



FEDERICO MAYOR PRESENTS UNESCO'S CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAMME BEFORE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Paris, 5 June - Director-General Federico Mayor today presented UNESCO's Culture of Peace programme during a hearing at the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French National Assembly at the invitation of Commission President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.

Mr Mayor emphasised to the parliamentarians the programme's goal: to contribute to building a new vision of peace by developing a culture of peace founded on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men.

Peace, development and democracy are inseparable, he said, adding that it is necessary to break the vicious circle of poverty-ignorance-exclusion-violence which is a factor of instability in a world marked by globalisation, injustice and inequality, which are threats to peace.

"The growing world-wide asymmetry in the distribution of wealth has become unbearable," the Director-General said. "Blatant inequality threatens peace everywhere." He further said that "it is ignorance that provides a fertile terrain for fear, extremism and intolerance. It is exclusion that leads to despair and violence."

At the heart of UNESCO's Culture of Peace programme, he continued, is the idea that "education--lifelong education for all, everywhere--is the basis of the social transformation, the basis for fighting exclusion and poverty, the basis for giving everyone the possibility of being heard."

In reply to a question on the role of the Organization in conflict-prevention, Mr Mayor explained that it was not up to UNESCO to act as a political mediator. "Our role is to create forums." He cited five such UNESCO initiatives in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Recalling UNESCO's mandate to promote peace through science, education and culture, Mr Mayor declared: "Fifty years after it was defined and begun, this vast programme is still not finished. In fact, we never finish building peace; it is built day after day and everywhere--in the schools, in families, in associations, in neighbourhoods, in parliaments and in the attitudes of each person."