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

**EXCERPTS** _(selected by dtme.org)_

The Executive Board (194th session of March 3rd 2014)

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;

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;

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

DRAFT ACTION PLAN

I.   INTRODUCTON

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", (…)

II.   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 (…)
Above all, dialogue is bound to play an increased 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. (…)

6.   (…) 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.

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. (…)

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, initiatives and projects (…).

IV.   MAINS 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.

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. (…)

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. (…)This was also recognized in the Education First initiative of the Secretary-General, which underscored global citizenship education as one of its three pillars.

19. (…) 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 programs 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.

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 behaviors which can only inform policies and practices of sustainable development (…)

22. (…) 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. (…)

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. (…)

24. (…) 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. (…)

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 (…) could include, among others:

- Research (…) 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. (…)

- (…) 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;

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. (…)

• Developing the use of heritage and contemporary creativity as tools for building peace through dialogue; (…)

• Empowering and engaging young people, women and men for democratic consolidation, community development and a culture of peace. (…)

• Mobilizing UNESCO's Associated Schools Network and UNESCO Clubs for a more active engagement in relevant themes for this Decade.

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 programs, funds and bodies (…)

Non-governmental organizations, including academic institutions

(…) ATD Quart Monde, (…) Bureau international catholique de l'enfance (BICE), (…) Organisation internationale pour le droit à l'éducation et la liberté d'enseignement (OIDEL), (…).

UNESCO Chairs

(…) UNESCO Chair in Democratic Citizenship and Cultural Freedom (Universidad de La Rioja, Logroño, Spain) (…)