

«Policy implementation regarding the building of a community of shared future for mankind»

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Statement by

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In an age of accelerating globalization, it is one of the central tasks, if not *the* central task for all countries to help build new and long-lasting bridges between peoples, cultures and civilizations. Peace in the twenty-first century is inextricably linked with sustainable and inclusive development, human security and a dialogue based on shared human values. This will allow to create a community of shared future of mankind.

No civilization can assume sole responsibility for all humanity; neither can a single civilization claim exclusive rights to provide an ultimate and universally valid vision of how to be a human being in the complex and multifaceted world. No civilization is "pure". We are all rooted in cultures and civilizations that have fed and enriched themselves through cross-fertilization. The complementarity of civilizations would be unthinkable without the constant interplay and exchange of the faculties of human thought and creativity such as science, art and philosophy. It would equally be impossible without mutual understanding of our ethical and spiritual dimensions. Hence, all civilizations celebrate the unity in diversity of humankind.

Dialogue is one of the most effective ways to promote the best in humanity. It implies reciprocity of communication and the acceptance that truth does not and cannot belong to a singular group alone. Since conflict begins where dialogue ceases it is essential to search for ways past political fragmentation.

Genuine dialogue based on openness towards all others and open-ended discussions are vital to the creation of the space necessary for deeper understanding of the diverse nature of the human family. It helps to shed misconceptions, dispel misunderstandings and stereotypes, reveal differences, and to generate confidence and trust.

We all agreed over the past decades that cultural harmony paves the way for a harmonious world, bringing together diverse communities to a single community of a shared future for mankind.

Creativity and artistic expressions are central because they entail something deeply and universally human. Architecture, crafts, sculpture, paintings, design, fashion, film, music, dance, performance art, painting, literature and increasingly so video and digital arts contribute to make our lives whole. Without the arts, we would be deprived of an authentic sense of ourselves and the world.

It is imperative to highlight the place of science in the process of dialogue as a universal language for the rapprochement of cultures and its significance in helping to understand the close interconnection of science with the growth of civilization and the flourishing of cultures.

Culture can act as a driver for social inclusion and a driver to reassure individual identities. It is when exchanges, networking and sharing of experiences are based on the respect for cultural diversity that people can learn from each other, promote mutual understanding and learn to live together on this planet.

Globalization has also allowed new tensions to come to the fore – fears of a loss of identity and strife between cultures and faiths. Culture and artistic creations are not spared the deep dichotomy of our globalized existences. Although we aim for openness, there is a pervasive fear of identity loss. The constant change, globalization, digitalization and delocalization, left many people longing for stabilization, rationalization and identification.

As the globalization process increasingly opens societies to each other and diversifies them internally, the new threats to peace are becoming political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental and sometimes a mix of all. They can take the form of intra- or inter-states tensions which may turn into conflicts, wars,

transnational disease vectors, global terrorism, tsunamis, floods and droughts, water-resources disputes, misuse of cyberspace as well as the joint effect of all these forces in producing disruptive social transformations and traumatic human population movements.

The concept of the dialogue is part of the fundamental structure of the United Nations, as underlined by former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan: “The United Nations itself was created in the belief that dialogue can triumph over discord, that diversity is a universal virtue, and that the peoples of the world are far more united by their common fate than they are divided by their separate identities”. Today, faced with a new set of challenges, the United Nations must uphold once again its founding values and build through innovative approaches the basis for dialogue creating a new culture of belonging.

We need new ideas, new thinking, new approaches to tackle the challenges of our time, to move our world out of the journey into vagueness towards better policies which make the most of the globalized reality. We need new skills to live and work together, and new forms of citizenship for a rich and plural environment.

Solidarity should be the principal response to a globalization process that has made us more interconnected and interdependent but has not helped us to make satisfactory advances and choices towards shared prosperity and reduced inequalities. I suggest that solidarity must be the basis for any global ethics of the 21st century.

We must re-energize the ideals of peace, solidarity, human dignity, tolerance, mutual understanding, reconciliation and cultural diversity as well as intercultural dialogue as a path to a global ethics for the 21st century.

“People of all countries should work together to build a community of shared future for mankind, to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and shared prosperity.” These are the words of the 19th CPC National Party Congress.

How can such a community be defined, built and nurtured? It must be a community of shared values. It must be a community of eco-civilisation.

Arguably, a broad sense of commonality and agreement has by now been reached with respect to an overarching framework for the dialogue consisting of a set of

universally shared values, which cuts across all cultures and civilizations, propounding basic standards of behaviour and providing form and substance to identities. These values constitute the very basis of social cohesion and collective purpose. Tolerance is a fundamental value that incorporates respect for the Other regardless of diversity of belief, culture and language, neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies, but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity. Other globally shared values are mutual understanding, respect for and the upholding of cultural diversity, commitment to peace, non-violence and peaceful practices, respect for human dignity, observance of human rights, commitment to democratic practices, sustainable development and human solidarity.

The current challenge is dual: to translate them into reality through concrete action and to re-instil and regularly reaffirm these values, especially in succeeding generations.

We witness today, in many respects, not a clash of civilizations but a clash of ignorances – meaning the ignorance of each other’s way of life, values and heritage, the ignorance of the equal dignity of the human person in all cultures and civilizations, and the ignorance of the unity of humanity and of commonly shared values.

We must design ways of responding to new or re-emerging forms of ignorance, namely “ignorance of diversity”, “ignorance of the Other”, “ignorance of the future”, “ignorance of sustainable development”, “ignorance of ethics” or “ignorance of climate change”. More importantly, we badly need ways of countering these “new ignorances” by developing “new literacies” – namely, the knowledge, values and competencies necessary to meet these challenges. This would, however, have to be complemented by the development of “cultural literacy”, that is the knowledge of cultural values and of other cultures vital in an increasingly interconnected world. Historical knowledge – both of one’s own society and of other peoples’ history – forms part of this endeavour.

Our common challenge is then: to strengthen and deepen this shared understanding and commitment by striving for a better reciprocal knowledge and appreciation of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity and traditions. Ultimately, this approach will also help to counter extremism in various forms, reduce divisiveness and promote peace and understanding among peoples. Our constant goal must be to build cultures of dialogue, cultures of inclusion, cultures of mutual understanding.

It becomes urgent to rethink the intellectual and moral foundation of progress and reaffirm the humanistic values that should inspire the attitudes, behaviours and actions susceptible to produce, through dialogue and the free flow of ideas, global peace and shared prosperity.

In a world of intricate interdependencies, where a conflict anywhere can spread conflict everywhere, it becomes urgent to understand that peace can disappear at once, even in countries where it has a long tradition. Lasting peace rests on a complex and fragile web of daily practices embedded in local settings and the most ephemeral encounters that individuals and communities creatively maintain out of the conviction that it constitutes the sustainable conditions for living together in dignity and shared prosperity.

We must accept that learning to live together and living together, side by side, does not mean living in the same way. What is required now is a set of specific institutional and policy mechanisms to assure that they are suited to the special political, technological and planetary conditions of our present era. To that end, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach of policies conducive to human dignity, freedom, equality, mutual trust, shared responsibilities and intercultural solidarity, thus making sustainable peace the custodian for humanity's sustainable future.

In a very short period of time, the world has become a "global village". In the process, it has lifted millions out of poverty. It has witnessed the emergence of middle classes in countries where there were once just the elites and the poor and has brought about new values and orientations.

Our adaptation to the immense speed of change must go hand in hand with a re-iteration of enduring values.