

[Special Dialogue]

UNESCO's Role in Peace and Prosperity: Multilateral Cooperation through Education, Culture, and Science



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I am very pleased to be with you today to participate in the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity.

The challenges of our world, whether they be demographic, due to climate change, deadly extremism or the preservation of diversity are challenges that no State can resolve alone and which cannot find a lasting response without education, sciences and culture. We, therefore carry a great responsibility to implement this mandate in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue.

We must once again find the path of strong multilateralism. And I wish to reiterate here today that multilateralism is not the sum of individual interests, the addition of bilateral relationships. It is instead a dialogue with several voices, a collective intelligence in action, in which the voice of each Member state is equal to that of another, in which each voice should be heard and respected.

At this moment in time, abandoning or weakening what we have built through the UN system would be a dangerous regression. This is why we must defend institutions like UNESCO and not weaken them. Our collective responsibility it to reawaken the spirit

of dialogue through a global conversation and to renew our commitment to cooperation so that we can find collective solutions for the challenges we face.

Too often these past few years, UNESCO has suffered from divisions between Member states, which have weakened our credibility and slowed our actions at a time in which they have never been more necessary.

We are, therefore, working towards strengthening Member states consensus through dialogue and by facilitating mediation if the parties concerned wish. Whether it be questions regarding memory of conflicts - as this continent has known - or the smouldering questions of the Middle East, we believe that it is our responsibility, as an institution, to facilitate this dialogue, when the parties concerned agree to it.

This is what has allowed us to negotiate, for example, consensual texts on the difficult issue of Middle East, at our last executive board and two days ago, on Jerusalem, during the World Heritage Committee. I believe that this shows a willingness of the majority of our members to get back to a spirit of consensus, who also know the impact of the past divisions on UNESCO. I particularly wish to thank the Korean President of UNESCO's Executive Board - who

began his mandate at the same time as I began mine, last November - and who strongly contributes to restoring this spirit.

This means that we can concentrate our efforts on UNESCO's core mandate. In order to be relevant, we do not need to reinvent UNESCO's mandate but instead better serve it. We must address today's battles. And carrying UNESCO's mandate today means sowing all the necessary seeds to build a more human world. Building the human dimension of globalization: this is the core of UNESCO's mandate. And I would like to highlight a few essential features, if we are to speak of our contemporary time.

One is the growing interconnectivity of our societies. To ignore it would be delusional, to vilify it dangerous. Public opinion is correct to recognise this phenomenon. Young people in particular think at a global level and are committed to tackling the challenges, such as climate change because they know the limits of solely national action.

This interconnection produces shared challenges.

Firstly, the technological challenge, in a new era in which a fusion of technologies - including artificial intelligence - will blur the lines between physical, digital and biological spheres. This technology changes the way in which we live, work, communicate, learn and even think. Some specialists have even said that artificial intelligence is more important to humanity than the invention of fire or electricity.

Big Data and algorithms will help shape new public policy, but will also raise questions about our values, moral choices and ethical questions related to our private lives, individual freedoms, transparency and responsibility.

These ethical questions should be at the heart of our reflections. UNESCO will play its part in this reflection - which must be global - on the ethics of artificial intelligence, and attempt to define an essential ethical framework that could - if our Member States agree - lead towards the definition of common ethical principles. What other universal and intergovernmental forum is better placed to do so?

As far as applying ethics to science is concerned, UNESCO has longstanding experience. It has addressed, in the past, ethical issues related to the human genome and genetic data.

The second challenge is climate change and the way in which we will adapt to this ecological transition resulting in drought, rising sea levels and extreme phenomenon.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 is a major - if rather late - step, which signals a political willingness but its consequences for public policy are huge and much remains to be done.

This will change the way in which we live. Highly populated coastal zones will need to be designed in a more sustainable way and we will need new methods for managing natural resources. We will, therefore, need to cooperate to develop new competencies based on creativity and intelligence.

The third challenge is demographic. The global population will reach 9 billion by 2050, having increased three-fold in just one century. This population will be increasingly urban, with 6 out of ten people living in towns.

Demographics, coupled with climate change, will continue to prompt migration within and between countries.

These technological, climatic and demographic challenges threaten to increase the tensions that lead to violent extremism.

This version of globalization could prompt retreats into nationalistic sentiment and create deep divisions. To tackle these challenges, we must reinforce partnerships between governments, regional institutions and the private sector, as these challenges call for a collective engagement.

We must build a better multilateral system in order to avoid the worst, and I would like to outline some of UNESCO's concrete proposals here.

Firstly, one of the essential pillars of our mission is education. Building appropriate, modern education systems for our time means lifelong learning that reaches the whole population. Women have been left behind, particularly in Africa, yet education is

essential to tackle the challenges of our time in a sustainable way. It is necessary because the migration routes every day show that nobody can simply retreat behind their borders.

It is also through education that we can begin to find a long-term solution to climate change.

We also need to adapt education systems for the skills of the future. The pace of the technological revolution is so fast that it is impossible to predict precisely the evolution of jobs. Some will disappear, other will be created but all of them will be impacted.

It is why lifelong learning is crucial, and it also means that not only technical skills are required, but also creativity and the humanities, to learn how to learn and think is evolving environments.

Too often we only put emphasis on technical skills to provide solutions, and put humanities in another silo. But as Fabiola Gianotti -- Director of the CERN project, which UNESCO helped create -- points out, sciences and humanities, on the contrary to being diametrically opposed, both represent the highest expression of curiosity and creativity of humanity.

This is why the teaching of humanities is crucial -- to foster creativity, critical thinking, learning to learn, learning to live together in peace. Education is not only about skills -- it is also about passing on shared values, becoming global citizens.

UNESCO, as lead agency in the United Nations for education works to share best practices, to support public policies in the field to measure and track data to guide our path towards the Agenda 2030. We particularly prioritise education to support women and Africa.

The international community is not yet on track to invest sufficient funds to reach to goals of the agenda it has committed to.

Our latest figures show that after a worrying decline, international public aid to education is increasing but there is a shortfall of 39 billion dollars a year. We call on all donors to consider contributing to this essential area, as education is the key to the success of the whole of the 2030 Agenda. Across the globe where children are deprived of an education

- particularly young girls - economic development, peace, the fight against terrorism and fanaticism are at stake.

We see education not only as a set of skills but also as a set of values that foster citizens and not only members of the work force. This citizenship should encompass global issues of sustainable development and peace.

As we speak, 263 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school, unable to reach their full potential. But even those in school are not necessarily gaining basic skills.

The shift to the green economy and the opportunities of the new Industrial Revolution call for a sharper focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics -- especially for girls who are too often dissuaded from pursuing careers in these fields.

I am speaking to you today in a country which has shown the world the power of education. The Republic of Korea understands the weight of history and knows how fragile peace is. Korea has managed a unique turnaround and has become a model of development and innovation in just a few decades.

The path that you have forged since the 1950s through massive investment in education was supported by the international community, through UNESCO. The Organisation responded to the call of the United Nations to help to the civilian population after the war in the 1950's. This aid was primarily for schools and universities. Since then, the Republic of Korea has become one of the most advanced countries in terms of education.

In turn, Korea now supports UNESCO in its mission, particularly in education. Today, the country finances several education programmes coordinated by UNESCO, not only in Asia but throughout the world. For example, Korea has just signed an agreement, which will allow it to reinforce its aid to education for girls in the Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan regions of Pakistan. Korea also supports professional training through the Better Education for Africa Rise project in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda as well as for Syrian refugees in Jordan.

I call on others, State and private companies, to follow the Korean example and contribute to support UNESCO in its missions.

I would also like to underline the role of cultural heritage in building peace. Cultural heritage is a wealth which is the legacy of centuries and which must be known and understood. Our heritage is part of our identity and it is essential that each of us can appropriate this heritage and see ourselves in our history, locations, arts and traditions. Knowing this identity is being able to discover that of another. Being deprived of our past is to be vulnerable to false narratives and sometimes deadly extremism.

Heritage evolves, adapts, and reinvents itself. Young generations must be involved with it. Earlier this week, I opened the 42nd session of the world heritage committee in the Kingdom of Bahrain. We organized in parallel a young professional forum and I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing with you the conclusion of their forum. They insisted on two key messages: first, the importance to consider the multiplicity of stories inherent in our heritage. They refuse over-simplification and the artificial opposition that is created by hate speech. Secondly, the necessity to protect natural heritage sites and to inscribe them on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

What these young people are saying is that culture is more than buildings, documents and traditions -- it is how we see ourselves, see the world, present ourselves to the world and how we learn about ourselves and about each other.

It is the only long-term solution to fight extremism. When extremists seek to divide humanity between "us" and "them", we need to highlight everything that unites us as a single community, through universal values.

That is why we believe that an efficient way to prevent violent extremism is through our mandate, be it education, culture, sciences, freedom of expression. To name a few examples, we publish manuals to help teachers and policy-makers prevent violent extremism. We work with youth at the regional level to promote their participation in policy-making. We

launched at the beginning of the month a manual on the role of education to prevent anti-Semitism.

Last February, as part of the United Nations initiative to support the rebuilding of Iraq, UNESCO started a long-term project for Mosul, to revive the spirit of the Old City, to reanimate, through culture and education the unique spirit of diversity and education that made Mosul throb with life before the war.

The Republic of Korea not only supports UNESCO on these issues, helping education and culture. We are in Jeju Island, an island that wonderfully symbolizes our message. Since 2007, it has been inscribed on the World Heritage List as an island of exceptional geological value, its lava tunnels and volcanic formations are unique in the world. This is why it has also been inscribed as a UNESCO Geopark and a Biosphere Reserve. A site whose volcanic, island environment has shaped the lives of its inhabitants, the island has developed as a habitat, with crafts and customs.

It has also been recognized for its contribution to the intangible heritage of humanity, with the inscription on the world list of the age-old tradition of the Haenyeo, the female divers who dedicate their lives to underwater fishing. Jeju Island is a wonderful example of sustainable development based on heritage.

To conclude, I would like to look from Jeju island at the entire peninsula. It will be the task of an entire generation to renew the links that have been severed between the north and the south, if the out-stretched hand of President Moon is accepted. UNESCO will also have a role to play in building strong links through education, culture and the sciences, which are so essential for lasting peace. Both Koreas are UNESCO Member States, and we hope to further deepen the relationship of trust that has been going from strength to strength since the 1950s.

Building a more human world through education, culture, science and freedom of expression: this should be our common goal. This is UNESCO's purpose.

Discussion

- **BAK Sangmee** You said that the Korean Peninsula has created a momentum for peace. What measures do you think could expedite inter-Korean exchange?
- **Audrey AZOULAY** UNESCO will devise a plan to bring the two Koreas together as UNESCO partners. Mutual trust in peace is not only built through government-level exchanges but also through private-level personal interchanges. In fact, personal interchanges are often more effective. Cultural and scientific exchanges would also be possible through UNESCO. UNESCO already has active projects in North Korea, in the areas of geology, cultural heritage preservation, and archaeology. However, the projects remain largely symbolic, so if South Korea could aid in the preservation of North Korean cultural heritages, this would be beneficial for the entire Korean Peninsula. The Koreans would be able to preserve their intangible cultural assets more effectively. Joint teams could be formed in areas of music, traditional martial arts, and ssireum, which is traditional Korean wrestling, to pursue joint values. Educational exchanges will also be very important. UNESCO is actively working in that area.
- **BAK Sangmee** Jeju Island is widely known as an “island of world peace.” How do you think Jeju’s role in world peace relates to the goals of UNESCO?
- **WON Heeryong** Jeju Island and UNESCO are both committed to achieving the same goal of world peace. I also think we are on a similar path. Speaking for Jeju, the Korean government designated the island as an “island of world peace” in 2005 for the following reason. The government planned for Jeju to become a conference venue for Northeast Asian discussions of peace, and to serve as a buffer zone in times of international conflict. Regarding the original intent, Jeju, as an “island of world peace,” must continue to promote and contribute to not only peace on Jeju Island and the Korean Peninsula, but also to the common prosperity of Northeast Asia and the world. I think that there are many possible ways of achieving peace, because the concept of peace itself

implies many different things in individual, social, national, and international contexts. An absence of war and violence could be defined as peace, but the resolution of poverty and inequality could also be a route to peace. Protecting human rights and abolishing sexism could also be acts of peace. Jeju’s “carbonless island” campaign for “energy peace” could also be another path towards world peace. I also believe that resolving the scars of the Jeju April 3rd Incident through reconciliation would be an act of making peace with human history. Since education is closely connected to peace, UNESCO and Jeju will have many things to do together. I am proud of Jeju Island’s designation as a UNESCO Natural and Intangible Cultural Heritage, and plan to join in the responsibility of cultural heritage preservation.

- **BAK Sangmee** What kinds of efforts is UNESCO making in the promotion of sustainable tourism?
- **Audrey AZOULAY** There are many cases in which the conservation of nature and regional development are poorly balanced, or where there is a lack of effort to balance the two. UNESCO’s goal is to manage development and the development sites. Spain’s Andalusia region is both attracting a large number of tourists and limiting the numbers of visitors to its cultural heritage sites to ensure sustainable tourism. In the long run, each country will have to make specific efforts. Development is important, but sustainability is also important.
- **BAK Sangmee** Among Jeju’s uniquely beautiful natural environments, three sites known collectively as Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes were listed as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage in 2007. Registration at UNESCO is a promise to the international community that the natural environment will be well-preserved. But preservation efforts face ever-increasing obstacles due to globalization and as people around the world show an increased interest in Jeju, rapidly increasing the number of arriving tourists. What plans do you have for sustaining Jeju’s natural heritage?
- **WON Heeryong** Designation as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage signifies a clear obligation to pre-



serve these sites. Jeju is trying to benchmark other regions by extensively studying these international experiences. The Geomun Oreum volcanic cone is currently using a reservation system to limit the number of visitors and reduce any negative impact on the ecosystem. We will continue to apply reservation systems, restrict the number of visitors, and establish entrance fees in an effort to preserve these heritage sites and make tourism sustainable. Jeju Island is obliged to engage in four types of conservation. We are the only province in Korea with all four. Many regions with preservation obligations face complaints from residents who think their neighborhoods are relatively underdeveloped. We are striving to encourage the participation of residents in the preservation process and are planning to build a preservation education and training center.

- **Audrey AZOULAY** I believe Governor Won’s sense of accountability for cultural heritage preservation is logical. Once registered, there has to be follow-up measures, and they have to be drawn on a regular basis—every two years. One region that was registered as a cultural heritage for its coral reef had let that same reef be damaged. Only after restoring the condition of the reef were they able to be re-registered. Various efforts need to follow.
- **BAK Sangmee** The Jeju haenyeo culture, the female diver community that has been adapting to sustain the natural environment, was listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016. How can the culture of Jeju haenyeo be preserved and maintained as a key cultural identity as Korean and Jeju societies change rapidly? What policies do you have to protect and promote the culture?

• **WON Heeryong** I am very proud that the culture of Jeju haenyeo is listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. I believe that the UNESCO designation is a big first step in its preservation. We have taken many measures to protect the culture since the designation. First, we created a haenyeo society. We offer support in the pricing of their top shell catches to guarantee profits for the divers, and we subsidize the elderly divers who have difficulty sustaining a regular income. For the haenyeo culture to be preserved, first the ocean has to be preserved, but the island's seas are rapidly becoming contaminated. The prerequisite for the preservation of the haenyeo is the protection of our marine resources. To that end, Jeju Island plans to invest more funds to protect said marine life. In addition to setting up a taskforce, we are working on a five-year plan.

• **Audrey AZOULAY** I think the culture of the Jeju haenyeo is a beautiful tradition, and it is a good example of an interaction between humans and nature. People should never be separated from nature. This great tradition should be handed down to the next generation, and for that to be possible, I agree that the ocean must be kept clean. UNESCO holds a scientific duty and we also have programs for cleaner waters. We have such projects set for the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030). Jeju will also have to be more involved in the fields of ecology and oceanography, but the island is an excellent example among UNESCO listed sites. Jeju Island is a role model for the international community.

• **BAK Sangmee** How do you think Korea could contribute in terms of education?

• **Audrey AZOULAY** Wide-ranging and life-long education is key. Social and technological evolution are ambitious agendas. Korea's investment in education is remarkable and can be seen as the engine for the nation's successes. Research conducted by UNESCO has shown that health and education are the most important factors in economic growth. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon often mentioned in his speeches that he had learned English as a child

using UNESCO published books. This shows how important educational support is. Success comes with responsibility. Korea's responsibility would be to support countries that are under-established in terms of education. Support is crucial for the education of girls. Korea should devote itself to supporting girls' education projects in Asia. They need constant investment and attention. Private enterprises, in particular, should expand their investments in education.

• **BAK Sangmee** How do you plan to meet UNESCO's long-term goals, such as sustainable growth in tourism?

• **WON Heeryong** Jeju is acutely aware of its duty to preserve our UNESCO heritage sites and will make various efforts in the areas of peace, ecology, and education.

[Special Dialogue]

Overcoming Legacies of the Past, Promoting Reconciliation and Peace in Northeast Asia



Jose RAMOS-HORTA
Former president of East Timor/
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Presenter & Discussant

Jose RAMOS-HORTA Former president of East Timor/ Nobel prize laureate in 1996

Presenter

Jose RAMOS-HORTA

I am pleased to be again in Korea and in such hopeful times. The Republic of Korea is one of the world's most vibrant democracies, with an independent and inquisitive media, an informed and vigilant civil society, and an uncompromising judiciary.

While you live in peace and prosperity, at the same time almost anywhere, any day of the week, you can read about violence and death, the immense suffering of the innocent, of children and youngsters, and of countries imploding violently along ethnic and religious lines. Over many thousands of years, human beings waged wars, sometimes to satisfy the basic needs of survival to find food, water and land to cultivate the food. However, most wars have been waged with the ambition of expanding influence and securing even greater gains, to the detriment of others whom have been defined as adversaries and enemies.

This vast region of Northeast Asia, home to 1.5 billion people – Korean, Chinese and Japanese – with an extraordinarily rich history and culture, has been known for the many destructive wars that killed tens of millions of people. The region boasts

the world's largest combined standing armies, facing off against each other, with a powerful foreign force that ostensibly provides on your soil, in the ROK and Japan a security umbrella. Arguably, this is a credible deterrence that has kept the peace in the region since the Korean War.

But, North and South Korea, and virtually every country in the Asian region also know firsthand the tragic consequences of wars, enduring immense suffering caused by centuries of conflict unleashed by tyrants and demagogues.

Timor-Leste, a country of a little more than 1 million people, shares a history of war, occupation and resistance, with Koreans. We survived and prevailed through centuries of colonial rule, occupation by the Japanese Imperial Army, re-colonization by Portugal and occupation by Indonesia, during which close to one third of our population perished. However, in 2002, we celebrated our freedom, when we became a nation with the first new democracy of the millennium. We honored our martyrs and heroes, and began the process of looking after the veterans, widows, orphans and those mutilated by war. We reconciled with our domestic adversaries, those who did not think and believe like us; we forgave our ene-