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ACTION PLAN FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES (2013-2022)

SUMMARY

This document is submitted pursuant to 37 C/Resolution 1 (II), in which the General Conference requested the Director-General to finalize and present the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) at the 194th session of the UNESCO Executive Board.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 6.

BACKGROUND

1. The UNESCO General Conference proposed, during its 36th session, that the period 2013-2022 be proclaimed as the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.¹ The proposal was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly² which designated UNESCO as the lead agency for the United Nations system. This new mission is consistent with the Organization's mandate and its steadfast commitment in favour of mutual understanding, as acknowledged in a number of decisions and landmark initiatives led by UNESCO³ as well as by the United Nations with a focus on intercultural dialogue.
2. As lead agency for the Decade, the Director-General⁴ initiated wide consultations with all relevant partners of the Organization and created a Special Account for mobilizing extrabudgetary resources. In this framework, UNESCO collaborated with the Republic of Kazakhstan, initiator of the Decade, in the launching event, in Astana on 23 August 2013.
3. As a result of the consultations, a number of Member States, as well as intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners in official relations with UNESCO expressed their support and commitment to this Decade (see Annex II). Substantial comments and proposals were made which constitute a representative sample of the goals and expectations from this new commitment and a profound willingness to further participate in building a global strategy, with concrete impact at regional, national and local levels to improve mutual knowledge and global understanding.
4. The General Conference, at its 37th session⁵ did "Request the Director-General to finalize and present the Action Plan for the International Decade of Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) at the 194th session of the UNESCO Executive Board".
5. In the same spirit, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 68/126 of 10 December 2013 did also "Welcome the launch of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) for which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with Member States and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, will provide a plan of action to enhance interreligious and intercultural dialogue and promote tolerance and mutual understanding". The document in Annex I provides more detailed information on the draft Action Plan of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

Proposed decision

6. In the light of the background information provided above and in consideration of the draft Action Plan and annexes, the Executive Board may wish to consider a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling UNESCO's General Conference Resolutions 34 C/Resolution 46, 35 C/Resolution 47, 36 C/Resolution 40, 37 C/Resolution 1 (II) and the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 62/90, 63/22, 66/226, 67/104 and 68/126;
2. Having examined document 194 EX/10 and its annexes;

¹ 36 C/Resolution 40 was a proposition of the Republic of Kazakhstan, co-sponsored by a number of Member States.

² A/RES/67/104

³ 32 C/Resolution 60, 172 EX/49, 34 C/Resolution 46, and 36 C/Resolution 66.

⁴ CL/4021 of 10 June 2013.

⁵ 37 C/Resolution 1 (II).

3. Reaffirming the imperative need to consolidate and intensify dialogue among cultures in order to create, at the national, regional and global levels an environment conducive to respect for cultural diversity, human rights and mutual understanding, in line with the principles inscribed at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO;
4. Further recalling UNESCO's long and rich experience in developing and increasing the links between peoples, cultures and civilizations in order to build peace in the minds of men and women;
5. Expresses its appreciation for the draft Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022) presented by the Director-General, after consultation with Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other relevant partners in official relations with UNESCO;
6. Approves the draft Action Plan elaborated by the Director-General and invites her to finalize it in the light of the comments made by the Executive Board;
7. Welcomes the creation of a Special Account for the Decade and urges the Director-General to pursue her efforts to build awareness among all partners and to mobilize extrabudgetary funding in order to attain the goals of the International Decade;
8. Invites all Member States and relevant organizations and institutions, when developing their own agenda, to draw on this Action Plan and its principles, with a view to furthering their commitment to intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace;
9. Requests the Director-General to present a report on the implementation of this Decade at its 197th session.

ANNEX I

THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES (2013-2022)

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly in its sixty-seventh session adopted its resolution 67/104 entitled “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, in which it proclaimed the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be the lead agency for this decade. This new framework is building on previous engagement of the international community in favour of intercultural dialogue and peace, which was expressed in a number of landmark commitments led by UNESCO⁶ and the United Nations.⁷

2. Owing to its Constitutional mandate asserting “that 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, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”, UNESCO has a long-standing commitment and recognized legitimacy to “advancing, through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind”. This vision and aspiration has been and is constantly renewed and adapted to the regional and international political contexts.

3. Yet, the persistent question remains as to the best approach to unity-in-diversity, or, even more, to the achievement of unity beyond diversity through the full participation in the infinite wealth of the cultures of the world. To meet this challenge, this Action Plan builds therefore on the consultations initiated by the Director-General of UNESCO and also takes stock of the follow-up actions inspired by the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) as well as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010) and the Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence (2012-2013). It therefore aims to articulate a wide array of views and approaches while setting a common goal to enhance ongoing initiatives at the local, national, regional and global levels and to instigate a wide movement in favour of intercultural dialogue respectful of cultural diversity and human rights, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding conducive to achieve international peace and security as well as sustainable development.

II. THE RAPPROCHEMENT OF CULTURES: A NEW HORIZON WITH NEW CHALLENGES

4. The central goal of the United Nations system is “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. These humanist ideals formulated decades ago undeniably remain the most relevant compass for action today, in a world of intricate interdependencies, where a conflict somewhere can spread conflict anywhere. It therefore becomes urgent to understand that peace can disappear suddenly, even in places where it has a long-standing tradition. Lasting peace rests on a complex and fragile fabric of interrelated values, attitudes and behaviours required both in the implementation of international treaties and in the course of daily life with the practice of respect, tolerance, openness, mutual understanding and dialogue. Above all, dialogue is bound to play an increased

⁶ 34 C/Resolution 46, 35 C/Resolution 47, 36 C/Resolution 40, 37 C/Resolution 1 (II).

⁷ Resolutions 52/15, 56/6, 57/6, 60/288, 63/22.

role in the development of a universal global consciousness, free from racial, ethnic and social prejudices.

5. According to a variety of conceptual, intellectual, political and programmatic approaches, the terms of “unity-in-diversity”, “routes of dialogue”, “tolerance”, “culture of peace”, “dialogue among civilizations”, “intercultural and interreligious dialogue” and more recently “rapprochement of cultures” were used to express this aspiration. At a time of rapid globalization and social transformations, heralding the notion of rapprochement is to be understood as addressing the pressing urgent need to take into account and clearly demonstrate new articulations between cultural diversity and universal values.

6. Bearing in mind the diversity of cultures and the numerous ways in which they can interact peacefully and fruitfully, it is important to consider this Action Plan as a firm declaration of a strong commitment for action, including new policy design and new stakeholders’ engagement to help bringing people closer together. Indeed, the purpose of this Action Plan is to provide guidelines and principles to inform and inspire projects carried by a growing number of different actors over the Decade. Designed and implemented within such universally accepted frameworks, these many actions to come over the Decade will constitute as many opportunities to exemplify the potential of rapprochement as a slow, gradual and patient process. It is through this chorus of initiatives that an overall understanding of the implications of rapprochement shall emerge, along with its deeper connections to the culture of peace and the dialogue. In this perspective, the rapprochement of cultures can be characterized as implying that international security and social inclusion cannot be attained sustainably without a commitment to such principles as compassion, conviviality, hospitality, solidarity and brotherhood which are the corner stones of human coexistence inherent in all faiths and secular ideologies.

7. The advantage of a decade is to offer a medium-term approach rather than a short-term one which is essential in this context to make the impact more tangible and measurable. This is consistent with the lessons learned from previous international observances and the results from consultations on this Action Plan, suggesting that innovative, coherent and comprehensive projects should be encouraged, and target audiences should be chosen carefully and defined precisely. In the same vein, stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Decade could thus enhance the relevance and results of their activities by developing clear-cut strategies, including, for some, the setting of annual priorities, in order to sharpen the Decade's profile. The challenge will therefore reside in the capability to create a flexible framework for action with a realistic and sustainable strategy. (See Section V).

III. OBJECTIVES AND GOAL

8. The International Decade will therefore seek to illustrate the benefits of jointly promoting respect for human rights and cultural diversity, while acknowledging the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to fight against new forms of racism, discrimination, intolerance, extremism and radicalization, thus forging ties among peoples and nations. More precisely, the Decade should :

- Reaffirm and renew the expression of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Constitution of UNESCO, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, as well as pertinent regional instruments;
- Contribute to the emergence of a global consciousness in favour of the ideals and practice of mutual understanding and non-violence by providing fresh arguments to governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the

civil society for creatively adapting policy frameworks in order to address the challenges which are jeopardizing humankind's cohesion and peaceful co-existence;

- Reflect on the principles and conditions for the emergence of a common ethos, free from racial, ethnic, religious and social prejudices and thus fostering new opportunities and spaces where needs and aspirations of societies can be expressed and heard, including those of young men and women, in order to create shared sense-making and hope;
- Sensitize governments, opinion makers, religious leaders, believers and non-believers, civil society and the private sector on the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to fight against manipulation of religion and to foster social sustainability and cohesion by designing new policies, modalities and tools for a harmonious living together;
- Foster international cooperation, solidarity and reconciliation through the maintenance of a climate of mutual trust and security, understanding and better knowledge among nations, cultures, traditions, religions and beliefs, especially in communities and nations where post-conflict and post-disasters situation create tensions;

9. In sum, the overarching goal of the International Decade is to empower the present and future generations so they are better equipped with the appropriate knowledge, new competences, skills and tools necessary to exchange, communicate and cooperate across cultural, religious and national boundaries to become responsible global citizens in a safer world for all, mainly through education, arts and heritage initiatives and projects as well as science, information and communications technologies (ICTs), including the Internet and social media.

IV. MAIN AREAS OF ACTION

10. To achieve these objectives, an Action Plan of the Decade is proposed, which focuses on four major themes inspired by the mobilizing framework of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, including the following: (i) Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity; (ii) Building a pluralist framework for commonly shared values; (iii) Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural dialogue through quality education and the media; and (iv) Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, social and cultural dimensions.

IV.1 Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity as well as supporting reconciliation efforts

11. The rapprochement of cultures through intercultural and interreligious dialogue requires basic understanding about the otherness, including his or her history, language, heritage, religion and belief. As stated in the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution, "ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war". As the lives of all peoples and nations are growingly interdependent, respect for each other must be more than keeping one's distances, it must rest on a positive and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. Dialogue, solidarity and rapprochement are key to the implementation of all the dimensions of peace, including the prevention of violence and terrorism, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, mutual respect, understanding and international cooperation. They are also essential to active promotion of social cohesion and inclusion; notably as migrations and new modalities of communication are transforming societies into multicultural communities sharing the same space and seeking to define a set of values to which all citizens can adhere in the full respect for human rights.

12. An important dimension of the Decade is to encourage increased awareness about history and relationships developed between cultures and civilizations and highlighting all process which have spurred intercultural dialogue and the rapprochement of cultures, with particular attention paid to the effective roles of women and youth as well as minorities and indigenous peoples, whose actions on the life of societies has often been overlooked. A special focus shall thus be on social and cultural transformations articulating in a judicious manner the claims of cultural identities and citizenship.

13. The Decade shall be a chance to illustrate that diversity is above all a dynamic process which offers new opportunities for all to increase knowledge, competences and skills thanks to the creative potential of people to constantly reshape standards of well-being and ways of living together.

IV.2 Building a framework for commonly shared values which fosters social cohesion

14. Dialogue is a process which demands not only the recognition of cultural diversity but also the sincere adhesion to shared values such as freedom, equality, including gender equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, social inclusion, notably with regard to youth and minorities as well as indigenous peoples. A genuine rapprochement of cultures can happen if governments, international organizations, civil society and religious communities commit to disseminating a message of peace, justice, respect and tolerance based on the cardinal principle of the equal dignity of all cultures and religions as well as such individuals' rights explicitly formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes "freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

15. Building on intercultural and interreligious dialogue as well as on a culture of peace, the rapprochement of cultures thus fosters the discussion for the elaboration and the implementation of policies conducive to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, the free flow of information and knowledge, democratic participation, international solidarity and a sense of global responsibility. As such, the importance of public places and special events such as cultural festivals, religious gatherings and sports events should be emphasized during the United Nations Days, Weeks, Years and Decades as they offer privileged venues for cultural interaction that is beneficial to all. (See para. 29).

IV.3 Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural dialogue through quality education and the media

16. Reaching to minds of people, education at all levels and the media, including the Internet, are some of the principal means to create the conditions for an authentic rapprochement of cultures. Quality education should be primarily grounded in the respect for human rights and cultural diversity and their interaction, thanks to a vibrant intercultural dialogue. Children and youth should from an early age, must be able to benefit from an education on the values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and non-discrimination. As participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community is a right conditioning the rapprochement of cultures, it is essential to reassert the importance of the Education For All (EFA) goals, which, as a global agenda encompassing all the levels and dimensions of education, directly contribute to the peaceful development of societies. This was also recognized in the Education First initiative of the Secretary-General, which underscored global citizenship education as one of its three pillars.

17. In line with the principles formulated in the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), joint efforts by all education stakeholders must be made so as

to equip teachers and learners with knowledge and aptitudes to openness and appreciation of cultural diversity. This includes the revision of the content of national curricula and textbooks, notably history, as well as other learning materials, taking into account diverse learning styles, life experiences and other cultural and linguistic diversity issues at large. Such an education should also include the teaching of peace education, human rights education, education for global citizenship and intercultural dialogue as well as sustainable development education. Initiatives to promote the rapprochement of cultures should be undertaken by schools and universities and other institutions of education and research. The Decade represents a major opportunity to highlight that new intercultural competences are needed as part and parcel of all curricula.

18. Since the media play an increasingly important role in the daily lives of people across the globe, namely among young people, it is crucial to harness their potential for promoting the rapprochement of cultures. The traditional mass-media such as the press, television and the radio remain essential vectors to inform people on other cultures and religions. Their capacity to change the perception of different cultures and religions is possible if journalists and media actors are well trained and sensitized to the need to respect and positively promote human rights and cultural diversity as well as non-violence-infused programmes.

19. However, it must be noted that in a more and more interconnected world, the importance of media training will increasingly exceed the sphere of professionals. New information and communication technologies have become ubiquitous in all societies increasing access to information and knowledge as well as the capacity to participate in the cultural, social, political and economic life of the community. While digital tools have the potential to bridge the different cultures and religions of the world, they can nevertheless also be misused and widen the divide between and among cultures. The Internet and social media, remain a largely uncharted territory which can offer open platforms for dialogue as well as an echo chamber for intolerance, extremism and division. In that context, media and information literacy and intercultural competences programmes must become essential references if the exercise of freedom of the press and freedom of information and communication is to foster mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation among peoples.

IV.4 Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, social and cultural dimensions

20. As poverty and environmental degradations are recognized causes of conflict and obstacles to reconciliation between and within nations, the rapprochement of cultures builds on the same requirements as sustainable development, notably with respect to the often neglected ethical, social and cultural dimensions of the latter. This intangible dimension of development is nonetheless indispensable to address if one hopes to see modes of consumption and production transformed democratically and progressively so that humankind can achieved shared well-being, notably within the post-2015 agenda.

21. All cultures, including in particular the rich body of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems, offer a resource of values, attitudes and behaviours which can only inform policies and practices of sustainable development. As global environmental challenges call for shared frameworks of actions, recognition of and respect for all forms of knowledge and traditions that contribute to safeguarding the resilience of ecosystems and to promoting sustainable uses notably in relation to the management of water and other natural resources is the best approach to enhance during this Decade. New spaces of dialogue must be open today by the sciences, notably with respect to the dimensions of scientific progress which may raise ethical issues and controversies. This exercise of ethics is an ongoing challenge: it is a process requiring dialogue that can be efficiently designed to deliver balanced, rational, reasonable and responsible responses.

22. As stated in the Outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “The Future We Want”, sustainable development cannot happen without democracy, inclusive participation, social inclusion and respect for cultural diversity. In other words, the imperative to organize and support cultural pluralism at all levels remains a vital and indispensable dimension towards achieving lasting peace. Hence, there is a need to multiply the platforms of exchange and to collect innovative practices that are conducive to cultural pluralism at local, national and regional levels. Raising awareness on cultural expressions of minorities, migrants, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged and excluded groups to foster respect and mutual understanding for social cohesion will thus be an important feature of the International Decade. This will also contribute to stress that cultural heritage and creativity can contribute to the development and the eradication of poverty, if a balance is struck between the dynamics of culture and the requirements of the market, while emphasizing that the trade of cultural goods and services is never only a commercial exchange but also a cultural interaction and, as such, an opportunity for the rapprochement of cultures.

V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY, NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP

23. The International Decade will enhance the development of initiatives with some flagship projects, tacking stock of UNESCO’s long-standing work in this domain and its main functions as laboratory of ideas, clearing house, standard-setter, capacity-builder and catalyst for international cooperation. The Organization will capitalize on its own programmes and initiatives in the domain afferent to the rapprochement of cultures. Indeed, the UNESCO has a wide range of programmes geared towards building peace in the minds of men and women, thus contributing to mutual understanding and the rapprochement of cultures. The Organization’s unique mandate and know-how in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information will be mobilized through innovative intersectoral approaches to priority areas of focus and the most effective use pertinent programmes, normative instruments and modalities of action. (See Annex II).

24. A strong emphasis will be placed on the two strategic priorities, Africa and Gender Equality as well as on some transversal issues such as culture of peace, human rights, youth, bioethics and social inclusion. The ultimate goal would be to reaffirm and strengthen UNESCO’s constitutional leadership and responsibility in the promotion the rapprochement of cultures by showcasing why cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and responsive democratic governance are vital for development and peace, especially in time of global crisis. This could become more relevant at the grass-roots level with the full involvement of UNESCO field offices and United Nations Country Teams, namely within the UNDAF.

25. More precisely, the Action Plan should:

- (a) improve access to formal and non-formal quality education for all, free from cultural, religious and gender prejudices and stereotypes as well as human rights and intercultural dialogue education to strengthen South-South and North-South-South interuniversity cooperation;
- (b) increase opportunities for research, meetings and public debates and the broadening of spaces for intercultural mediation in the form of exhibitions illustrating exchanges and transfers between cultures, as well as fairs and festivals, using in particular places such as museums, art galleries and foundations, and making use of new technologies that specifically foster linguistic diversity and translation;
- (c) highlight the role of creativity, which is a fundamental attribute of innovation, by stressing both specific features and similarities of societies, and in that regard, enhancing the promotion of an integrated vision of all aspects of the cultural heritage as a bearer of history and identity that must be preserved, as resource and engine for

sustainable development as well as tool for intercultural dialogue, which includes interreligious dialogue;

- (d) mobilize the media and the ICTs to change the perception of different cultures and religions through, *inter alia*, the promotion of dialogue on the Internet, including on social media where numerous cultural expressions can be circulated and shared; or co-production fostering dialogue between media professionals from different cultural backgrounds, particularly on sensitive issues;
- (e) promote knowledge contents and practices – including traditional bodies of knowledge as well as local and indigenous knowledge systems – which contribute to sustainable development, the promotion of human rights, philosophy and intercultural dialogue, with particular emphasis on fighting racism, discrimination, extremism, radicalization as well as the manipulation of cultural and religious identities to achieving a culture of peace and democracy.

26. To support this strategy, UNESCO will work towards creating relevant and goal-oriented partnerships to build inclusive planning and implementation frameworks, so to ensure the effective involvement and cooperation among key actors whose mandate is pertinent for the achievement of the objectives of this Decade. Such key actors will include, among others, United Nations bodies and its specialized agencies as well as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Besides, the implementation of the foreseen actions will also rely largely on the important work of governmental and regional intergovernmental organizations such as the African Union, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Nations, the Council of Europe, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the Organization of Ibero-American States (OIE). Non-governmental organizations and the civil society at large, including religious institutions, will be involved to help operationalizing this process for which the UNESCO-NGOs Liaison Committee could play an instrumental role.

27. A regularly updating mapping of relevant global and regional initiatives will be ensured and that could significantly impulse and showcase a durable movement towards the rapprochement of cultures, if anchored to this Action Plan. This may include, among others:

- The annual United Nations High Level Debate on Peace (21 September);
- The UNESCO Leaders' Forum, at the General Conference;
- The UNESCO's High-Level Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures;
- The annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations;
- The triennial Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana;
- The Euro-Arab Dialogue promoted by the National Commissions;
- The annual World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilizations" in Rhodes;
- The biennial World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku;
- The biennial UNESCO Youth Forum;

- The annual Forum on “The Image of the Other” of the King Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

National initiatives could also be included at a later stage, following the branding process indicated in Section VI.

28. However, key to the success of this Decade is the effective engagement of all Member States, through the creation at local and national levels of an enabling environment where all stakeholders could be involved. Member States are therefore encouraged to develop national plans and strategies to enhance the objectives of the Decade, building on the principles formulated in this Action Plan. This could serve to assess and capitalize on the internal wealth of each country for contributing to dialogue among cultures at national, regional and global levels. Such plans and strategies could include, among others:

- Research, with national survey and studies to assess the status of the respect for the diversity within each country through laws, national policies, curriculum/textbooks and media. It shall aim at building of alternative models for promoting social cohesion while respecting the plurality of cultures and religions of the society and openness to the otherness. The effectiveness of formal and non-formal education could also be assessed and enhanced in this regard.
- Adapted policy-making shall remain the foundation for any sustainable rapprochement of cultures to take place. As such, an assessment of current policies to monitor inclusiveness and respect for diversity is encouraged, informed by relevant UNESCO conventions, declarations and recommendations in the fields of education, the sciences, culture and communication and information. Important tools such as the human rights-based approach (HRBA) the UNESCO Cultural Diversity Programming Lens could be very useful in this endeavour.
- Capacity-building will also be essential in this context, namely for building effective local citizenship with the aspiration to become global responsible citizens, through the development of skills and competences necessary to living harmoniously in our globalizing and multicultural environments. Educators, scholars, intellectuals, scientists and artists, religious and spiritual leaders, journalists, human rights institutions, women and youth associations, the private sector and mediators, as well parliamentarians, local authorities and their respective international networks would be therefore mobilized.
- Partnership strategies geared towards inspiring an endogenous movement for a better knowledge and respect for national diversity should be encouraged. National Commissions for UNESCO have a strategic contribution in this regard, associating relevant networks of UNESCO Chairs, category 1 and 2 institutes, Goodwill Ambassadors, Artists for Peace, Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), Clubs, the civil society, in close cooperation with UNESCO Field Offices,
- Funding is a challenging issue when it comes to engaging actions in such a Decade. Taking advantage of the UNESCO Participation Programme, each Member State may decide to include every year an activity with high rank priority in their authorized package under this fund. This will guarantee an effective participation, while ensuring a good reporting framework for activities carried out by Member States.

29. To widen the scope and advocacy of the ideals embedded in the United Nations Charter, the UNESCO Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is recommended to also capitalize on relevant United Nations observances related to this topic, including among others, International commemoration and celebrations: International Day of Commemoration in Memory of

the Victims of the Holocaust (27 January), World Interfaith Harmony Week (first week of February), World Radio Day (13 February), International Mother Language Day (21 February), Language Days at the United Nations (French (20 March), Chinese (20 April), English (23 April), Russian (6 June), Spanish (12 October) and Arabic (18 December)), International Women's Day (8 March), International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), World Poetry Day (21 March), International Day of Norwuz (21 March), International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (25 March), International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (6 April), International Day of Monuments and Sites (18 April), International Jazz Day (30 April), World Press Freedom Day (3 May), International Day of Families (15 May), World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May), International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May), World Population Day (11 July), International Day of Friendship (30 July), International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August), International Youth Day (12 August), International Day for the Remembrance of Slave Trade and its Abolition (23 August), International Day of Charity (5 September), International Literacy Day (8 September), United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation (12 September), International Day of Democracy (15 September), International Day of Peace (21 September), World Tourism Day (27 September), International Day of Non-Violence (2 October), World Food Day (16 October), World Science Day for Peace and Development (10 November), International Day for Tolerance (16 November), International Day for Human Rights (10 December), International Migrants Day (18 December), including other Decades and relevant national Days.

30. In a time of multiple crises, extrabudgetary resources will however need to be mobilized to effectively reinforce the impetus, sustainability and outreach of this Decade and for complementing the work engaged under Regular Programme (see Annex II). In this regard, pledging events will be organized during this Decade to attract voluntary contributions in the Special Account that was created by the Director-General for this purpose.

31. Although the attainment of the main objectives of the Action Plan is difficult to be measured, it is important to consider qualitative and quantitative indicators on the impact of actions undertaken which express the commitment by States and the civil society to nurture the rapprochement of cultures everyday through the adoption of strategic plans, roadmaps, learning tools or awareness-raising mechanisms (such as public for a, debates and campaigns) to build inclusive democratic societies.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY – BRANDING, VISIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

32. UNESCO will develop a consolidated communication strategy around this International Decade, so as to ensure a clear focus on its goals and objectives, while building a well-established communication plan to help appreciating the implementation process and achievements at national, regional and global levels. The different facilities offered by ICTs will be explored in this context, including social media and networking for increased outreach and visibility. A website for the Decade will be developed, including relevant support documents such as brochures and leaflets that will deliver key messages for sensitization and awareness raising campaigns. Special agreements could be concluded with media companies, public and private radio and TV channels as well as internet platforms to showcase individual and collective success stories.

33. Central to the branding process will be the granting of the "Logo" of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. It builds on the logo used for the International Year (2010) and will serve for accessibility and visibility of activities carried out in this framework. A labelling policy will be developed, whereby innovative projects and activities could be identified as "flagship initiatives for the rapprochement of cultures", contributing thus to enhance work underground and create a record of good practices to be disseminated among Member States, namely through the ICTs.

34. Global campaigns will also be initiated, building on communication events and supported by high-profile public personalities, symbolic figures and places to voice for the rapprochement of cultures. Video spots, contests, online discussion forums and other special initiatives promoting diversity and intercultural dialogue will be encouraged, with youth as main actors.

35. As lead United Nations agency for the implementation of this Decade, UNESCO will liaise with all relevant stakeholders involved to ensure the smooth coordination and sharing of information. This will also serve to develop a reporting framework, whereby all actors would regularly submit to UNESCO the key achievements in the implementation of their commitment towards the objectives of this Action of Plan and to be highlighted in relevant subsequent periodic reports to governing bodies of UNESCO and the United Nations on the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan.

ANNEX II

TENTATIVE MAPPING OF PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES BY UNESCO AND ITS PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DECADE

This open-ended list provides an illustration of UNESCO core activities per sectors and priorities areas which can be infused by the objectives of the Action Plan. Besides, a number of flagship activities will be developed through an intersectoral and interdisciplinary approach, encapsulating novel ideas and modalities of implementation after the approval of this Action Plan.

Education

Quality education fosters the values of tolerance and non-violence as well as the practice of intercultural dialogue. Programmes and projects developed by UNESCO to promote global citizenship education and learning to live together will nurture the objectives of this Decade, taking advantage of relevant initiatives such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Holocaust Education or the *Teaching Respect for All* programmes. The Decade could be implemented mainly through the following activities and modalities:

- Educational material, educational-training programmes and projects promoting non-violence, tolerance, mutual understanding, interculturalism, multilingualism, intercultural competences and interreligious dialogue;
- Surveys in school and academic curricula and textbooks to encourage and support reforms and adjustments in national level educational policies;
- Teacher's training that will enhance their intercultural awareness and capacity to teach the values, behaviours and attitudes conducive to the rapprochement of cultures;
- Education for sustainable development and inclusive societies as reinforced by and reinforcing the rapprochement of cultures;
- Establishment of training bases, knowledge sharing mechanisms i.e. (e-libraries, culture exchange centres in universities);
- Scholarships for study and research and awards for significant works in intercultural research;
- History education with a view to debunk myths, biases and stereotypes;
- Trainings enhancing intercultural capacities of professionals from governments and international governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as of the private sector;
- Promotional events such as prizes on literacy, peace education, linguistic diversity and translation.

Culture

In the field of culture, UNESCO's outstanding standard setting instruments for the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible heritage (namely the 1972 and 2003 Conventions), and the diversity of cultures, with a focus on the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), are relevant for the Decade. Besides, specific programme such as the World Heritage – namely the "World Heritage in the hands of youth" project, the General and Regional Histories, UNESCO

global initiative “Culture: a Bridge to Development”, the Routes of Dialogue projects – in particular The Slave Route Project and the Silk Route Online Platform, will serve as mobilizing frameworks to create/illustrate effective ties among different cultures. In essence, the Decade shall serve to better promoting the right to free participation and enjoyment of cultural life, as specified under Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Decade could be implemented *inter alia* through the following activities and modalities:

- Conferences, symposia and meetings on the roles of culture, heritage and creativity with respect to intercultural dialogue, interreligious dialogue, interculturalism, multiculturalism, etc.;
- Internet-based platforms and digital tools promoting the rapprochement of cultures, including through interactive and participative actions;
- Organization of or facilitation of access to cultural events, exhibitions and performances, international festivals, contests, cultural weeks, days of culture, heritage months;
- Digital and non-digital written and multimedia documents on cultural heritage and creativity fostering intercultural dialogue, including books, recordings, testimonies, documentaries, archives, reports, pamphlets;
- Projects fostering the mutual understanding and knowledge of the diversity cultures in their equal dignity;
- International programmes that promote cultural diversity and cultural exchanges;
- Inclusion of intercultural dialogue in cultural policies at all levels;
- Promotion of cultural cooperation and diplomacy;
- Promotion of cultural tourism as a practice respectful of cultural diversity and human dignity;
- Awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in both traditional media and new media, including the mobilization of eminent political, artistic and religious personalities;
- Sensitization of journalists and media content creators to the values and principles inherent to the rapprochement of cultures.

Social and human sciences

UNESCO will seek opportunities offered by the social and human sciences to undertake foresight studies to analyse emerging challenges in its fields of competence with a focus on intercultural dialogue and the rapprochement of cultures. In this regard, the programme on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST) will be actively engaged in a forward looking perspective providing key analysis of some of the most significant challenges posed by globalization to the rapprochement of cultures and peoples. Programmes such as the *Coalition of Cities against Racism* and other UNESCO initiatives on migration will contribute to this endeavour. The rapprochement of cultures can also be promoted through sport, which can be a school of tolerance and respect for rules and the others especially in an era when it has become a unifying factor par excellence. Furthermore, attention will be paid to the way bioethics and the ethics of technology affect the rapprochement of cultures. More precisely, bioethics programme will continue to contribute to the Action Plan through the work of the *International Committee of Bioethics* as a

unique multidisciplinary, multicultural and global forum to address ethical challenges. The Decade could be implemented *inter alia* through the following activities and modalities:

- Promotion of social inclusion by focusing on mobility schemes, collaborative projects, curriculum and learning outcomes for social responsibility;
- Internationalization of research, notably to foster the knowledge and the understanding of the conditions that foster the rapprochement of cultures;
- Promotion of Human Rights;
- Support of programmes that promote cultural diversity and respect of the rights of migrants, minorities and indigenous issues;

Communication and information

With respect to communication and information, it must be stressed that achieving mutual respect and trust requires an environment where freedom of expression is actively promoted in order to foster development, democracy, and dialogue. The role of the media is therefore essential to the success of the Decade, to which UNESCO will also contribute through initiatives to promote freedom of expression, media information literacy and intercultural dialogue, open access to knowledge and contents from diverse sources, or the preservation of digital heritage through the UNESCO *Memory of the World* Programme. In addition, the role of community radio programmes as a relevant tool for the rapprochement of cultures shall be taken into consideration, especially to widen access to and exchange with communities residing in remote places. The Decade could be implemented *inter alia* through the following activities and modalities:

- Addressing North-South and other digital divides to enhance the free flow of information across borders;
- Fostering a multilingual cyberspace;
- Mobilizing of UNESCO category 1 and 2 institutes and Chairs in the field of intercultural dialogue;
- Encouraging community radio stations encouraged to adapt programming guidelines to enlarge inclusion and participation;
- Strengthening youth radio structures to promote intercultural dialogue;
- Accompanying Member States to promote intercultural dialogue on the occasion of World Radio Day each year;
- Fostering the development of media and information literacy policies and strategies integrating intercultural dialogue;
- Developing media training programmes to build capacities in intercultural dialogue
- Engaging youth associations engage in media and information literacy cultural diversity action.

Natural sciences

In the field of the natural sciences, UNESCO intends to further its scientific cooperation, including in places where peace is fragile. With respect to its specific programmes, it will capitalize on the

work to promote the preservation and sustainable use of the environment, its resources and biodiversity. In this context, it will be useful to identify and to value the original way in which different cultural, social and spiritual values may contribute the preservation of the earth and the life on it. UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) and the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programmes will lead towards securing a more active and equitable role for local communities in resource management and knowledge transmission across and within generations. This will contribute to UNESCO's work on education for sustainable development. Besides, relevant aspects pertaining to ethics in sciences, for the most equitable use of the results of scientific research for the full enjoyment of benefit of all human being could be analysed, as this may contribute reduce the disparities that sometimes create a divide among societies. The Decade could be implemented *inter alia* through the following modalities:

- Organization of scientific meetings where scientists from all around the world would share knowledge and experiences, contributing that way to intercultural dialogue;
- Promotion of scientific research cooperation with a view to facilitate the rapprochement of cultures thanks to its universally accepted principles.

Focus on the Organization's priorities

The strategic frameworks for implementing the UNESCO's priorities on Gender Equality as well as the on Africa will also be mainstreamed:

Gender Equality:

Relevant initiatives during this Decade will build on the UNESCO's Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021), with a focus on initiatives geared towards:

- Integration of a gender perspective in all activities related to the rapprochement of cultures;
- Fight against gender-based violence rooted in cultural practices and religious beliefs;
- Promotion of the role and contribution of women as agents for the rapprochement of cultures;
- Empowering women through their free and equal participation in cultural and social life;
- Reinforcing the participation of women in decision-making process;
- Researching and programming related to the best practices for engaging women and girls in all aspects of society;
- Applying UNESCO's Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media.

Priority Africa:

In an effort to address the causes and increase the capacity of peaceful resolution of conflicts and to promote values and traditional endogenous practices in Africa for a harmonious living together, this Decade will capitalize on the new UNESCO Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021), with a focus on its Flagship Programme 1: "*Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence*". This effort will particularly nurture the rapprochement of cultures in the framework of this Decade through activities aimed at:

- Strengthening peace and non-violence through education, advocacy and media including ICTs and social networks;
- Developing the use of heritage and contemporary creativity as tools for building peace through dialogue;
- Promoting scientific and cultural cooperation for the management of natural transboundary resources;
- Empowering and engaging young people, women and men for democratic consolidation, community development and a culture of peace.

Building on transversal issues

Youth:

Ensure that young men and women are empowered and their contribution and participation as main actors for the rapprochement of cultures is better acknowledged, reinforcing thus their engagement with regards to governance, programming, policy development, advocacy and monitoring. This work will be building on UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021) and in particular its 3 main axes:

- Axis 1: Policy formulation and review with the participation of youth;
- Axis 2: Capacity development for the transition to adulthood;
- Axis 3: Civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation.

A special attention during this Decade shall be paid on the engagement of young women and men in this global conversation, through:

- Facilitating intercultural interactions among youths, including through for meetings and cultural exchanges, such as UNESCO's Youth Forum;
- Developing small grant projects to empower young women and men and facilitate their exchange, including on-line;
- Building capacities for young people in volunteering for peace-making, mediation, and intergenerational and interfaith dialogue;
- Encouraging participation of young people in research programmes fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the acquisition of intercultural competence;
- Enhancing participation of young people in art festivals, music festivals;
- Mobilizing UNESCO's Associated Schools Network and UNESCO Clubs for a more active engagement in relevant themes for this Decade.

Culture of peace and sustainable development:

- This Decade shall contribute to fostering the positive feedbacks between lasting peace and sustainable development to bring governance closer to citizens. In this respect, the post-2015 agenda should be designed so as to promote sustainable management of natural resources, social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, strong sense of belonging

locally and globally, thus building local, national, regional and international capacities to cope with the emerging challenges.

- Through its “soft power” mandate, number of UNESCO programmes is contributing to the Pillar One of the United Nations Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism: Combatting Violent Extremism.⁸ This commitment will be reinforced in close cooperation with the United Nations Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UNCTITF).
- A special effort will be deployed to create synergies between the UNESCO’s Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence and the Action Plan of the Decade in order to become mutually reinforcing.

Post-conflict and post-disaster response:

UNESCO has been increasingly called upon by its Member States to respond to post-crisis situations, a field of work particularly important to enhance the rapprochement of cultures, with a focus on five operational strengths:

- Education in emergencies and reconstruction;
- Natural disaster risk reduction;
- Culture and world heritage in emergency situations;
- Media in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- Promotion of gender equality in crisis situations.

⁸ A/RES/60/288.

ANNEX III

LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS THAT PROVIDED REPLIES TO THE CONSULTATION FOR THE DRAFTING OF AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE DECADE

Member States and Observers

Afghanistan, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroun, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Holy See (Observer), Iran, Kenya, Kuwait, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Portugal, Republic of Kazakhstan, Spain, Tunisia, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

International and regional organizations, United Nations programmes, funds and bodies

Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), League of Arab States, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), World Peace Council.

Non-governmental organizations, including academic institutions

Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), Association Catholique Internationale de Services pour la Jeunesse Féminine, Association Internationale des Charités (AIC), Association of Arab Universities, ATD Quart Monde, B'nai B'rith, Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE), Centre Catholique International de Coopération (CCIC), Centre International de Phonétique Appliquée (CIPA), Conseil International de la Danse, Conseil International des Radios - Télévisions d'Expression Française (CIRTEF), China Folklore Photographic Association, Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), Cultures & Traditions, The European Law Students Association (ELSA), The European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO), Fédération internationale des universités catholiques, Fondation Tyr, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Fondation Joseph Ki Zerbo, HOPE '87, Human Variome Project International Limited, International Amateur Theatre Association (Aita/iata), International Association of Political Science Students (IAPSS), International Associations of Universities, International Council of Folklore Festivals and Traditional Arts (CIOFF), International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW), International Council on Education for Teaching, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Federation of Language Teacher Association (FIPLV), International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisation (IFRRO), International Network for a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace, International Society for Education Through Art (InSEA), International Young Christian Workers (IYCW), Association Catholique Mondiale pour la Communication (SIGNIS), New Humanity, Office International de l'Enseignement Catholique (OIEC), Organisation Internationale pour le Droit à l'Education et la Liberté d'Enseignement (OIDEL), Pen International, Religions for Peace, Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), Service Civil International (SCI), South Asia Foundation (SAF), Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC), World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA), Yachay Wasi.

UNESCO Chairs

Chaire UNESCO en aménagement linguistique et didactique des langues dans les systèmes éducatifs, Université de Mons-Hainaut (Belgium), Chaire UNESCO en droits de l'homme et éthique de la coopération internationale, Università degli Studi di Bergamo (Italie), Chaire UNESCO pour la Promotion de la Culture de la Paix et des Droits de l'Homme, Université du Mali (Mali), UNESCO Chair in Comparative Education, University of Hong Kong, UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, Russian Institute for Cultural Research (Russia), UNESCO Chair in Democratic Citizenship and Cultural Freedom, Universidad de La Rioja, Logroño (Spain),

UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, Democracy and Peace, Padua University (Italy), UNESCO Chair in Human Rights Education, University of Magdeburg (Germany), Chaire UNESCO Mémoire, Cultures et Interculturalité, Université Catholique de Lyon (France), UNESCO Chair in Multiculturalism in Teacher Training, Beit Berl College (Israel), UNESCO Chair in Religious Pluralism and Peace, Bologna University (Italy), UNESCO Chair in Rural Community, Leadership and Youth Development, Pennsylvania State University (USA), UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue and Peace, University of Oregon (USA), UNESCO Etxea – UNESCO Centre Basque Country (Spain), UNESCO Peace Chair Manipal, University (India).