

DOCUMENT

**New Delhi Declaration**

Adopted at the International Ministerial Conference on the  
**Dialogue among Civilizations - Quest for New Perspectives**  
New Delhi, India 9 & 10 July 2003

We, the participants in the International Ministerial Conference on Dialogue among Civilisations - Quest for New Perspectives, held in New Delhi from 9-10 July 2003,

Recognising that all civilizations celebrate the unity in diversity of humankind and are enriched and have evolved through dialogue with other civilizations,

Underlining the contemporary relevance of the ancient Indian concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakkam, which means that all the world is one family, and that a common humanity unites all civilisations,

Recognising that dialogue among civilisations, which has existed since the earliest stages of history has blurred the frontiers of different civilisations and led to today's multitude of overlapping cultures, which are rich in diversity while preserving the uniqueness of identities,

Noting that while civilisation provides an important source of identity, people have multiple identities deriving from nationality, gender, profession etc,

Emphasising that complementarity of civilisations is strengthened by constant inter-play and exchange of ideas as well as by creativity in science, art, philosophy, ethics and spirituality and allows for the highest attainments of civilisational diversity,

Noting that globalization, while offering great benefits, also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilization,

Noting further the threat to equitable social and economic development of all civilisations consequent to problems of poverty, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and profligate utilisation of the natural resource base of the planet,

Emphasizing that international cooperation, as a key means of promoting dialogue among civilisations, should contribute to enabling everyone to have access to knowledge, to enjoy the arts and literature of all peoples, to share in advances made in science in all parts of the world and in the resulting benefits, and to contribute to the enrichment of social, economic and cultural life.

Convinced of the need to contribute to the Global Agenda and Programme of Action for Dialogue among Civilisations contained in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001.

1. Recognise that tolerance is a fundamental value common to all civilizations and that this includes respect for others, regardless of diversity of belief, culture and language neither fearing nor repressing differences within and between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity;

2. Underline the need to address and overcome ignorance and prejudice about the ways of life and customs of peoples;
3. Recognise the crucial role of education in promoting a scientific temper and an ethical and spiritual value system which facilitate the use of knowledge and reasoning in understanding other cultures and civilizations;
4. Recognise further that education promotes tolerance, respect for diversity and friendship among peoples and nations;
5. Affirm that the nature and content and quality of education should help to develop knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary to ensure a high quality of life for all;
6. Recognise that education is necessary to develop communities and societies rooted in principles of democracy, justice and respect for human rights;
7. Invite governments to also give special emphasis to democratic principles and practices as well as pluralism, including through the teaching and learning at all levels of formal, informal and non-formal education;
8. Encourage all governments to expand their educational curricula and learning materials in order to promote a better understanding of all cultures and civilizations – especially through the teaching of respect for various cultures and civilizations and their histories and philosophies, human rights education, non-violence and the teaching of languages;
9. Emphasise the importance of knowledge, information and scholarship among governments and civil society in order to promote a better understanding of all cultures and civilizations;
10. Emphasise that the pursuit of the six Education for All (EFA) goals, including especially the fight against gender discrimination in education, is essential to an inclusive approach to dialogue among civilizations;
11. Resolve to take suitable steps to establish in educational institutions a learning environment which will contribute to tolerance, respect and understanding about the diversity and wealth of cultural identities;
12. Urge governments to take full and effective measures to ensure that educational institutions are protected from teachings that promote extremism, intolerance and violence;
13. Reaffirm that all acts of terrorism represent an attack against humanity as the killing of innocent civilians in order to spread terror is despicable to the values of all civilizations;
14. Affirm that in the 21st century, science must become a shared asset benefiting all peoples serving as a powerful resource for economic transformation and for understanding natural and social phenomena;
15. Recognise that science and technology are major engines of social change which should be guided by ethical and moral perspectives and approaches;
16. Emphasise that social and human sciences should assume a much more proactive role in analysing all the dimensions of social interaction and transformation in a rapidly changing world with a view to ensuring the well-being of the societies and to enhancing global understanding of civilizational dynamics and processes;

17. Underline the importance of traditional and local knowledge systems as dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding the world and that this tangible and intangible cultural heritage and empirical knowledge need to be protected and preserved;

18. Affirm further that the information and communication revolution offers new and effective means of exchanging scientific knowledge and advancing education and research which promote the economic and social development of all people;

19. Further recognise that information and communication technologies can enhance intercultural communication and mutual understanding, especially through the promotion of cultural and linguistic pluralism, the generation of cross-cultural links, and the sharing of knowledge and information in various forms by networking communities and individuals;

20. Affirm therefore the need for enhanced inter-cultural dialogue through international cooperation in order for all peoples and nations to share with one another their knowledge and skills;

21. Stress the need to develop the various branches of knowledge side by side and, as far as possible, simultaneously, so as to establish a harmonious balance between technical progress and the intellectual and socio-economic advancement of mankind;

22. Affirm that the respect for diversity of cultures, including the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, values of tolerance and: mutual understanding are fostered through multi-civilisational discourse and are the best guarantors of peace in the world;

23. In the context of the above, the Conference;

a. Enjoins all governments and civil society to support actively a dialogue within and among civilizations and cultures so that it will become an effective instrument of transformation, a yardstick for peace and tolerance, and a vehicle for diversity and pluralism;

b. Calls upon governments and civil society to ensure the empowerment and full participation of women and youth in efforts to foster dialogue within and among civilization and to generate equitable, inclusive societies where mutual understanding may flourish and people may learn to live together in peace;

c. Recommends that UNESCO initiate a broad based collaboration with Member States, organizations of the UN system, civil society, the scientific, academic and artistic communities, the private sector and other partners with a view to translating the various proposals contained in this Declaration into concrete action.