothers have at least secondary school education. Educated mothers are more likely to send their children to school. Women who participate in literacy courses can more confidently make decisions and have a say in their households and communities.

Money matters on all of these issues. We face a shortfall of US\$16 billion in aid annually to reach the Education for All goals in poor countries by 2015. Meanwhile, worldwide military expenditure in 2009 stood at US\$1.5 trillion. This represented an increase in real terms of 5.9% compared to 2008 and an increase of 49% since 2000. Our role is to keep reminding states of the need to invest out of the crisis. Education provides individuals and societies with the ability to manage change. Cutting education budgets now is a perfect example of a false economy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Examples abound of well-intended but inappropriate development policies by the international community that fail to integrate local context.

Culture must find its place at the heart of development thinking and action, because it provides the framework in which individuals and communities understand problems and react to them. In Uganda and Botswana, for instance, the most successful policies in the fight against HIV/Aids are those that build on the culture of family solidarity.

Culture is a powerful global economic engine. In 2005, culture generated jobs and income to a value of US\$1.3 trillion. Cultural industries create jobs and raise revenues for communities and countries.

It is the ultimate renewable energy. But it needs support. UNESCO works to promote cultural industries and local crafts. Our work in putting in place an ISBN system in Algeria has boosted publishing in this country.

This is why I worked so hard in September to ensure that the outcome document of the Millennium Development Goals Summit encouraged “international cooperation in the cultural field, aimed at achieving development objectives.” This is an important result.

Fundamentally, globalization is about individuals. It touches on their sense of self, their identities and perceptions – in a word, their culture. Culture is what makes us who we are.

Promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue through education, the arts, and the media is the smart answer to intolerance. In increasingly complex societies, we know too well the dangers of the breakdown of dialogue and the rise of hatred. Culture can be a force for prevention and regeneration.

Our byword should be respect for diversity – the diversity of people, languages and cultural expressions.

Societies grow on their own model. Development is not uniform. At the same time, we will not compromise our fundamental principles. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, even if they are not universally accepted. Our job is to persuade and nurture societies to move in this direction.

UNESCO sets international standards to protect cultural diversity. Humanity's tangible and intangible heritage, our practices, expressions and languages are protected through six international conventions – the most recent of which is the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In the United States, the World Heritage List includes the Grand Canyon National Park, along with the Yellowstone and Redwood national parks. These areas of exceptional natural wealth must be protected and promoted. Independence Hall and the Statue of Liberty are also listed by UNESCO. These quintessentially American symbols are universal. They are part of the story of humanity as a whole and must be recognized and cherished as such.

In September, UNESCO signed a ground-breaking agreement with the Smithsonian Institution to cooperate on promoting cultural and natural heritage programmes.

UNESCO World Heritage sites are a source of wealth and employment. Australia's 15 world heritage areas generate some 40,000 jobs. They also provide unique platforms for cooperation in scientific research and conservation. Cooperation between architects, historians and experts from across the world is a sure way to bring women and men from different cultures together to work on common projects.

Building peace in the minds of men and women must take its cue from culture and heritage.

This applies also to the information and communication revolution, which must make the most of humanity's diversity as a source of wealth and of sustainability. Last year, I signed an agreement with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers to operationalize the first multilingual domain names on the Internet. This is a step towards enhancing diversity of content on the Internet.

UNESCO is the only UN agency with a clear mandate to promote and protect the free flow of information.

We work to protect media freedom in conflict and post-disaster situations. In 2009, at least 77 journalists and support staff were killed worldwide while trying to do their job. UNESCO raises the alarm and works with countries to ensure follow-up.

The annual celebration of the World Press Freedom Day on 3 May is an opportunity to sensitize governments and civil society worldwide to the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of the press for development, democracy and dialogue. In 2011, the main celebrations will occur in Washington and New York.

The "World Digital Library" is another initiative that draws on the power of the revolution in communication and information technology to support access to information and knowledge.

This is a joint initiative developed with the American Library of Congress to digitize significant collections of documents relating to the history and culture of all countries. Free, accessible in seven languages, covering all continents, time periods, and topics, taking in a vast array of partner institutions, the wealth of this Library is stunning. I encourage you to visit the website of the World Digital Library.

UNESCO seeks also to harness information and communication technologies to support quality education. Partnership with private institutions, including Intel, Cisco and Microsoft, are an important part of our work. We must build international partnerships that are as wide as possible in order to bridge the digital divide and establish inclusive knowledge societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have provided only a few examples of our work. These are illustrations of the tools that UNESCO leverages to build peace in the minds of men and women by strengthening sustainability and resilience in the face of change.

As I see it, the core challenge of global governance today is to harmonise the collective preferences of many different kinds of actors to ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction, for the greater common good.

This is difficult. Traditional tools of international relations must be reviewed. New modes of action have to be invented. States cannot tackle the challenges of global governance alone. "Hard power" falls short in an increasingly complex world. Joseph's Nye concept of "soft power" comes closer to explaining how to manage the complexity of globalization.

I believe that UNESCO's strength can be found here.

By this, I mean the power to broker ideas, to define problems, to set agendas, to convince the reluctant, and to set standards for behaviour. This is the power to bring the right actors together to work on joint goals. It is the power to draw on the wealth of civil society and the engagement of mayors, educators, artists, athletes and NGOs. It is the power to develop partnerships with the private sector to foster better collective action.

These methods and tools are a good fit for the playing field of global governance today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the midst of rapid change, we must remain true to a moral compass. The inherent dignity of every individual must be the starting point for international action and the measure of its success. The increasing complexity of our world should not take away from this core value. It is the pillar on which to build long term peace and growth.

This new humanism is the red thread weaving through all UNESCO programmes.

This calls for *every* human being to be able to participate in our shared destiny.

It calls for ensuring that *every* child goes to school and receives a quality education.

It calls for achieving gender equality and giving women and men equal access to knowledge and power.

This new humanism also means a better grasp of our environment, by understanding and anticipating the consequences of climate change for millions of affected people.

It means protecting humanity's great cultural diversity, along with biodiversity.

Humanism has a long tradition. The context has changed. The goals which humanists of the past posited for cities and states, we must now achieve worldwide. Globalization is not only about increased contacts but about sharing objectives and working in common directions. The challenge today is to build a lasting and singular human community that includes all and that draws on the fundamental values of dignity, equality and respect.

These are the stakes of a new humanism, where UNESCO has a leading role to play.

For all of this, we need your ideas and creativity. I end with an appeal for your continued engagement. We are in this together; we must find answers together.

Thank you.