

OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination

**Address by Mr Philippe KRIDELKA
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*Plenary session 7: strategies for promoting tolerance and understanding,
interethnic and intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension, in the
OSCE area*

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

OSCE's work complements UNESCO's own endeavours to foster peace through international cooperation, dialogue between cultures and religions and a better understanding between ethnic communities.

This was the mission UNESCO's founders conferred on our Organization sixty-five years ago in the wake of the Second World War, and to this day, it continues to guide our work.

UNESCO is the only UN Agency to have a mandate in education, in the sciences, in culture and in communication/media. In those fields of action, we foster dialogue between governments, academics, civil society practitioners, journalists and other stakeholders. This dialogue is the very base of our normative action (eg the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity, adopted in 2005), it is the very base of policy advice to governments who wish to improve the way they organize quality education, their science or cultural policy or the development of pluralist media. And of course, this constant dialogue between our 193 Member States forms also the base of our concrete activities in the field, in developing or emerging countries, where for instance we train education specialists, we train journalists or we help establish sustainable jobs in cultural industries.

UNESCO has a key role to play in peace-building and reconciliation to achieve the goal of promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and a culture of peace.

We are profoundly convinced that dialogue among cultures is the antidote to intolerance and exclusion. It is a preventive force. This is why last February, UNESCO's Director General Irina BOKOVA launched the United Nations' International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures at our headquarters in Paris. On that occasion, a high-profile public debate has been organized on two key themes: the power of cultural diversity and dialogue; and the role of shared values for building peace in a globalized world.

Globalization is a positive force when it nurtures respect for all cultures, encourages dialogue between them and upholds inalienable human rights.

Moreover, culture has a pivotal role to play in development. The contribution of creative industries is an obvious example. UNESCO's recent World Report on "Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue" demonstrates the benefits of such policies and sets out 10 recommendations for governments, NGOs, cultural organizations, and the private sector. I encourage you to read this report because it develops a new and dynamic vision of cultural diversity encompassing public policies, multilingualism, the media, education and other issues that are of utmost relevance.

Our cultural heritage is also part of our identity. UNESCO's six culture conventions set the ground for safeguarding culture in all its forms. Culture is not only about books, classical paintings or monuments, but it is also about landscapes, traditions, traditional knowledge, cultural industries and all forms of cultural expressions.

Ultimately, we would like culture, culture as a promoter for tolerance and understanding, culture as a tool for growth and more inclusive societies, to be better recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a major driver of development. This is a point UNESCO intends to highlight at the high level meeting which, in New York in September, will review progress towards the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Allow me to end this short address by underlining how much UNESCO's and OSCE's mandates and activities are complementary, for instance in the field of intercultural dialogue. And I am convinced that this complementarity could lead to more common initiatives in the years to come.

I thank you for your attention.