

Hundred and forty-first Session

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Item 5.4.2 of the provisional agenda

Action programme to promote a culture of peace

Summary

This document is presented in conformity with 140 EX/Decision 5.4.2, by which the Executive Board invited the Director-General to submit to it an action programme setting out practical activities aimed at promoting a culture of peace.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Board of UNESCO at its 140th session in October 1992 discussed the contribution UNESCO could make to the promotion of a culture of peace and adopted a decision (140 EX/Decision 5.4.2) inviting the Director-General to submit to the Board at its 141st session an action programme setting out practical activities to be undertaken.
2. The decision took cognizance of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report entitled 'An Agenda for Peace', with a view to ensuring that all the organizations of the United Nations system contribute to the construction of peace. The Secretary-General pointed out that 'peace-making and peace-keeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people'.
3. The Board was convinced of the need for UNESCO to participate fully in the efforts of the international community to build peace, in particular in areas where conflicts might arise and where peace-keeping operations are decided upon by the United Nations. More than any other member of the United Nations family, UNESCO has the fields of competence that are essential to peace-building.
4. This programme emphasizes the use of conflict resolution in the context of human development projects. It builds upon the experience of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that have developed the techniques of conflict resolution in recent years, and it applies these techniques to local projects in the context of United Nations peace-building.
5. The programme will be assessed by a round table of eminent persons convened by the Director-General. They will consider its potential synergy with other United Nations initiatives and submit recommendations to the twenty-seventh session of the General Conference.

II. THE CONCEPT OF A CULTURE OF PEACE

6. The concept of a culture of peace is anchored in the Constitution of UNESCO which states 'that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. It corresponds to the initial motivation of those professionals and governments who established UNESCO in the aftermath of the Second World War.
7. Peace is not only the absence of war; it must be constructed with the participation of each person on the basis of a common vision. 'A culture of peace' can provide a foundation for that vision, as proposed by the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men (Yamoussoukro, 1989). The Declaration of the Congress calls upon all to 'help construct a new vision of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women'.

III. OBJECTIVES

8. Based on the principle that peace begins in the minds of women and men, the programme will develop a consciousness of peace culture in individuals and organizational actors through a process of task-oriented cross-conflict participation.

9. As a first stage, UNESCO will undertake two or three pilot projects to create a climate conducive to reconciliation in countries which have been torn by war or civil strife and where United Nations peace-keeping operations have been or are being conducted. The experience of cross-conflict participation will be the basis for educational activities and information campaigns throughout the country.

10. In the long term, the programme could be extended to conflict situations in other countries, including situations of conflict prevention as well as post-conflict peace-building. Educational activities and information campaigns could be extended to a global scale, with an emphasis on participation of young people as messengers of peace culture from one country to another.

IV. ACTIVITIES

A. The actors

11. The programme will involve groups of adults and young people, both men and women, in cross-conflict participation through their families, their professional associations, work places, institutions, groupings, etc. Attention will be given to certain groups including:

1. work place (unions, employers);
2. professional associations;
3. religious and cultural organizations;
4. youth, including through leisure and sports clubs;
5. social workers;
6. security, army, police, etc.;
7. public officials and decision-makers;
8. media personnel.

12. Special attention will be given to the following priority populations:

1. women;
2. youth;
3. indigenous peoples;
4. refugees and internally displaced persons;
5. demilitarized soldiers;
6. minorities.

B. Task-oriented cross-conflict participation

(a) Task-oriented cross-conflict teams

13. Each team will include individuals recruited from all sides of conflict in a country and will work on human development projects in one of the following areas: education, social sciences, science, communication, culture and democratic participation. Each team will include

a project co-ordinator from UNESCO or related organization and trainers skilled in conflict resolution. They will play the role of a third party to help the team members develop peace-culture consciousness in the course of working together.

(b) Cross-conflict participation among organizations

14. The programme will support ongoing projects and initiate new projects in which organizations and institutions from different sides of conflict in society come together to co-operate on concrete actions.

C. Fields in which cross-conflict participation will be organized

15. An emphasis will be placed on human development projects in UNESCO's fields of competence involving local participation of individuals and organization. Although the projects will vary greatly depending on the country involved, the following may be taken as illustrative examples:

(a) Education

16. Priority will be given to education, both formal and informal, using cross-conflict teams. These may include, for example, teams to design new curricula or administer a model school. Educational exchange and other co-operative ventures will be supported and initiated. At the university level, a special chair for peace culture will be established in association with related disciplines. At later stages of the programme, the experiences of cross-conflict participation will be incorporated into curriculum materials and school activities.

(b) Social sciences

17. One of the first steps in a particular country will be to establish cross-conflict teams of social scientists to examine the causes of conflict and propose appropriate means of conflict resolution, including projects such as those listed here. They will be encouraged to draw upon the traditional ways of peace-making in that society as the basis for their recommendations. Their advice will be essential to the adapting of the programme to that particular country.

(c) Science

18. Cross-conflict participation will be organized in environmental projects that provide the basis for sustainable development. Such teams may be trained to take part in research using scientists and technicians for endogenous technology that can facilitate future economic development.

(d) Culture

19. Special cultural events will be organized to dramatize the work of the programme in highly visible ways. These events, organized by cross-conflict teams, such as peace concerts or sporting events, will vary from one country to another depending upon their tradition of peace-making. Other teams may develop exhibitions and performances in creative arts and crafts from a multicultural perspective, or engage in the restoration of cultural and natural heritage sites.

(e) Communication

20. Cross-conflict participation may include, for example, workshops of journalists from the media from all sides of the conflict who seek to present the news in ways that will promote

reconciliation. At later stages of the programme, both traditional and non-traditional media will be used to inform the population about the existence and functioning of cross-conflict participation. This information will present the participants as role models and encourage people to propose new cross-conflict projects or volunteer to take part in those already functioning.

(f) Democratic participation

21. Because of the intimate relation of culture of peace to democracy, the programme will seek to establish cross-conflict participation in projects which strengthen the development of democratic institutions.

V. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

A. Experimental stage (1994-1995)

22. On the basis of field missions to areas of United Nations peace-building operations and consultations with other United Nations institutions, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, UNESCO will launch two or three pilot projects in different countries to test the programme. As soon as 1993, missions will be undertaken and planning will begin to lay the basis for the pilot projects. Existing projects in the countries concerned, especially in education, will be reoriented wherever possible to include cross-conflict participation.

23. A variety of staff, mostly drawn from and trained in the country concerned, will run the pilot projects. The staff will include, in particular: initial programme organizers and conflict resolution trainers, initial recruiting teams, local trainers and information and education specialists.

24. Intersectoral arrangements will be made so that cross-conflict teams can be engaged in human development projects in education, culture, communication, etc. Co-operation will be arranged with other United Nations institutions (UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, etc.), intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations for establishment of similar projects with cross-conflict participation.

25. Field operations will be funded from extra-budgetary funds. All possible sources of funding will be explored: public and private, international, regional and national. Much of the funding should come from bilateral and multilateral sources which are involved in the reconstruction of the country concerned. United Nations institutions, such as the World Bank or UNDP may contribute financially to programme projects which are close to their own activities on a collaborative basis. Also, the possibility of raising funds from the private sector should be actively pursued from foundations, industries, companies, banks and other private sources.

26. The target for extra-budgetary funding should be about \$2 million annually for the operations of each country programme. A provision of \$180,000 has been included in the 27 C/5 Draft under Major Programme Area V, paragraph 05206, to initiate and co-ordinate the pilot projects and to work out co-operative agreements and raise funds to support them.

B. Extension of programme

27. Based on the results from the pilot projects and using staff and methods developed in the course of these operations, the programme could be extended to conflict situations in other countries and adapted for conflict prevention as well. Those activities of information and education, including special events, which prove most successful in the pilot projects could be extended to an international scale. The programme could serve as a clearing house for information on peace culture, and could sponsor research to study the development of peace culture in the framework of the programme.

28. An international programme could be developed to involve youth from other countries in the cross-conflict teams and other cross-conflict activities. These 'Youth peace-builders' would learn about peace culture so that they could take it back with them on their return to their home countries. To facilitate this process, each youth would obtain the sponsorship of an institution in their home country.

VI. DRAFT DECISION

A draft decision is proposed below, which the Executive Board might wish to adopt:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling its decision 5.4.2, adopted at the 140th session, inviting the Director-General to submit to the Executive Board at its 141st session an action programme aimed at promoting a culture of peace, setting out practical activities to be undertaken, together with various options for its funding,
2. Takes note of the Action Programme to Promote a Culture of Peace (141 EX/16) and transmits it to the General Conference at its twenty-seventh session;
3. Recommends to the General Conference the approval of the proposals formulated in document 141 EX/16;
4. Invites the Director-General to further consult with the United Nations system with an aim to strengthen and extend the culture of peace action programme.

ANNEX

List of specialists consulted

A representative list of 35 specialists was asked to make comments, criticisms and suggestions on the draft proposal. At the time of the drafting of the document, replies had been received and suggestions incorporated from the following 19 specialists:

Professor Thierno Mouctar Bah Département d'Histoire Université de Yaoundé Yaoundé CAMEROON	John McDonald Chairman Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy Washington, DC UNITED STATES
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