

Southern Regional Model United Nations XVIII
Fostering a Culture of Peace for International Development
November 15-17, 2006
Atlanta, GA
Email: unesco@srmun.org



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 18th annual Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN XVIII)! I am Tara Gilliland and I am overjoyed to serve as your Director for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). To give you a little background on myself, this is my 6th SRMUN conference, and my third year on staff. I have also worked for the UNA-USA national conference in New York. I graduated from Berry College in 2005 with a degree in Psychology and a minor in Government. I completed my Master's degree in Autism and Asperger Syndrome at the University of Kansas near Kansas City in 2006. I currently live in Atlanta, where I work for the Jacobs Ladder Neurodevelopment Learning Center, providing one-on-one programming for children with developmental disabilities. My experience and my passions span both subjects of psychology and government, and I am excited to integrate the two working in this committee.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established in 1946 with the purpose of helping the international community to establish peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science, and culture. With this, and the SRMUN XVIII theme of *Fostering A Culture of Peace for International Development*, your Assistant Director, Harsharan Dhaliwal and I selected the following topics for discussion:

- I. Using Science, Technology and Education to Promote a Culture of Peace;
- II. Eliminating Discrimination and Intolerance through Education;
- III. Using the Mass Media to Promote International Peace and Security.

This background guide will provide you with a good foundation for your research. However, it is in no way all-inclusive of the information available on these topics. Please use this guide and its references as a jumping-off point. We expect for each delegate to be fully prepared for each topic throughout the conference, so please conduct research outside of that which is presented in this background guide.

Also, each delegation is required to submit a position paper prior to attending the conference. It should be no longer than two pages; single spaced, and explains your country's position, policy and recommendations for each of the three topics presented. You can find out more about position paper requirements by visiting the SRMUN website at www.srmun.org. Please email your copy to UNESCO@srmun.org no later than **11:59 PM EST on Friday, October 26, 2006**.

If you have any questions regarding the background guide or position papers, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Harsharan. We are here as a resource for your conference preparation.

I wish you the best of luck for the next few months, and I look forward to meeting and working with all of you in November!

Tara M. Gilliland
Director
unesco@srmun.org

Harsharan Dhaliwal
Assistant Director
unesco@srmun.org

Cardell Johnson
Deputy-Director General
DDG@srmun.org

History of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Shortly after the United Nations came into being, thirty-six Member States established the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). On November 16, 1945, the UNESCO Constitution was signed, and finally ratified by 20 countries in November of 1946.¹ This body was established to use education, science, culture and communication in the building of peace across the globe.²

The two bodies that govern UNESCO are: the General Conference and the Executive Board.³ The General Conference of UNESCO is comprised of all 191 Member States plus the observer nations, and meets every two years.⁴ It is responsible for the overall budget and programming of the entire committee.⁵ The General Conference also elects the 58 member Executive Board and Director-General of UNESCO.⁶ According to UNESCO, the Board is selected based on diversity of cultures and geographical origin. The Executive Board is tasked with the overall management of the committee's work, carrying out the various tasks set out in the General Conference meetings.⁷

UNESCO, as a general organization, is responsible for a large variety of activities, which impact the daily lives of many people in the world. In its initial conception, UNESCO was responsible for the reconstruction of education systems destroyed by war.⁸ This project soon took root in many countries where the education systems were not devastated by war, but where the education systems could use improvement. In 1948, the UNESCO General Conference was the first organization to suggest that primary education should be free, compulsory and universal.⁹ Since then, UNESCO has been a driving force in the push for equal opportunity education across the globe. It aims to promote education by providing international leadership for creating "learning societies with educational opportunities for all population."¹⁰ UNESCO also seeks to provide expertise and foster partnerships to strengthen national educational leadership and the capacity of countries to offer quality education for all.¹¹

In addition to education, UNESCO works to promote natural and social science development. Each year, they co-sponsor the L'Oreal-UNESCO Woman in Science Award, which recognizes five outstanding women, one from each continent, in the field of scientific research.¹² Also in the field of natural science, UNESCO sponsors a wide variety of research efforts such as seismic monitoring in ocean floors, human genome mapping, HIV/AIDS research and prevention and how natural sciences impact sustainable development.¹³ Also, they are directly involved with the development and disbursement of ethical and human rights standards through international conventions, educational awareness campaigns and ethical recommendations for global decision-makers.¹⁴ UNESCO is also responsible for the publishing of two social and human science journals.

The organization is also involved in the preservation of the world and individual culture heritage as a method for achieving sustainable development.¹⁵ This involves things such as International Mother Language Day, encouraging

¹ "About UNESCO. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3328&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

² Ibid.

³ "Governing Bodies." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3973&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Education." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.phpURL_ID=48792&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Report by the Director-General to UNESCO Executive Board." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <http://www.unesco.org/delegates/nigeria/OmolewaFUTALecture.html>

¹³ "Strategies and Actions." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.phpURL_ID=6872&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ "Science Policy and Sustainable Development." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

<http://www.unesco.org/science/psd/>

cultural diversity and tolerance and supporting native cultural industries.¹⁶ Each of these programmes supports local culture and industry which, in turn, provides sustainable development in local communities.¹⁷

In 1998, UNESCO was tasked with implementing the United Nations “Culture of Peace” decade. As defined by the United Nations, the concept of the Culture of Peace consists of:

A values, attitudes, and behaviors, that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.¹⁸

The Culture of Peace Program of Action has prescribed eight different domains of activity to address the overall agenda. These domains are: fostering a Culture of Peace through education; promote sustainable economic and social development; promote respect for all human rights; ensure equality between women and men; foster democratic participation; advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity; support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge; promote international peace and security.¹⁹ Each of these domains is distinctive and addresses all areas of UNESCO’s charter purpose.

For the purpose of the SRMUN conference, we will be simulating the Executive Board of UNESCO. The current member states represented on the UNESCO Executive Board are:

AFGHANISTAN; ALGERIA; AZERBAIJAN; BAHAMAS; BAHRAIN; BANGLADESH; BENIN; BRAZIL; CAMBODIA; CAMEROON; CANADA; CAPE VERDE; CHINA; COLOMBIA; CONGO; CZECH REPUBLIC; DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO; ECUADOR; EGYPT; ETHIOPIA; FIJI; FRANCE; GHANA; GUATAMALA; HUNGARY; INDIA; INDONESIA; ITALY; JAPAN; LEBANON; LITHUANIA; LUXEMBOURG; MALI; MAURITIUS; MEXICO; MOROCCO; NAMIBIA; NEPAL; NIGERIA; NORWAY; PAKISTAN; PORTUGAL; RUSSIAN FEDERATION; SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS; SAINT VICENT AND THE GRENANDINES; SERBIA; SLOVENIA; SOUTH AFRICA; SRI LANKA; SWITZERLAND; THAILAND; TOGO; UGANDA; UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAN AND NORTHERN IRELAND; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; URUGUAY; VENEZUELA; YEMEN.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ “Culture of Peace: What is it?” United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization.

http://www3.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sum_cp.htm

¹⁹ Ibid.

I. Science, Technology and Education as a Promoter of the Culture of Peace

Introduction

On January 15, 1998, the General Assembly of the United Nations established the Culture of Peace as an important step in the creation and continuation of peaceful relations across the world.²⁰ As defined by the United Nations, the concept of the Culture of Peace consists of: “the values, attitudes, and behaviors, that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavor to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.”²¹

Thus, the Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups, and nations.

In addition to the establishment of the Culture of Peace, the UN General Assembly Plenary also adopted a Declaration and Program of Action for the Culture of Peace.²² This Declaration established the Culture of Peace as a movement incorporating governments, NGOs, and the United Nations to establish clear channels of thought to abstain from violent acts, and instead turn to peaceful conflict resolution. Further, this Declaration emphasizes the need for a comprehensive curriculum to educate and spread the principles of nonviolent conflict resolution across the globe.²³

The Culture of Peace Program of Action has prescribed eight different domains of activity to address the overall agenda. These domains are:

- Fostering a Culture of Peace through education;
- Promote sustainable economic and social development;
- Promote respect for all human rights;
- Ensure equality between women and men;
- Foster democratic participation;
- Advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity;
- Support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge;
- Promote international peace and security.²⁴

These eight domains are dramatically interwoven, where the actions taken and steps made in each domain directly affects the progress of the next. However, the actions used within each domain are distinctive and address all areas of UNESCO’s charter purpose. While each of these domains are essential for achieving a Culture of Peace, many scholars and policy experts strongly believe that development is the best way to achieve international peace. Promoting sustainable economic and social development has a dramatic effect on the peaceful attitudes of people. When a society is plagued with poverty, people will inevitably focus on the daily struggles to collect food and water and security for their families. In desperate situations, desperate measures are taken to ensure survival. Until these situations are remedied, there is no way for peace to be fostered in the minds of men. Therefore, by promoting sustainable development for the citizens of the world, true ideals of peace can be fostered in communities. One of the best ways to improve economic and social development is through science and technology.

Scientific and technological advances are growing by leaps and bounds across the globe. Scientific knowledge has led to remarkable innovations that have been of great benefit to mankind. For instance, life expectancy has increased significantly. Cures have been discovered for many diseases, and agricultural output has increased

²⁰ A/RES/52/13. *Culture of Peace*. United Nations General Assembly.

²¹ “Culture of Peace: What is it?” United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization.
http://www3.unesco.org/iyep/uk/sum_cp.htm

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

tremendously in many parts of the world to meet growing population needs. Using the principles of the Culture of Peace in unison with technological and scientific advances will foster and stimulate sustainable development.

Science and Technology

A particular area in which science and technology continues to play a critical role is the environment - particularly energy. In the last 15 years, scientific advances have allowed us to develop technologies that are clean and efficient, and meet the energy demands of a growing population.²⁵ A form of energy that is still heavily used in many developing countries is bioenergy.²⁶ Bioenergy is derived from wood and other plant matter.²⁷ Bioenergy accounts for nearly one-third of primary energy use in developing countries.²⁸ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), over two billion people cook by direct combustion of biomass, especially in rural areas. This traditional use of biomass fuels is typically inefficient because it relies on low-cost resources such as forests, which in turn contributes to deforestation.

In the 1990s, bio-based technologies were developed to be more efficient and convert solid biomass into clean energy carriers. Using new energy technology in development projects can contribute directly to poverty alleviation by helping to meet basic needs, creating opportunities for improved productivity on which the poor depend. For instance, providing locally produced energy sources to pump water for drinking and irrigation, light homes and provide energy for local enterprises, brings a two-fold benefit of providing needed resources and stimulating development. Further, they ease pressure on fuel wood resources. Also, the new bioenergy market offers a new and fast-growing opportunity for agricultural producers and could contribute significantly to higher incomes and could support higher productivity growth in agriculture with positive implications for food availability, sustainability, and access.²⁹

According to the World Energy Council, there are over 250 bioenergy projects in progress in over 40 developing countries.³⁰ One of the most successful bioenergy projects is the Brazilian Sugarcane and Ethanol programme (SEP).³¹ This programme was first implemented in 1975 to address Brazil's dependence on imported oil and to stabilize sugar production, as well as to create employment in rural areas of the country.³² Since the 1950s, Brazil has been the leading sugarcane producer in the world.³³ However, due to the lack of technology the cost of production was becoming a burden to many producers. This led the Brazilian government to begin heavily subsidizing the sugarcane industry in the early 1970s.³⁴ With the implementation of the SEP programme in 1975, Brazil began using sugarcane to produce ethanol, which can be made directly from sugarcane juice, or a by-product of sugar production such as molasses.³⁵ The production of ethanol from sugarcane generates a "fibrous biomass" product, bagasse, which is used as fuel.³⁶

In the first 10 years of the program, ethanol production grew by almost 25 percent each year and the number of distilleries increased from 12 to 350.³⁷ By 2005, nearly 200 trillion liters of ethanol has been produced in Brazil.³⁸ According to the WEC, the ethanol industry is one of Brazil's strongest industries and in 2005 ranked second behind the United States in ethanol production.³⁹ Today, the Brazilian ethanol industry provides direct employment to

²⁵ "Energy Resources and Technological Options." United Nations Development Programme.
www.undp.org/energy/docs/WEAOU_part_IV.pdf

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "World Energy Survey." World Energy Council.
http://www.worldenergy.org/publications/2007_global_energy_survey/default.asp

³¹ "Modernized Biomass Energy for Sustainable Development." United Nations Development Programme
<http://www.undp.org/energy/publications/2000/2000b.htm>

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ "World Energy Survey." World Energy Council.
http://www.worldenergy.org/publications/2007_global_energy_survey/default.asp

nearly one million Brazilians.⁴⁰ Also, the cost of growing sugarcane in Brazil is among the lowest in the world. New technology allowed Brazil to produce more ethanol at a low cost.⁴¹ In turn, this led equipment manufactures to standardize distillery designs, which led to additional reductions in the cost of producing ethanol.⁴² Such advances enabled the industry to continue producing ethanol at a high level. According to the UNDP, producing ethanol will continue to be profitable as result of technological progress of modernizing the production of bioenergy.⁴³

Agriculture and Biotechnology

In addition to energy, agriculture is another area which continues to benefit from scientific and technological advances. Many policy experts believe that the use of biotechnology has the ability to alleviate the global food security crisis.⁴⁴ According to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), biotechnology is “the use of living organisms or their products to modify human health and the human environment.”⁴⁵ Further, modern biotechnology includes an array of tools for introducing or removing a particular gene to produce plants, animals and micro-organisms with specific traits. This kind of genetic manipulation is called “genetic engineering.”⁴⁶

Biotechnology can provide tools that developing countries can use to raise crops, enhance pest control and disease resistance, adapt crops to new or adverse ecological conditions, and enhance the nutrition content of food among other things.⁴⁷ For example, some biotechnology crops such as soybeans and corn can be engineered to tolerate specific herbicides, which make weed control simpler and more efficient.⁴⁸ Other crops have been engineered to be resistant to plant insects, which can make pest control more reliable and effective and decrease the use of pesticides. A good example of how biotechnology can be used to enhance nutrition content of food can be seen with rice.⁴⁹ Biotechnology has been used in rice to increase the amount of beta-carotene, a nutrient that is converted to Vitamin A--which is in short supply in diets in many parts of the world.⁵⁰ According to the FAO, consumption of foods rich in beta-carotene will alleviate the chronic Vitamin A deficiencies in the diets of many of the poor in Asia and Africa.⁵¹

According to the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), an non-profit organization which tracks data on the international usage of genetically engineered crops, 81 million hectares of biotech crops were grown by 8.25 million farmers in 17 countries in 2005.⁵² In 2003 alone, there were only 55 million hectares of biotech crops being grown by only 6 million farmers.⁵³ Thanks to scientific and technological advances many countries are considering the use of biotechnology to meet the food demands of their country. Many biotechnology crop production options can help countries keep pace with demands for food while reducing production costs.

Information and Communication Technologies

Within the last decade, much emphasis has also been placed on using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to bolster development in developing countries. ICTs include a number of modern day technologies, such as the telephone, computers, and the Internet and enable users to have better access to global and local markets, to

⁴⁰ “Modernized Biomass Energy for Sustainable Development.” United Nations Development Programme
<http://www.undp.org/energy/publications/2000/2000b.htm>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “FAO Statement on Biotechnology.” United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization. <http://www.fao.org/biotech/stat.asp>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Biotechnology Overview.” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/scipoly/biotech/pubs/overview.htm>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ “Improving the Nutrition of the Rural Poor in Asia and the Far East.” United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization.

http://www4.fao.org/cgi-bin/faobib.exe?rec_id=139092&database=faobib&search_type=link&table=mona&back_path=/faobib/mona&lang=eng&format=EFMON

⁵² “Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops 2005.” International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications. <http://www.isaaa.org/Resources/publications/briefs/default.html>

⁵³ Ibid.

exchange information with others in the industry, and to better utilize limited resources.⁵⁴ With about two-thirds of the world economy based on services, and the rise of India, Philippines, and other nations as global IT players, many developing countries have accepted ICT as a national mission.⁵⁵ According to the United Nations Commission on Science, Technology and Development, ICTs will be very instrumental in helping countries meeting the MDGs.⁵⁶ For instance, the first MDG calls for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. In terms of this goal, ICTs can increase access to market information and reduce transaction cost for poor farmers and traders.⁵⁷ Also, ICTs could increase efficiency, competitiveness and market access for firms in developing countries.⁵⁸

In addition to assisting in the eradication of poverty, ICTs can also make significant contributions to improving education levels in developing countries - another step in achieving sustainable economic and social development.⁵⁹ According to UNCSTD, "ICTs can increase the supply of trained teachers through ICT-enhanced and distance training of teachers and networks that link teachers to their colleagues."⁶⁰ Further, ICTs can help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education systems through strategic application of technologies and ICT skill development. In essence, ICTs can greatly improve education management and information systems, teacher training and support, capacity building, educational content, distance learning, literacy, education policy, and assist with media outreach.⁶¹

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) among many other UN agencies have developed global Information Technology and Development programmes to help improve ICT development in developing countries. In 2003, the UNDP developed the National ICT for Development Strategies Programme which aims to assist developing countries in the designing and implementing of national ICT development strategies.⁶² Additionally, the programme conducts workshops in each country to help raise awareness and local capacity building on ICT as an "enabler for development."⁶³ Since the establishment of this programme, the UNDP has helped 16 countries including Mozambique, Azerbaijan, and Cambodia to design national frameworks for ICT development.⁶⁴

In 2000, the World Bank launched its Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) to help promote the use of ICTs for development. The GDLN is a forum that brings together government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and development agencies to discuss regional challenges to development.⁶⁵ Since its inception, the GDLN has held 113 learning sessions in over 80 countries to discuss best practices to development.⁶⁶ According to the World Bank each forum includes a discussion along with best practices to using ICTs for development. In addition to the GDLN, the World Bank has over 50 on-going ICT projects in various sectors such as education, health care, and the environment.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The Culture of Peace is not only a UNESCO headed initiative, but a movement of people to embrace non-violent resolutions of conflict and tolerance of different peoples and cultures. In order for this global culture to take root in the hearts of world citizens, there must be a dramatic shift in many disciplines to include strategies to contribute to the spread of peace.

⁵⁴ Nabil Sukkar. "The Digital Divide and Development." World Bank. October 2, 2002.
<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/mdf/mdf4/papers/sukkar.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "A Roadmap Toward the Implementation of the MDGs." United Nations Commission on Science and Technology.
<http://stdev.unctad.org/themes/mdg/docs.html>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "About UNDP and National ICT Development Strategies Programme." United Nations Development Programme
http://www.sdn.undp.org/it4dev/docs/about_undp.html

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "About GDLN." The World Bank.
<http://www.gdln.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/GDLNCHILD/0,,hlgPK:64233317~menuPK:841862~pagePK:64234859~piPK:64234862~theSitePK:841731.00.html>

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Within the fields of science and technology, there are many approaches that can be made to address the need for peaceful conflict resolution. First, sustainable economic and social development must be achieved in every nation. This is the only way in which inhabitants of the world can reach a level of comfort where peace is an option for their lives. Without the feeling of peace in life situations within a person, that person can never achieve peace with others. Engineering, ecology, and human sciences all work together to bring about a satisfactory life situation for people across the globe.

Committee Directive

This topic will require delegates to understand various aspects of science and technology and how it affects people across the globe. Delegates should be well versed in the branches of science which your country either conducts research in, or needs to develop based on their development status. Focus of this topic should be on how scientist, government officials, and the layperson can use new technologies and new information to disseminate not only the knowledge of peace, but also strategies which can further development.

II. Eliminating Discrimination and Intolerance through Education

The United Nations Charter, the Constitution of UNESCO, and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights were created to promote the ideals of human rights and to further peace worldwide.⁶⁸ To pursue this goal and achieve a world with understanding, these organizations have focused themselves on eliminating social and political problems worldwide. Our focus as part of UNESCO is on the challenge of eradicating discrimination and promoting tolerance.

The United Nations and UNESCO relations toward Tolerance

The UN has taken this challenge very seriously. It has made recommendations to its Member States and has helped to organize and research the problems. In the General Conference of UNESCO at its 18th session on November 19, 1974, the “recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamentals” was adopted. As part of that report, the UN encouraged Member States to:

“promote, at various stages and in various types of education, study of different cultures, their reciprocal influences, their perspectives and ways of life, in order to encourage mutual appreciation of the differences between them. Such study should, among other things, give due importance to the teaching of foreign languages, civilizations and cultural heritage as a means of promoting international and intercultural understanding.”⁶⁹

This report emphasized the cultural diversity of this global world and the different stances on education that nations need to take the initiative for. The report further urged that education be used to battle inequality, injustice, and the use of war as a political tool, and to advance international co-operation.⁷⁰ The UN asked Member States to take advantage of UNESCO and its many programs to help fulfill the recommendations detailed in the report.

In its “Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance,” UNESCO offers a definition of tolerance that most closely matches the philosophical and practical use of the word: “Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom*. United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/display.php?doc_id=464&category_id=438&category_type=2&group=

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ “What is ‘tolerance’?” Tolerance.org. <http://www.tolerance.org/about/tolerance.html>

The roots of discrimination start from the very beginning of civilization when humans started to accumulate wealth and its distribution was unequal. As civilizations progressed the discrimination became more apparent. But, to do well in our world today one must be educated and tolerant of the diversity that surrounds us.

Discrimination

As countries globalize and individuals become ever more part of a diverse and interconnected society, tolerance becomes increasingly essential to the functioning, safety, and moral well-being of the world. Organizations such as the UN provide a forum for discussion and try to harmonize relations among Member States. In a seminar opened by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Confronting Islamophobia under the general topic of “Unlearning Intolerance,” the focus was on using education to undo the harm caused by intolerance and declaring that intolerance through discrimination leads to violence.⁷² Describing that violence, Mr. Annan stated in an earlier conference on “Confronting anti-Semitism” that such discrimination had become an abhorrent prejudice which had led to discrimination.⁷³

Anti-Semitism was the cause of millions of horrible deaths in World War II and caused a ripple effect of hatred around the world. The country of Israel was formed in the wake of this rippling, and even today conflicts stem from it. Reporting on the conference on anti-Semitism, the UN Chronicle recounts that Swami Adiswarananda, Minister and Spiritual Leader of New York’s Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, discussed how intolerance manifests itself in myriad ways, promoting violence, despite this being contrary to the teachings of every major religious tradition.⁷⁴ The presence of remarkably diverse groups at this conference, including academics, political leaders, spiritual leaders, and other organizations, shows the global concern over this topic. The Holocaust was a horrifying event in history, and the global community is doing everything it can, including maintaining awareness of historical fact through education, to make sure that such hatred and violence never go hand in hand again.

The Middle East

In an address to the Arab League Summit in Riyadh on March 28, 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that “The Middle East region is more complex, more fragile and more dangerous than it has been for a very long time. Deep mistrust continues to constrain Palestinians and Israelis from conducting a meaningful peace process.”⁷⁵ The roots of the anti-Semitic feeling have become a major problem in the Middle East. The Secretary-General continued to express his desire to see lasting and comprehensive peace in both nations and surrounding areas as directed in the resolutions of the Security Council.⁷⁶ The UN has worked toward this goal and recently concluded an international meeting in support of Israeli-Palestinian peace with the adoption of a document on March 23. At this meeting, the Member States welcomed the formation of a Palestinian National Unity Government and stressed that the generations-old conflict had been fueled by intolerance.⁷⁷ Member States acknowledged the wrongful use of cultural and religious differences for political gains which have disrupted peaceful international relations, causing a wider rift between the Israelis and the Arabs.⁷⁸

While the 40 years of conflict between these two states is hopefully coming to an end, other groups’ battles are taking center stage in the Middle East. The War on Terror has brought to the world’s attention the Sunni-Shiite conflict, a decades-long fight that became an all out war with the Iran-Iraq War at the start of the 1980s, and the root of the conflict started with the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632. The two groups split, based only on different opinions as to who would continue the Prophet’s work.⁷⁹ The Sunni-Shiite conflict, which started as a

⁷² “‘Unlearning Intolerance.’ Secretary-General Opens Seminar On Confronting Islamophobia.” 7 December 2004. UN Chronicle Online Edition http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/webarticles/112204_Conference.asp

⁷³ “Education for Tolerance and Understanding “Confronting anti-Semitism”. UN Chronicle Online Edition. <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue2/0204p48.asp>

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ “Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s Address to the League of Arab States in Riyadh.” UN News Centre. 27 March 2007. http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/statments_full.asp?statID=76

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ GA/PAL/1045. *United Nations Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace Concludes With Adoption of Final Document.* United Nations General Assembly. 26 March 2007. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/gapal1045.doc.htm>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “Sunni-Shiite Conflict Dates to 7th Century.” Turkish Daily News, The Associated Press. 1 September 2005. <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=22287>

religious uncertainty, has now become a trans-boundary political and social problem. With the basic difference in the lineage of the Caliphate, the two sects saw each other as mistaken in the truth. At first, the Sunni-Shiite conflict took place only within the nations of Iraq and Iran, but discrimination and intolerance spread beyond these boundaries, engulfing Lebanon in the conflict as well, compounding already present difficulties.⁸⁰

Africa

The long suffering continent of Africa has had many conflicts in the past 50 years, most due to its arbitrary borders. The legacy of European Colonialism affected countless African cultures, used African resources by controlling trade, and drew borders according to what the European thought logical, not to the benefit of its inhabiting peoples. From this unstable start, Africa now deals with deep rooted instability and inhumane conditions of living due to poverty. All these factors effect African development.⁸¹

This dismal situation, of the poor, in the interior regions of Africa promotes violence. In Rwanda, the sad and unfortunate happenings during which thousands of people died were instigated upon the suspicious death of the country's president, a Hutu tribal member. The imperialist power used the Tutsi tribe to rule and left the Hutus in power which caused an imbalance in power amongst the two inhabitants.⁸² Over 800,000 people died in a rampage of mass murdering, based on simply the racial identity of the people. Artificial partitioning and racial superiority tempted the people so much that they killed their neighbors to protect this sense of pre-eminence. Discrimination and intolerance only exacerbated the problems that already plague Africa, a place of poverty, disease, and war.

Unfortunately, the seeds of intolerance continue to grow and bear the fruits of violence and injustice, as Southern Sudan is now plagued with similar discriminatory behavior. For over a year, the Janjiaweed militias have caused havoc in Sudan with atrocious acts of inhumanity.⁸³ Just like its imperialist rulers in the 17th century, the current government has used the age old Imperial British created formula of divide and rule.⁸⁴ As per the Convention on the prevention and punishment of the Crime of Genocide, there are conditions that must be met for violence to be termed as Genocide:

“In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”⁸⁵

The debate of categorizing the happenings in Darfur as genocide continues to spin as more and more continue to suffer.

Tolerance

In 1960 UNESCO had taken a landmark step by adopting the “Convention against Discrimination in Education” in which Article 7 gave states the responsibility to provide education to its citizens with the help of UNESCO's innovative ideas.⁸⁶ It further emphasized that education should be handled on a national level ensuring non discrimination, full opportunity, to learn the basic human rights and equality in education for all.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ David Schenker. “One Year after the Cedar Revolution: The Potential for Sunni-Shiite Conflict in Lebanon”. The Washington Institute for near east policy. 20 June 2006. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2479>

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Anup Shah. “Conflict in Africa – Introduction”. 27 February 2005.

<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/12883>

⁸³ John Prendergast. “Genocide in Sudan?” The Washington Institute for near east policy. 26 June 2004.

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=1763>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 12 January 1951. http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm

⁸⁶ “Right to Education.” United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12203&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁸⁷ Ibid.

The UN declared 1995, the 15th anniversary of UNESCO to be the International Year of Tolerance. Tolerance, global diversity, religious and cultural dialogue were the main issues which were debated in the many levels of conferences set up by UNESCO to help share knowledge on these topics.⁸⁸ The culmination of that year's talks was at the 28th session of the general conference of UNESCO at Paris in November 1995. The Members re-endorsed the Declaration of the 44th session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva, October 1994. In this document, the members stressed teaching the most impressionable group – the youth – the ideals of tolerance, leading ultimately toward a more anti-racist environment.⁸⁹ The document also celebrated the activities performed in the UN Year for Tolerance (1995). At the same session in November 1995 the general conference adopted an Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy in accordance with Resolution 5.7 passed by the 27th conference.⁹⁰ In this report the committee laid emphasis on education being the primary source of action to help build a strong personal identity, for the nations' people, which is directed toward non-violent conflict resolution and part of every citizen's Right to Education.⁹¹

UNESCO is very active in its programs and holds events on every UN officially recognized day. Such as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March) and UNESCO's Associated Schools follow-up activity of the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition, celebrated in 2004.⁹² These officially recognized days are celebrated in different ways which might vary from a workshop on the topic of the day to a display of literary and artistic work done by people around the world, and even promoting communication amongst schools leading to innovative ideas to deal with problems. Intolerance and discrimination could very well lead to the destruction of an entire ethnicity and devastate global harmony. The UN and some NGOs have started to focus on the induction of peace into such troubled areas. The UN is a forum primarily for discussion, and as such, it has started to use regional NGOs that better understand local situations to try to help people in distress. One such organization is The Friends for Peace in Africa, whose mission it promote channels of communication through which all regions of Africa and help each other, empowering the nation and developing a Culture of Peace in Africa⁹³ This group has helped encourage peace talks, by hosting them and it uses education as a tool to develop a peaceful environment, such as directly sponsoring children in school as well as starting libraries in impoverished communities.

Education

UNESCO has submitted reports and recommendations to the General Assembly that have been carefully thought out and acted upon. In a recent UNESCO-published report, "*Tolerance: the threshold of peace; a teaching / learning guide for education for peace, human rights and democracy*," the need to educate for tolerance was featured, and ways and means to accomplish this education were discussed. Culture is learned through various forms of education and therefore to form a Culture of Peace requires a well planned and guided method of imparting the knowledge of human rights, democracy and very importantly tolerance.⁹⁴ This guide gives methods for teachers to recognize intolerance, deal with it in the right way, and help build a Culture of Peace within each classroom. It also lays down principles for the practice of tolerance in schools.⁹⁵ These seven values, currently being developed by the Anne

⁸⁸ "Peace and Human Rights Education." United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 1995.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3503&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁸⁹ Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. General Conference of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 1995.

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001128/112874eb.pdf>

⁹⁰ Declaration of the 44th Session of the International Conference on Education and Intergrated Framework of Action On Education For Peace, Human Rights and Democracy. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1689&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² *Anti-racism campaign mobilizes schools*. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. 21 March 2007.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52823&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

⁹³ "Promoting Peace Through Advocacy and Grass Root Action." Friends For Peace in Africa.

http://www.friendsforpeacein africa.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=37&Itemid=59

⁹⁴ *Tolerance: the Threshold of Peace*. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000981/098178e.pdf>

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Frank Foundation in the Netherlands, include: “school responsibility [to educate for tolerance]; positive approach to ethnicity; learning to think inclusively; integrating intercultural education; focusing on similarities; combating racism on a broad front; and creating a positive school atmosphere.”⁹⁶

The United Nations has declared the decade 2005-2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). UNESCO keeps track of the goals of this decade through different reports and spearheading programs. The main goal of this decade is to encourage change in behavior using education as its tool, enhancing fundamental learning in every aspect of life to transform our global community.⁹⁷ UNESCO has many branches with specializations in different fields but its approach to the DESD is to use UNESCO Inter-Sectoral Working Group so ensure that education is used in all spheres of life to promote sustainable development. With the economic growth of the developing nations starting to equalize it with that of the developed nations the former can then allocate its resources to education. The government of Japan has established a Funds-in-Trust to support UNESCO for ESD in global leadership and coordination.⁹⁸

As part of its association with different nations UNESCO held an international workshop which took place on November 28-29, 2006 in Bonn, Germany. “ESD Worldwide – Commonalities and differences” which was organized by the German Commission for UNESCO, the State Government of North-Rhine Westphalia and other partners, and with support from Japan ESD Funds-in-Trust. Such workshops are held all over the world such as, the Windhoek Southern Africa ESD sub-regional Meeting at the UNESCO HQ in Darak in November 2006, the Latin America Regional Mobilization Meeting held in San Jose, Costa Rica from October to November in 2006, Australian Strategy for the UN Decade held in October 2006. These workshops, programs and events help countries rethink their methods, create new programs and even use their resources more efficiently so that they can direct the minds of the youth to a better, sustainable and tolerant nation.

Conclusion

Education is the key to shaping the minds of future generations toward the goal of universal tolerance. Education brings about shifts in cultural attitudes, and the international community must make the spreading of knowledge capital to be a primary goal. The troubled areas of the Middle East and Africa can attain lasting stability only by inculcating a peaceful nature into the generations to come. Children and young adults can be educated in ways that are constructive and will lead to a better, more cohesive future for this world. With a better knowledge and common understanding of others’ cultures, we will be one step closer to a global Culture of Peace.

Committee Directive

In accordance with the topic, delegates must be open minded and well read on the related issues. This topic uses society’s main form of advancement, education. Without education there would be no order in society and no way to advance. To formulate a Culture of Peace, the education imparted to the youth of today must be rooted in tolerance and acceptance without discrimination. Education is a well-planned, thought-out process of transferring knowledge, and such programs need to be created in order for this education to go beyond the school system and to disperse throughout the society. Firstly, the delegates should be clear on the definitions of tolerance and discrimination. Secondly, delegates should know the various types and forms of tolerance and discrimination as well as their respective impacts upon the world. Furthermore, delegates should be thoroughly acquainted with all of the following:

- The constitution of UNESCO and its programs, so that delegates know the full scope and abilities of the organization
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The charter of the United Nations
- All the possible global issues that could be resolved by implementing well-constructed plans of education.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ *Highlights on DESD Progress to Date*. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. April 2007.
http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/8318cd5f18f0430cd7e8fdc744ab2bf6Progress+to+Date+APRI+L07.pdf

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Delegates should ask themselves the following questions: Have your country's government, NGOs or religious groups taken positive steps on this issue? Are there any cultural limitations your country has concerning this issue? What type of education system is in place, or should be in place, in your nation where tolerance education can be disseminated, both to children and adults in the community? How do we as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization take this often-discussed issue and implement real, sustainable, and substantial plans?

III. Using the Mass Media to Promote International Peace and Security

"In an age when information is power, a free and vibrant media is an indispensable partner in creating a true Culture of Peace. Just as the media can be an important factor in fomenting hatred and tension, so can it play a powerful part in promoting the reconciliation of differences. By giving voice and visibility to all people - including and especially the poor, the marginalized and members of minorities - the media can help remedy the inequalities, the corruption, the ethnic tensions and the human rights abuses that form the root causes of so many conflicts."⁹⁹

-- Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, March 23, 2001

Introduction

One of the most pressing issues facing the international community today is armed and violent conflict. According to the United Nations, nearly one-third of all countries in the world have experienced violent conflict in the past 15 years.¹⁰⁰ Civil wars, ethnic cleansing, and actions of genocide have claimed the lives of over 5 million people.¹⁰¹ Further, conflicts have an adverse impact on development; and in many countries set back the economic and social progress made.¹⁰² Many organizations at both the international and national level are working to prevent conflict and rebuild nations after conflict occurs. One avenue for promoting international peace and security is through the use of media.

In the United States, Japan, Germany and most western European countries, there are newspapers at every corner. One can access the daily news through National Public Radio, local printed news, 24 hour news television, and the internet. The media bombards the lives of these citizens with information about any topic from national security and presidential elections to the personal life of a well-known celebrity. Media sources in other countries many times do not have the same far reach as those in more developed nations.

According to the United Nations, effective and democratic media are an essential part of any culture of prevention, as well as being indispensable in societies in transition towards peace and democracy.¹⁰³ At any stage of a conflict, lack of information can make people restless, desperate, and easy to manipulate.¹⁰⁴ Access to information fosters economic growth as well as democracy.¹⁰⁵ Societies are strengthened by the ability to make informed decisions about their future and their welfare. The United Nations Millennium Declaration stresses the need "to ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information."¹⁰⁶

In situations of conflict, the media's work can provide independent and trustworthy information that can contribute significantly to processes of reconstruction and reconciliation. In times of turmoil, disorder and uncertainty, people's need for reliable information is especially great "as their ability to access provisions, and sometimes their

⁹⁹ "Transcript of Press Conference by Secretary General-Kofi Annan at Headquarters March 22, 2001." United Nations. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2001/sgsm7748.doc.htm>

¹⁰⁰ "Preventing Conflicts." The United Nations. <http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/conflicts/index.htm>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "Media: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction." United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=19154&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

personal safety and very survival, may depend on it.”¹⁰⁷ However, they tend to regard much of the information available to them through the media as propaganda.¹⁰⁸ For these reasons, independent and pluralistic media are particularly important in times of war and in the post-conflict phase.¹⁰⁹

Responsibility of the media

Reporting on any conflict can influence the situation in many ways. Media coverage can strongly influence how certain parties relate to a conflict and the “players” within it by the choice of stories that are covered or omitted, the sources used, and the stand that is taken toward ethical reporting.

Further, the economic constraints that many newspapers, radio, and television stations are experiencing place huge demands on the media in general, particularly in conflict or war reporting.¹¹⁰ Cutting costs means that there is a reduction in the number of journalists sent abroad, especially in war-torn countries.¹¹¹ With these financial constraints, the media often do not authenticate information in order to report objectively, but there are numerous incidences where the military, governments, and civilian entities have been grossly disillusioned and angered by the media’s attitude toward ethical reporting in conflict situations.¹¹²

Due to this incredible influence that the media has in the global society, the media share an obligation for responsible reporting. Responsible reporting includes reporting new stories accurately, without bias, and to the greatest number of consumers possible. Accurate reporting seems as though it would be expected of all journalism. However, many news sources in remote areas use reporters who are not trained in responsible reporting practices.¹¹³ This particularly includes fact checking with multiple sources.

The Rwanda evaluation report stressed the need of the media to provide clear and accurate information. It raised core issues relating to all media coverage of conflict.¹¹⁴ On Rwanda, it drew this vital conclusion:

“The international media played a mixed role in the Rwanda crisis. While the media were a major factor in generating worldwide humanitarian relief support for the refugees, distorted reporting on events leading to the genocide itself was a contributing factor to the failure of the international community to take more effective action to stem the genocide.”¹¹⁵

Challenges to Using Media to Promote International Peace and Security

It has been established many times over that the media can be a powerful mechanism to promote international peace and security; however, it faces many challenges. Two of the greatest obstacles facing media in developing countries are: media freedom and the protection of the journalist.¹¹⁶ In many countries, governments continue to dominate the media from which most people get their news and information, and freedom of the press does not fully exist, even where the media establishments are privately owned.¹¹⁷ Various methods are used to silence or control the media.

The media often undergo extreme pressure and danger in order to report professionally. In some countries, media personnel are fearful for their lives and livelihood and are continuously harassed and threatened. Stations have been closed down; government people have been installed in high positions; licenses have been denied or revoked; and pressures have been placed on journalist to “toe the government line,” with threats of detention, litigation, or loss of

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ “Media and Democratic Governance.” Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility.

http://www.cmfr.com.php/speechespapers/speechespapers_02.html

¹¹⁴ Allan Thompson. “Media and The Rwanda Genocide.” International Development Research Centre.

<http://www.idrc.ca/openebooks/338-0/>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ *Media: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction*. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=19154&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

employment for outspoken journalist.¹¹⁸ Such actions serve to remind journalist that they are being closely watched. According to Reporters Without Borders (RWB):

“Imprisonment is the favorite weapon of authoritarian rulers to silence journalists and more than 1000 currently languish in jails around the world. In these places, a sharp commentary, an over-strong adjective or an irritating news item are immediately dubbed ‘threats to public order,’ ‘sedition’ or ‘undermining state security.’ Punishment can be five, 10 or even 20-year prison sentences, as well as cancellation of civil rights, all aimed at breaking the journalist involved and frightening others who might utter some critical or disobedient thought.”¹¹⁹

According to many international scholars, the lack of media freedom has many consequences - most notably on development. An issue in particular that affects development and threatens international peace and security is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, there are nearly 46 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS, and that over 3 million die each year from the disease.¹²⁰ Of all the regions, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the worst affected region of the world, with one in five adults are HIV infected.¹²¹

The media have an essential role to play in the fight against AIDS. It is often said that education is the vaccine against HIV.¹²² Many media organizations are rising to the challenge by promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating listeners and viewers about the facts of the epidemic and how to stop it.¹²³ According to national surveys conducted in the United States, 72 percent of Americans identify media as their primary source of information about HIV/AIDS, more than doctors.¹²⁴ In a survey conducted in India, more than 70 percent of respondents said they had received their information about HIV/AIDS from television.¹²⁵ However, According to the UNDP, there are many countries that have prohibited the media from providing information on the epidemic to their citizens.¹²⁶ As a result, many people go unaware of proper treatments or understanding of the virus.¹²⁷

In addition to media freedom, another challenge facing the media is the continued violent attacks on journalist.¹²⁸ The year 2006 was the deadliest year for journalists in over a decade with 82 journalists and 32 media assistants being killed while working in the field.¹²⁹ In some areas of the world, journalists are under threat based on their decision to commit to responsible reporting.¹³⁰ Many journalists aim for accurate reporting and use truthful sources, rather than generating propaganda for influential groups within a country. Not only are reporters attacked for the content of their news, but also because they are vulnerable civilians in many times volatile situations. This is the case in many of the kidnappings which have occurred in Iraq.

Over the last twenty years there have been discussions throughout the international community on the protection of journalists on dangerous missions. The participants at the 1974-1977 Diplomatic Conference in Geneva supplemented Article 4.A (4) of the Third Geneva Convention with Article 79 on “measures of protection for journalist.”¹³¹ This article stipulates that journalists engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ “2005 Annual Report.” Reporters Without Borders. http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=573

¹²⁰ “HIV/AIDS Data.” Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/default.asp

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *The Media and HIV/AIDS: Making a Difference.* Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Geneva. UNAIDS. 2004. http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/default.asp

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ *Supporting Nations HIV/AIDS Responses.* United Nations Development Programme. New York. 2005. <http://www.undp.org/hiv/focus02.htm>

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *Media: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction.* United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=19154&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Alexandre Balguy-Gallois. “The Protection of Journalists and News Media Personnel in Armed Conflict.” International Review of the Red Cross, Vol 86. <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/review-1983-p3>

conflict are considered civilians and are therefore protected by international humanitarian law on civilians.¹³² Essentially, journalists are protected against effects of hostilities and against arbitrary conduct on part of a party to a conflict if they are captured or arrested by it.

In addition to Article 79 of the Third Geneva Convention, NGOs have taken an active stance to protect journalists and promote media freedom. In 2003, Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an NGO that works to improve the safety of journalist, worked with Amnesty International and the International Red Cross (IRC) to draft the *Declaration on the Safety of Journalist and Media Personnel in Situations Involving Armed Conflict*.¹³³ The purpose of this Declaration is to recall the principles and rules on international humanitarian law protecting journalist and the news media during armed conflict and to propose improvements to national law for such protections.¹³⁴ Although there are international agreements and laws in place to protect journalists, especially those working in war zones, these agree have not been strictly enforced and the number of attacks on journalist increase every year.

The Role of the UNESCO in Promoting the Use of Media for International Peace and Security

In 1989, after the end of the Cold War, UNESCO further strengthened its commitments to freedom of the press by developing a New Communication Strategy aiming “to encourage the free flow of information, at international as well as national levels, to promote the wider and better balanced dissemination of information, without any obstacle to freedom of expression.”¹³⁵ This strategy led to the establishment of the Communication and Information Sector (CIS) within UNESCO.¹³⁶ The mission of CIS is “to promote the free flow of ideas and universal access to information; the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the median and world information networks; and access for all to ICT.”¹³⁷ CIS accomplishes its mission through two critical programmes: the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC); and the Information for All Programme (IFAP).¹³⁸

The IPDC is a forum of dialogue for the international community to discuss and promote media development in developing countries.¹³⁹ Currently, the IPDC has over 1100 on-going projects in 139 developing countries.¹⁴⁰ Some projects include the strengthening the capacity of news agencies in developing countries and providing ethics training to journalist, as well as training on cultural differences.¹⁴¹ According to the Institute for International Peace and Security, “The efforts of the IPDC have had an important impact on a broad range of fields covering, among others, the promotion of media independence and pluralism, development of community media, radio and television organizations, modernization of national and regional news agencies, and training of media professionals.”¹⁴²

The Information for All Program (IFAP) was established by UNESCO in 2000 as an intergovernmental programme which seeks to increase access to information in the public domain and the application of ICTs for information sharing.¹⁴³ With the escalation of information sharing technology, the world has a great opportunity to further equal access of information to all people. As an intergovernmental program, IFAP establishes national committees which oversee the extension of information technologies into developing nations.¹⁴⁴ There are currently more than 50 national committees focusing the overall program to individual country and regional needs, along with activating services within those regions.¹⁴⁵

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “2003 Annual Report.” Reporters Without Borders. http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=573

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ “About the CIS Sector.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1509&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ “About IPDC.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=18654&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² “History of Media and Peace.” Institute for International Peace and Security. <http://www.mediapeace.org/paris.cfm>

¹⁴³ “About IFAP.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.phpURL_ID=21290&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

In addition to IPDC and IFAP, UNESCO has a number of country specific programmes to address various media and information issues at the national and local levels. For example, in Pakistan, journalists attempting to exercise their right of freedom of expression have become the victims of many forms of harassment, including kidnapping, physical attacks, death threats, raids on homes, legal actions and attacks on relatives.¹⁴⁶ Also, media organizations in Pakistan face similar threats including attacks on offices, banning and suspension of publication, financial harassment, repressive legislation etc. In the last decade a number of Pakistani journalists were killed for attempting to report the truth.¹⁴⁷ According to UNESCO, “recent attacks on freedom of expression in this country have been among the most serious reported anywhere in the world.”¹⁴⁸ To address these issues, UNESCO established the Freedom of Expression and Monitoring project (FEMP) in Pakistan. The purpose of this project is to train journalists in effective coverage of local issues, and to build the capacity of local government representatives to work with the media.¹⁴⁹ Further, the project seeks to make journalist participants in the national press monitors network, so that attacks against freedom of expression can be monitored and defended throughout Pakistan.¹⁵⁰

In Angola, there are concerns regarding the lack of fair, balance and impartial information on candidates for the upcoming election.¹⁵¹ Thus, UNESCO partnered with the Syndicate of Angolan Journalists (SAJ) to provide training to journalists and their media outlets in the context of the upcoming elections in Angola.¹⁵² The project seeks to increase the skills and abilities of local journalists to properly cover the electoral process, conduct and use polling, and provide an accurate analysis of the events.¹⁵³

Conclusion

The mass media has a dramatic influence in cultures across the globe. Television, the internet, and radios are responsible for disseminating the majority of information to citizens of the world. It is essential that the media has the ability to promote freedom of opinion, expression and information. Equally important, is the influence the media can have to promote ideals of human rights and respect. Also, recognizing the potential power of the media can advance new ideas on the media’s role in conflict prevention and resolution and ways in which the media might contribute toward developing an effective system of nonviolent problem solving or positive media participation to foster international peace and security.

Committee directive

First, it is essential for delegates to understand the state of media in their country. Likewise, delegates should also be prepared to discuss the challenges media face in their country. Delegates should consider access to information communication technology as it plays a major role in the dissemination of information. Also, what are ways to ensure the security of journalists and their sources in more volatile regions of the world? Should journalists be afforded intellectual property rights for their “scoops”? How could these most easily be given to reporters, if they should? Finally, delegates explore other issues that play a key role in obtaining international peace and security such as poverty, food security, and HIV/AIDS and understand the role the media can play in promoting the key ideas and concepts of those issues.

¹⁴⁶ “Freedom of Expression and Monitoring Project.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
<http://www.unesco.org/cgi-bin/webworld/ipdc/cgi/page.cgi?g=Detailed%2F771.shtml;d=1>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ “Training of Journalists.” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

<http://www.unesco.org/cgi-bin/webworld/ipdc/cgi/page.cgi?g=Africa%2FAngola%2Findex.shtml;d=1>

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.