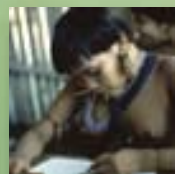




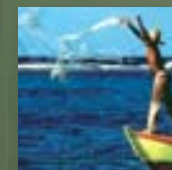
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**UNESCO World Report**

# Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue



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# THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of State and Governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The eight MDGs break down into 21 quantifiable targets that are measured by 60 indicators. The specific indicators can be found at: [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

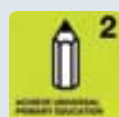


## GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

Target 1a: Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day

Target 1b: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people

Target 1c: Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger



## GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Target 2a: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling



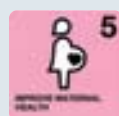
## GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

Target 3a: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015



## GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

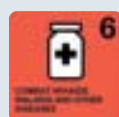
Target 4a: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five



## GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

Target 5a: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

Target 5b: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health



## GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Target 6a: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

Target 6b: Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

Target 6c: Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases



## GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Target 7a: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources

Target 7b: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

Target 7c: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

Target 7d: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020



## GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Target 8a: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

Target 8b: Address the special needs of the least developed countries

Target 8c: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

Target 8d: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term

Target 8e: In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries

Target 8f: In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

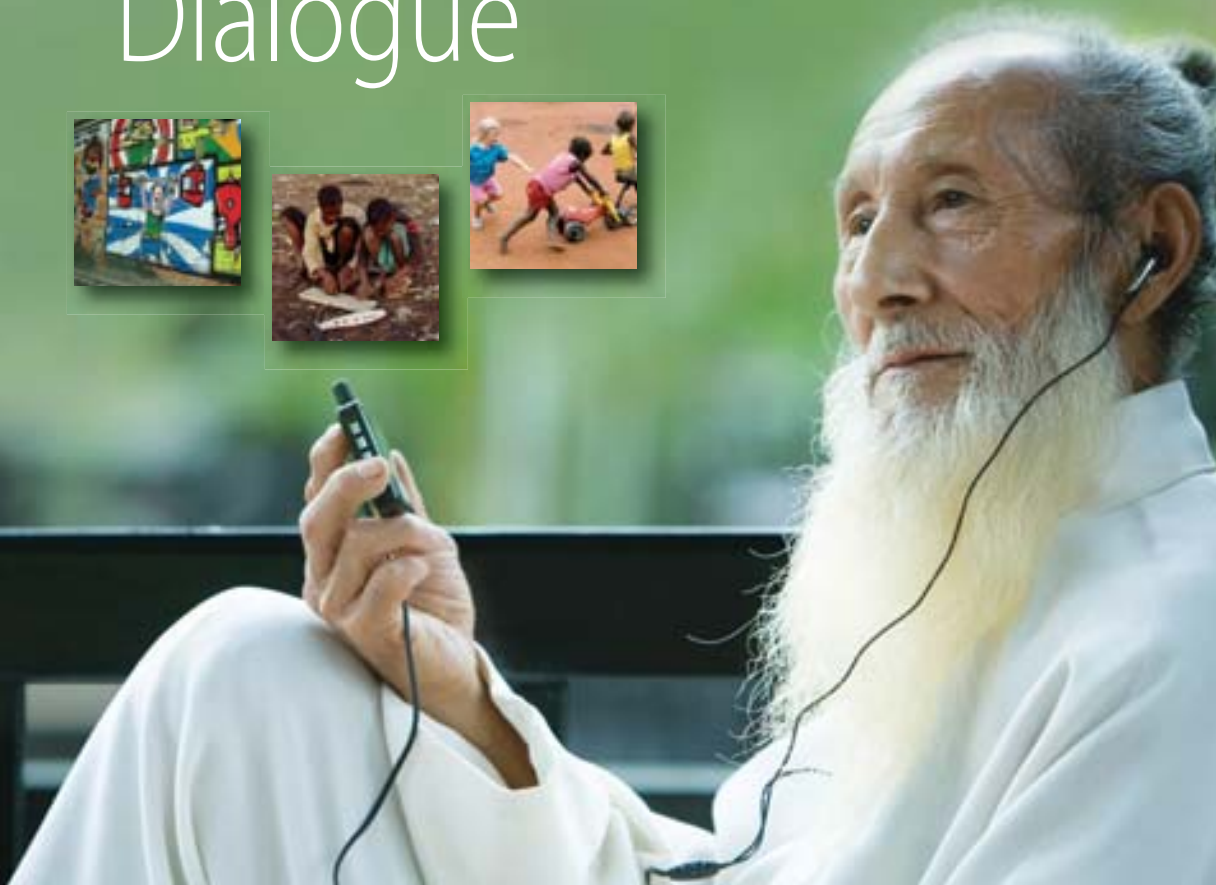


United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



## UNESCO World Report

# Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue







## Foreword

Culture plays a very special role within UNESCO's mandate. Not only does it represent a specific field of activities, encompassing the safeguarding and promoting of heritage in all its forms (both tangible and intangible), encouraging creativity (particularly in the cultural industries), and facilitating mutual understanding through intercultural dialogue, it also permeates all UNESCO's fields of competence. It is therefore a source of satisfaction that this cross-cutting relevance of culture should be underlined with the publication of this second volume in the series of UNESCO intersectoral world reports, devoted to cultural diversity.

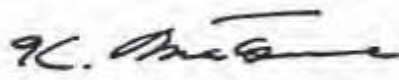
In keeping with its function of stimulating international reflection, UNESCO has enlisted the help of many experts, thinkers, practitioners and decision-makers in the preparation of this World Report. Following landmarks such as the 1982 Mexico City World Conference on Cultural Policies, the 1996 publication of the report *Our Creative Diversity* by the World Commission on Culture and Development chaired by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former United Nations Secretary-General, and the 1998 Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, the UNESCO World Report *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* extends the reflection on culture to cultural change itself, highlighting the dynamic nature of cultural diversity and its capacity to renew our approaches to sustainable development, the effective exercise of universally recognized human rights, social cohesion and democratic governance.

Accelerating globalization processes place a premium on intercultural competencies, both individual and collective, which enable us to manage cultural diversity more effectively and monitor cultural change. Without such competencies, misunderstandings rooted in identity issues are liable to proliferate. A strengthening of these competencies is central to the recommendations of the present report, which governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society should seek to implement as a matter of priority.

Through this World Report, UNESCO wishes to build on the advances of recent years and in particular to emphasize that cultural diversity has as its corollary intercultural dialogue, which implies a need to move beyond a focus on differences that can only be a source of conflict, ignorance and misunderstanding. Cultural diversity is related to the dynamic process whereby cultures change while remaining themselves, in a state of permanent openness to one another. At the individual level, this is reflected in multiple and changing cultural identities, which are not easily reducible to definite categories and which represent opportunities for dialogue based on sharing what we have in common beyond those differences.

The value of this new approach to cultural diversity is evident not only in UNESCO's activities in the cultural sphere; it also helps to renew the Organization's strategies in all its other fields of competence. On questions as important as multilingualism, realizing the education for all goals, developing quality media and stimulating creativity in the service of development, new solutions are emerging that need to be explored in greater depth if the international community is to prove equal to its own ambitions.

With this World Report, UNESCO reaffirms the continuing relevance of the United Nations approach based on universally proclaimed human rights and the principles of democratic governance. Better knowledge and recognition of our respective differences leads ultimately to better mutual understanding, with particular regard to those objectives we hold in common. Since the adoption of our Organization's Constitution in 1945, this truth has been inscribed at the heart of UNESCO's action.



Koïchiro Matsuura,  
Director-General of UNESCO





## Preface

The publication of the UNESCO World Report *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* is particularly timely in light of the current world events. The financial crisis and its consequences for the economy, labour markets, social policies and international cooperation risk to show that culture often remains the first adjustment variable to be sacrificed when the drying up of financial resources imposes a drastic choice between a number of competing priorities. Yet this is a very short-term view. For at this crossroad, where some are urging us to think in terms of a new world in which human disasters of this kind would no longer be possible, greater acknowledgement of cultural diversity is proving a particularly promising avenue of approach.

This World Report seeks to show that acknowledging cultural diversity helps to renew the international community's strategies in a series of areas so as to further its ambitious objectives, with the support and involvement of local populations. For culture is not simply another sector of activity, a mass consumption product or an asset to be preserved. Culture is the very substratum of all human activities, which derive their meaning and value from it. This is why the recognition of cultural diversity can help to ensure that ownership of development and peace initiatives is vested in the populations concerned.

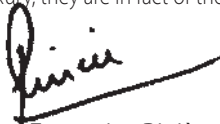
With regard to development initiatives, it has long been known that their success depends significantly on the extent to which they incorporate the cultural factor. But the message of sustainable development is that the planet is essentially finite, and that the resources humanity hoped to discover in its environment must now be found within itself, in its very diversity. Diversity must henceforth be considered a starting point rather than an obstacle to be overcome. Cultural diversity invites us to think in terms of a plural humanity, embodying a creative potential that precludes any prescribed model of development.

With regard to peace, we are convinced that its sustainability depends upon universally proclaimed human rights, which are the main token of our common humanity. The acknowledgement of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue help to defuse the tensions that can arise in multicultural societies when a majority and minorities confront each other over recognition of their rights. What favours cultural diversity, which is in no way opposed to the universality of human rights, is a governance of reconciliation, which is the surest guarantee of peace.

This approach has a bearing on international reflection on the 'post-crisis' world and the new mechanisms needed for its construction. While the 'traditional' cultural sectors (such as book sales or cinema, theatre, and concert attendance) seem for the moment to be spared by the 'crisis', it is worth underlining that culture can serve as an 'anti-crisis' weapon by encouraging us to think in terms of alternative modes of development. In this connection, it should not be overlooked that economic actors are increasingly acknowledging the importance of cultural diversity, not only in public policy — with regard to education, languages, media content and the arts and culture — but also in the activities of the private sector. We are witnessing the rediscovery of the virtues of a diversified work environment, in which creativity and innovation derive less from competition than from mutual receptiveness, from the sharing and exchange of knowledge. New areas of encounter between public and private decision-makers are emerging, and UNESCO has a leading role to play in this regard.

A genuine acknowledgement of cultural diversity is thus essential to attain the Millennium Development Goals. The belated recognition of this truth at the 2005 World Summit must now be translated into practical action.

Campaigning for the acknowledgement of cultural diversity in fields not immediately identified with culture does not mean lessening our vigilance in the cultural field proper. Safeguarding our tangible and intangible cultural heritage, stimulating creativity and furthering the discovery of new cultural horizons will necessarily remain formidable challenges. While such goals may be seen by many as a pointless luxury, they are in fact of the essence, as those who possess little, or nothing, are only too aware.



Françoise Rivière

Assistant Director-General for Culture

## Acknowledgements

This World Report would not have been possible without the generous and varied contributions of many individuals and organizations from around the world. The team expresses its sincere gratitude to Georges Kutukdjian and John Corbett who, from January to September 2009, finalized the drafting of the World Report.

**Under the supervision of Françoise Rivière**  
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**Assistant Director-General for Culture**  
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The Advisory Committee accompanied the progression of the preparation of the World Report and was formally gathered on three occasions, in September 2006 (UNESCO Headquarters), for a preliminary brainstorming, in April 2007 (UNESCO Venice Office) for the examination of a first table of contents and the identification of possible contributors and in January 2008 (UNESCO Headquarters), for the examination of a first draft of the World Report.

---

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© 'Korean Fantasy', a performance of two Korean intangible heritage expressions at UNESCO Headquarters, 2004





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*Fantasia, on the occasion of a Berber festival in the Sahara Desert of southern Morocco*



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*A monk in Osaka, Japan*

# General Introduction

Cultural diversity has emerged as a key concern at the turn of a new century. Some predict that globalization and the liberalization of the goods and services market will lead to cultural standardization, reinforcing existing imbalances between cultures. Others claim that the end of the bipolar world of the Cold War and the eclipse of political ideologies will result in new religious, cultural and even ethnic fault lines, precluding a possible 'clash of civilizations'. Scientists warn of the threats to the Earth's environment posed by human activity, drawing parallels between the erosion of biodiversity and the disappearance of traditional modes of life as a result of a scarcity of resources and the spread of modern lifestyles. 'Diversity' is becoming a rallying call among those who denounce persistent socio-economic inequalities in developed societies. Cultural diversity is similarly posing a challenge to the principles of international cooperation: it is invoked by some to contest universally recognized human rights, while others — like UNESCO — hold firmly to the view that full and unqualified recognition of cultural diversity strengthens the universality of human rights and ensures their effective exercise.



Yet the meanings attached to this catch-all term are as varied as they are shifting. Some see cultural diversity as inherently positive, insofar as it points to a sharing of the wealth embodied in each of the world's cultures and, accordingly, to the links uniting us all in processes of exchange and dialogue. For others, cultural differences are what cause us to lose sight of our common humanity and are therefore at the root of numerous conflicts. This second diagnosis is today all the more plausible since globalization has increased the points of interaction and friction between cultures, giving rise to identity-linked tensions, withdrawals and claims, particularly of a religious nature, which can become potential sources of dispute.

Underlying the intuition that all these phenomena are in practice linked and relate, each in its own way, to a particular understanding of cultural diversity, the essential challenge would be to propose a coherent vision of cultural diversity so as to clarify how, far from being a threat, it can become beneficial to the actions of the international community. This is the essential purpose of the present report.

From the start, UNESCO has been convinced of the inherent value and necessity of cultural diversity. With reference to the independence and integrity of its Member States, its Constitution (1945) speaks of the 'fruitful diversity' of the world's cultures. As the only United Nations agency responsible for culture, UNESCO promotes the process of mutual receptiveness among peoples with the purpose of contributing to the 'intellectual and moral solidarity' of humankind by combating ignorance and prejudice and thereby helping to build the 'defences of peace in the minds of men'. This project is as relevant today as ever, even if the definition of culture has become much broader since the 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico City, encompassing 'the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group, not limited to the arts and letters, and including

*... the essential challenge would be to propose a coherent vision of cultural diversity so as to clarify how, far from being a threat, it can become beneficial to the actions of the international community*




modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.’

### **A UNESCO World Report**

This report reflects UNESCO's new policy regarding the publication of its world reports, as decided by its Executive Board at its 160<sup>th</sup> session.

UNESCO's practice in the 1990s was to publish sectoral reports, usually consisting of a collection of opinion pieces or scholarly articles signed by leading academic experts or practitioners in the field. What was lacking was a report by the Organization as a whole, based on close cooperation between its different programme sectors (education, natural sciences, social sciences, culture, communication and information) and combining UNESCO's 'intellectual watch' function with the adoption of policy positions on the major issues within its remit. Such a report would have the advantage of expressing a viewpoint representative of the

 The front of a small shop in Naivasha, Kenya



Organization as a whole, whereas sectoral specialization can result in a fragmentation of standpoints. It could also help to make the Organization more 'visible' by underlining the relevance and topicality of its analyses and work, even if it should not take the form of an activity report, this role being fulfilled by other reports of the governing bodies (Executive Board and General Conference).

Following the publication of a first intersectoral UNESCO World Report on the theme of 'knowledge societies' (2005), which formed part of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 2005), the topic chosen for this second World Report was endorsed by the General Conference in October 2005, and the task of preparing the World Report on Cultural Diversity was formalized with the establishment of a World Reports Unit in May 2006. The work of the World Reports Unit has been guided by the in-house contributions of an informal intersectoral working group and by the recommendations of an advisory committee established in the summer of 2006 and consisting of experts from a variety of specialist and geographical backgrounds. Both have been particularly useful in identifying the topics to be covered, as well as the experts to be consulted, whose written contributions have provided valuable input to the chapters that follow.

The objectives of the World Report on Cultural Diversity are:

- to analyze cultural diversity in all its aspects, by attempting to show the complexity of the processes at work while at the same time identifying a main thread among the wide range of possible interpretations;
- to show the importance of cultural diversity in different areas (languages, education, communication and creativity), which, their intrinsic functions apart, may be seen as essential for the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity;
- to convince decision-makers and the various stakeholders of the importance of investing in cultural diversity as an essential dimension of intercultural dialogue, since it can renew our approaches to sustainable development, is a prerequisite for the exercise of universally recognized human rights and freedoms, and can serve to strengthen social cohesion and democratic governance.


The World Report aims in this way to take account of the new perspectives opened up by reflection on the challenges of cultural diversity and, in so doing, to map out new approaches to monitoring and shaping the changes that are taking place. Thus, the World Report does not seek to provide ready-made solutions to the problems liable to confront decision-makers. Rather, it aims to underline the complexity of these problems, which cannot be solved by political will alone, but call for better understanding of the underlying phenomena and greater international cooperation, particularly through the exchange of good practices and the adoption of common guidelines.

It should also be stressed that the World Report does not claim to offer a global inventory of cultural diversity, established on the basis of available indicators in the manner of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report. In the field of cultural diversity, the development of indicators is only just beginning. For the purposes of such an inventory, it would have been necessary to carry out, with the agreement of UNESCO's Member States, a truly global enquiry into cultural diversity — a task that would have required much greater resources than those allocated to the present report, but that could one day be undertaken by a World Observatory on Cultural Diversity, whose creation this report recommends. In the current state of research, the examples chosen serve mainly to illustrate the relevance of the arguments advanced. They have been selected on the basis of the materials available and in an effort to vary their geographical origin.

UNESCO hopes in this way to play a part in the recent renewal of thinking on cultural diversity, in keeping with its work in the 1950s and the conclusions of *Our Creative Diversity*, the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (1996), chaired by former United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. In the text entitled *Race and History* written in 1952 for UNESCO, the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that the protection of cultural diversity should not be confined to preservation of the status quo: it is 'diversity itself which must be saved, not the outward and visible form in which each period has clothed that diversity'. Protecting cultural diversity thus meant ensuring that diversity continued to exist, not that a given state of diversity should perpetuate itself indefinitely. This presupposed a capacity to accept and sustain cultural change, while not regarding it as an edict of fate. The report of the World Commission on



Culture and Development had argued along similar lines that cultural diversity is not simply an asset to be preserved but a resource to be promoted, with particular regard to its potential benefits, including in areas relatively distant from culture in the strict sense. The present report seeks to build upon the earlier report's main conclusions.

 French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and René Maheu, Director-General of UNESCO, 1971

In recent years the arguments UNESCO has developed in its thinking on cultural diversity have been taken up by a significant number of programmes and agencies in the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank, for example, has on several occasions followed UNESCO's lead in the context of the World Decade on Culture and Development (1988-1997) in its enquiries into the links between culture and development, notably at the international conferences 'Culture Counts' in Florence in 1999 and 'New Frontiers of Social Policies' held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2005 (see Marc, 2005). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have likewise published, respectively, a Human Development Report entitled *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World* (2004) and a collection of articles on natural resource management entitled *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity* (Posey, 1999). Subsequently, the Report of the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations (2006) has given unprecedented prominence to initiatives promoting dialogue between peoples, cultures and civilizations. The present report is



*A performance of the Burundi drums at UNESCO Headquarters, 1996*

also intended to contribute to the thinking and studies of UNESCO's partner programmes and agencies, particularly with regard to development.

### **What is cultural diversity?**

The topic covered by this World Report is complex, and some preliminary clarifications are necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Cultural diversity is above all a fact: there exists a wide range of distinct cultures, even if the contours delimiting a particular culture prove more difficult to establish than might at first sight appear. Moreover, awareness of this diversity has today become relatively commonplace, being facilitated by the globalization of exchanges and the greater receptiveness of societies to one another. While this greater awareness in no way guarantees the preservation of cultural diversity, it has helped to give the topic greater visibility.

Cultural diversity has moreover become a major social concern, linked to the growing variety of social codes within and between societies. It is increasingly clear that lifestyles, social representations, value systems, codes of conduct, social relations (inter-generational, between men and women, etc.), the linguistic forms and registers within a particular language, cognitive processes, artistic expressions, notions of public and private space (with particular reference to urban planning and the living

environment), forms of learning and expression, modes of communication and even systems of thought, can no longer be reduced to a single model or conceived in terms of fixed representations. The emergence on the political stage of local communities, indigenous peoples, deprived or vulnerable groups and those excluded on grounds of ethnic origin, social affiliation, age or gender, has led to the discovery, within societies, of new forms of diversity. The political establishment has in this way found itself challenged, and cultural diversity has taken its place on the political agenda in most countries of the world.

Confronted by this diversity of codes and outlooks, States sometimes find themselves at a loss to know how to respond, often as a matter of urgency, or how to address cultural diversity in the common interest. To contribute to the devising of specific responses to this situation, this report seeks to provide a framework for renewed understanding of the challenges inherent in cultural diversity. It will be necessary for that purpose to identify, beyond the mere fact of diversity, some of the theoretical and political difficulties it inevitably poses.

A first difficulty has to do with the specifically *cultural* nature of this form of diversity. Societies have recourse to various proxies, particularly ethnic or linguistic characterizations, to take account of their cultural heterogeneity. For example, examination of the population classification systems used in national censuses in different countries reveals wide divergences of approach to cultural categorization (ethnic origin, religious affiliation, skin colour, etc.). The first challenge will therefore be to examine the different policies pursued without losing sight of our topic, which is cultural diversity and not the proxies to which it is sometimes reduced. One solution would be to adopt the broadest possible definition of culture, along the lines of the consensus embodied in UNESCO's 1982 Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, which has the merit of not restricting the definition of culture or focusing on a particular aspect (e.g. religion) in order to define a culture.

Another difficulty concerns the identification of the *constituents* of cultural diversity. In this connection, the terms 'culture', 'civilization' and 'peoples' have different connotations depending on context, for example scientific or political (Descola, 2005). Whereas 'cultures' refers to entities that tend to define themselves in relation to one another, the term 'civilization' refers to cultures that affirm

*Cultural diversity should be defined as the capacity to maintain the dynamic of change in all of us, whether individuals or groups*

their values or world views as universal and adopt an expansionist approach towards those who do not (or do not yet) share them. It is therefore a very real challenge to attempt to persuade the different centres of civilization to coexist peacefully. As conceived by UNESCO — a conception remote from those ideological constructions that predict a ‘clash of civilizations’ — civilization is to be understood as ‘work in progress’, as the accommodation of each of the world’s cultures, on the basis of equality, in an ongoing universal project.

A third difficulty that needs to be provisionally identified concerns the relationship of cultures to change. For, as noted by Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, almost seven decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were to pass before cultures started to be understood as shifting entities. Previously, there was a tendency to view them as essentially fixed, their content being ‘transmitted’ between generations through a variety of channels, such as education or initiatory practices of various kinds. Today culture is increasingly understood as a process whereby societies evolve along pathways that are specific to them. ‘What is truly specific in a society is not so much people’s values, beliefs, feelings, habits, languages, knowledge, lifestyles etc. as the way in which all these characteristics change’ (Cunha, 2007).

These considerations argue in favour of a new approach to cultural diversity — one that takes account of its dynamic nature and the challenges of identity associated with the permanence of cultural change. This necessarily entails changes to UNESCO’s role in this context. For, whereas the Organization’s longstanding concern has been with the conservation and safeguarding of endangered cultural sites, practices and expressions, it must now also learn to sustain cultural change in order to help individuals and groups to manage diversity more effectively — for this ultimately is the major challenge: *managing cultural diversity*.

The challenge inherent in cultural diversity is not posed simply at the international level (between nation-states) or at the infra-national level (within increasingly multicultural societies); it also concerns us as individuals through those multiple identities whereby we learn to be receptive to difference while remaining ourselves. Thus cultural diversity has important political implications: it prescribes the aim of freeing ourselves of stereotypes and prejudices in order to accept others with their differences and

complexities. In this way, it becomes possible to rediscover our common humanity through our very diversity. Cultural diversity thereby becomes a resource, benefitting cultural intellectual and scientific cooperation for development and the culture of peace.

### ***The structure of the World Report***

Given the essential ambition of the World Report, which is to shed light on the ways in which cultural diversity can serve the actions of the international community, the first requirement is to agree on what cultural diversity is, and what it is not. This is the aim of the report’s first two chapters.

This is, of course, an old problem, one with which UNESCO has grappled since its establishment in 1945. But in recent times globalization seems to have radically altered the stakes, lending greater urgency to certain conceptual changes long in gestation. It has become clear that cultural diversity should be defined as the capacity to maintain the dynamic of change in all of us, whether individuals or groups. This dynamic is today inseparable from the search for pathways to an authentic intercultural dialogue. In this regard, it is important to analyze the causes (stereotypes, misunderstandings, identity-based tensions) that make intercultural dialogue a complex task. It is also necessary to explore the potential benefits of novel approaches, paying particular attention to new actors (women, young people) and the creation of new networks at all levels.

Part II of the report examines four key areas — languages, education, communication and cultural content, and creativity and the marketplace — with respect to the future of cultural diversity. In each of these areas, cultural diversity can be promoted and nurtured, for its own sake and for the benefit of the corresponding sectoral policies. Of course, virtually all activities can have an impact on cultural diversity, and vice versa. However, the fields in question are particularly relevant in the sense that cultural diversity both depends on and significantly influences their evolution.

Languages doubtless constitute the most immediate manifestation of cultural diversity. Today they are facing new challenges and steps must be taken both to revitalize endangered languages and promote receptiveness to others through a command of several languages — mother tongue, national language and an international language — and through the development of translation capacity.

*These considerations argue in favour of a new approach to cultural diversity — one that takes account of its dynamic nature and the challenges of identity associated with the permanence of cultural change*



In the field of education, we must seek to strike a balance between the requirements of education for all and the integration of cultural diversity in educational strategies through the diversification of educational contents and methods, and a new emphasis on the development of intercultural competencies conducive to dialogue. More generally, there is a need to promote practices involving out-of-school learning and value transmission, notably in the informal sector and through the arts, as developed by societies worldwide.

Concerning communication and cultural content, the focus is on the importance of overcoming certain obstacles that, by hampering the free circulation of ideas by word and image, can impair our responses to cultural diversity. Persistent stereotypes and major disparities in the capacity to produce cultural contents are a particular concern and call for greater efforts to promote media literacy and information skills, particularly through the information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Finally, we shall highlight the continuum that exists between artistic creativity and social creativity, ranging from cultural creation (including the arts) through commercialized sectors such as handicrafts and tourism, to the broader impacts of culture on business and the economy. In a globalized world, cultural diversity assumes new importance as a potentially significant factor in economic growth strategies.

The report's last two chapters (Part III) attempt to analyze how cultural diversity can help to renew the international community's approaches to a series of problems that have existed since the founding of the United Nations: development on the one hand, and peace-building on the other, in particular the promotion of universally recognized human rights.

It is well known that effective development policies must take account of the different cultural settings in which they are to be deployed. Cultural diversity can be instrumental in the empowerment of communities, populations and groups. It can be the linchpin of innovative strategies for protecting the environment and combating poverty and inequality.

Furthermore, to the extent that we are successful in encouraging an approach to cultural diversity based on the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the

development of unity in diversity, diversity can no longer be seen as being at odds with or opposed to the universally shared principles on which our common humanity is based. Cultural diversity accordingly becomes a key instrument for the effective exercise of universal human rights and for the renewal of strategies aimed at strengthening social cohesion through the development of new and more participatory forms of governance.

In each of the chapters, boxes containing examples and case studies — including views that UNESCO does not necessarily endorse — serve to illustrate different facets of the arguments presented. Most serve to promote 'good practices' and may prove useful to decision-makers confronted by similar challenges. At the end of each chapter, an 'In focus' section provides more detailed information on a potentially valuable topic, tool or reference in the field in question.

The eight chapters of the World Report are followed by a 'General Conclusion and Recommendations', and by a 'Statistical Annex', produced in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). The annex is divided into two parts: the first consists of a methodological chapter, which explores some of the many challenges inherent in the measurement of cultural domains and introduces the 2009 UIS Framework of Cultural Statistics; the second part presents 19 statistical tables, illustrating current coverage across a wide range of topics and more than 200 countries and territories.



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 South Pacific man

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*Women practising a traditional dance in Shanghai, China*



## PART I.

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY: WHAT IS AT STAKE?

The diversity of human cultures — the wealth of languages, ideas, beliefs, kinship systems, customs, tools, artistic works, rituals and other expressions they collectively embody — admits of many explanations and interpretations. These range from philosophical considerations, through an emphasis on cultures as emergent systems or in terms of intercultural contacts, to approaches that highlight the complex interactions between cultures and the human habitat. A current consensus regards cultures as systems that continually evolve through internal processes and in contact with the environment and other cultures. What is certain is that no society has ever been frozen in its history, even if some cultures have been viewed as 'timeless' from the perspective of others characterized by rapid change.

Cultural diversity, beyond the mere fact of its existence, has aesthetic, moral and instrumental value as the expression of human creativity, the embodiment of human strivings and the sum of humanity's collective experience. In the contemporary world — characterized as it is by space-time compression linked to the speed of new communication and transportation technologies, and by the growing complexity of social interactions and the increasing overlap of individual and collective identities — cultural diversity has become a key concern, amid accelerating globalization processes, as a resource to be preserved and as a lever for sustainable development.

In the context of the threats to cultural diversity, the international community has adopted a panoply of binding and non-binding instruments covering a wide range of cultural forms, including monuments and natural sites, tangible and intangible heritage, cultural expressions, and intellectual and artistic heritage. These instruments are dedicated to preserving and promoting such testimonies to human creativity as expressions of the common heritage of humankind. Part I of this report reviews some of these safeguarding mechanisms, with reference to the most recent developments. However, its main concern is with the wider phenomenon and multiple aspects of cultural diversity and with the related issue of intercultural dialogue. Indeed, cultural diversity and dialogue are mutually reinforcing, such that the maintenance of cultural diversity is intimately linked to the ability to establish dialogue and the ultimate challenge of cultural diversity is that of intercultural dialogue.

### CHAPTER 1 **Cultural diversity**

Chapter 1 analyzes the nature and manifestations of cultural diversity in relation to globalization, considers the relationship between national, cultural, religious and multiple identities, and summarizes normative and other measures adopted at regional and international levels to preserve and promote the many facets of cultural diversity.



### CHAPTER 2 **Intercultural dialogue**

Chapter 2 examines the interrelationship between cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and identifies stereotypes and stigmatization as major obstacles to intercultural understanding. It stresses the link between the diversity existing *between* individuals and groups and present *within* each individual and group, and indicates new pathways for dialogue in a multicultural world.







*Two men on a bicycle  
near Arusha, Tanzania*

# Cultural diversity

Globalization is not a wholly new phenomenon. Empires throughout history have sought to extend their dominion and influence beyond their immediate horizons. European colonialism reflected a similar imperialist impulse, inaugurating political, social, economic and cultural imbalances that have persisted into the new millennium. Yet contemporary globalization is of a different order to such historical anticipations. Recent decades have witnessed an unprecedented enmeshment of national economies and cultural expressions, giving rise to new challenges and opportunities. Communication networks have shrunk or abolished distance, to the benefit of some and the exclusion of others. Travel has never been so rapid and convenient, while remaining beyond the reach of many. In a world in which the possibilities of intercultural contact have multiplied, linguistic diversity and many other forms of cultural expression are in decline. How then is globalization to be viewed in terms of its impacts on cultural diversity?

Globalization is often conceived as potentially antithetical to cultural diversity, in the sense of leading to the homogenization of cultural models, values, aspirations and lifestyles, to the standardization of tastes, the impoverishment of creativity, uniformity of cultural expressions and so forth. The reality, however, is more complex. While it is true that globalization induces forms of homogenization and standardization, it cannot be regarded as inimical to human creativity, which continues to engender new forms of diversity, constituting a perennial challenge to featureless uniformity.



*Opera dei Pupi, Sicilian  
Puppet Theatre, Italy*



# Cultural Diversity

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A billboard advertising a mobile telephone operator in Nigeria

## 1.1 Cultural diversity in a globalizing world

Globalization is often seen as a *unidirectional* and *unidimensional* process, driven by a Western-dominated global market economy and tending to standardize, streamline and transnationalize in ways inimical to cultural diversity. The focus is on the threat posed to local cultural products and practices by globalized consumer goods and services — on how television and video productions are tending to eclipse traditional forms of entertainment, how pop and rock music are drowning out indigenous music, or how convenience food is blunting the appetite for local cuisine. Some forms of cultural diversity are clearly more vulnerable than others. Vernacular languages are recognized as being particularly at risk, notably from the continuing expansion of English but also from the advance of vehicular languages such as Arabic, Hindi, Spanish and Swahili (see chapter 3). This process tends to be exponential — as illustrated by the emphasis placed by many parents on schooling their children in vehicular languages at the expense of mastery of their mother tongue.

### **A multidirectional and multidimensional process**

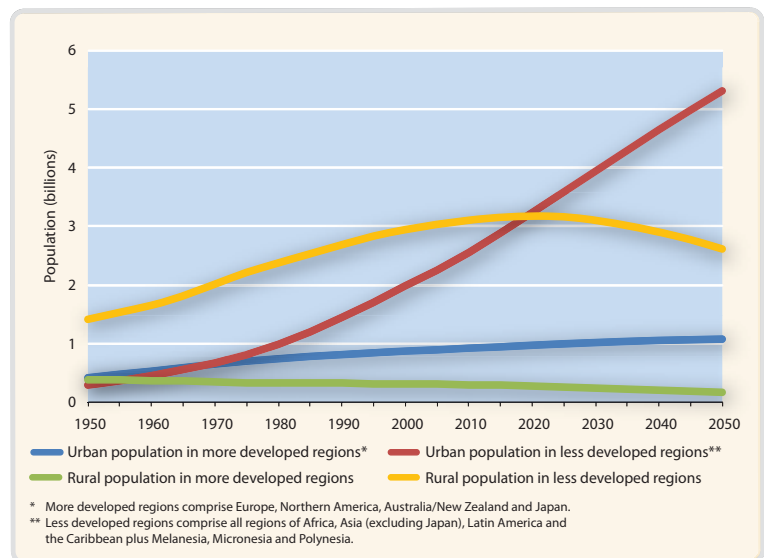
Through the media, globalization conveys an often seductive image of modernity and provides a template for collective ambitions: salaried employment, the nuclear family, personalized transport, pre-packaged leisure, conspicuous consumption. Most local communities worldwide have been exposed to some extent to the images and consumer practices typical of this Western paradigm, which has now impacted on almost all countries, irrespective of culture, religion, social system and political regime (Nyamjoh and Warnier, 2007). The adoption of many of its facets is closely linked to rapidly expanding urban living, which now involves some 50 percent of the world's population (see Figure 1.1). Cultural erosion has accordingly become an issue of increasing concern since numerous modes of life are being lost and many cultural forms and expressions are disappearing. There is a widespread sense that globalization is leading to pervasive cultural homogenization, not to say hegemonization by stealth (see Barber, 1996; Tardif and Farchy, 2006).

There can be no doubt that the development of transnational markets, linked to the rise of consumerism promoted by skilful advertising, is impacting

significantly on local cultures, which are finding it difficult to compete in an increasingly global marketplace. In this context, the tendency of enterprises to delocalize to the developing world as part of the liberalization of world trade is creating new consumer patterns in which the juxtaposition of contrasting lifestyles can serve to accelerate cultural change that may be neither welcome nor desirable. When, for example, a multinational corporation decides to transfer its production to a country in the South because of its lower labour costs, the products of Western consumer society begin to circulate domestically, sometimes to the detriment of local cultural models. In these circumstances, local cultures that find it difficult to compete in the global marketplace — but whose value is incommensurable with any market valuation — tend to be the losers, along with the diversity of the cultural manifestations they embody.

This said, the association of globalization with standardization and commodification is often overstated. The assertion that 'whatever [the] market touches turns into a consumer commodity; including the things that

**Figure 1.1 Urban and rural population growth**



Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unup>



try to escape its grip' (Bauman, 2005) fails to take account of the complexities inherent in the integration of cultural borrowings. Movements between geo-cultural areas invariably involve translation, mutation and adaptation on the part of the receiving culture, and cultural transfer does not usually take place unilaterally (Tomlinson, 1991; Lull, 2000). Globalized media, for instance, are increasingly being appropriated by marginalized and previously voiceless groups in order to advance their social, economic and political claims (see chapter 5). Furthermore, many areas of everyday cultural experience prove beyond the reach of the globalized market, such as our deeply rooted sense of national or ethnic identities, our religious or spiritual ties, our community interests, activities and attachments, not to mention our environments and social relationships. Most importantly, cultural commerce is to an ever greater extent a two-way process that takes place in an increasingly complex and interactive international context.

For all these reasons, globalization is best understood as a *multidirectional* and *multidimensional* process, evolving simultaneously within the economic, social, political, technological and cultural spheres. It is a complex and rapidly developing network of connections and interdependencies that operate within and between these spheres and exert increasing influence on material, social, economic and cultural life in today's world. Globalization can be described in terms of the increasing 'flows' of virtually everything that characterizes contemporary life: capital, commodities, knowledge, information, ideas, people, beliefs and so on. These flows — transiting essentially through the media, communication networks and commerce — consist of an ever-increasing volume of cultural goods, services and communications, including language and educational content. While this cultural traffic has tended to move along a mainly North-South axis, the rise of powerful new economies (in particular, the BRICs, i.e. Brazil, Russia, India and China) is diversifying or reversing the direction of these flows (see chapter 6).

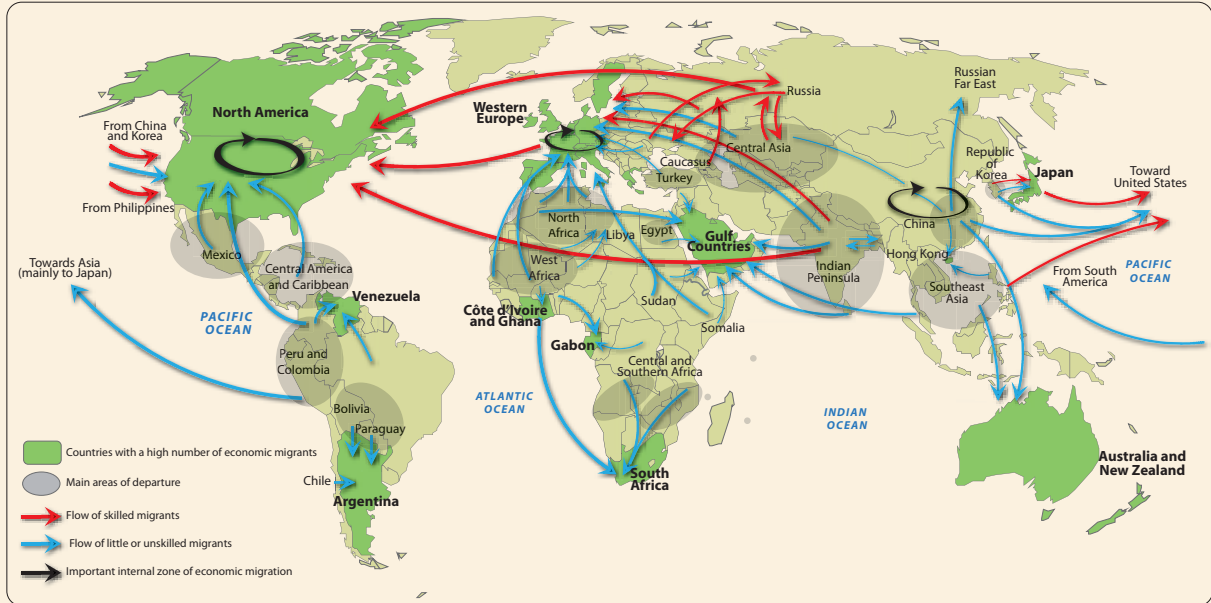
One of the most far-reaching effects of globalization is a weakening of the usual connection between a cultural event and its geographical location as a result of the dematerialization or deterritorialization processes facilitated by information and communication

technologies (Tomlinson, 2007). Indeed, globalization transports distant events, influences and experiences into our immediate vicinity, notably through visual and audio media. This weakening of the traditional ties between cultural experience and geographical location brings new influences and experiences into people's everyday lives. Digital cultures, for example, are having a considerable impact on cultural identities, especially among young people. In this way, an attitude of *cosmopolitanism* is developing, especially in the world's megalopolises (Sassen, 2001; Appiah, 2006). In some cases, this attenuation of ties to place may be experienced as a source of opportunity; in other cases, as a source of anxiety, loss of certainty and marginalization, leading on occasion to identity backlashes (see chapter 2). Still, as our identities are inextricably bound to the environments in which we grew up and those in which we live, the effect does not generally amount to a radical break with our cultural background or to cultural homogenization.

International migration has become a significant factor in intercultural dynamics (see Box 1.1). In countries of emigration, the drain on human resources — tending among other things to skew the relationship between the sexes and generations — inevitably entails some weakening of the socio-cultural fabric. In the receiving countries, migrants face the challenge of reconciling a traditional system of values, cultural norms and social codes with the often very different customs of the host countries. Among the possible responses to this challenge, most immigrants avoid the extremes of complete assimilation or outright rejection in favour of a partial adaptation to their new cultural environment while preserving their ties with their cultures of origin, notably through family connections or the media. The influx of sizeable numbers of migrant workers and the development of de facto multicultural communities prompts a complex range of responses, mirroring to some degree those of the immigrant population itself. The outcome of the implicit negotiations between these communities is usually some measure of pluralism, ranging from institutional recognition to tolerance of difference. In these circumstances, conviviality may put down roots if it is not thwarted by ideologies of exclusion. These roots may in turn nurture new cultural expressions, since diversity is always potentially in the making.

### Box 1.1 The migration factor

#### Major labour migration movements



Source: Simon 1995; UNESCO 1998; CNRS-Université de Poitiers, Migrinter; Agence France Presse, Reuters and Philippe Rekacewicz (*Le Monde Diplomatique*). Updated in December 2005.

Migrations are as old as human history, but took on new forms from the 1600s with the emergence of European mercantile interests and the conquest of the 'New World'. Slaves and indentured workers were shipped between continents to work plantations, mines and construction projects in the Americas, Asia and Africa. Industrialization in Western Europe and North America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw new movements of settlers to build railways, ports and cities, and work in new factories. Between 1860 and 1920, some 30 million people sailed to the United States.

However, globalization has brought about a dramatic increase in the volume and scope of international migration. In 2005, the world stock of migrants was estimated at 190 million people (see Table 3 in Annex). This mobility is transforming societies and cultures, creating diasporas and developing transnational identities — the feeling of belonging to two or more societies at once. Community links are forming between peoples across the globe. Migrant social networks span

the globe, thus facilitating further migration. The cities of North America, Europe and Oceania have become multicultural, while new immigration areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America are rapidly following the same path. Formerly homogenous populations now experience a bewildering diversity of languages, religions and cultural practices.

Many people do not move by choice: in 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) counted about 14.3 million of refugees throughout the world. The vast majority move in search of work and a better life. However, climate change is increasingly recognized as a factor that will force people to migrate (see chapter 7). Most of the world's migrants and refugees begin their journey as internal rural-urban migrants in developing countries, before moving on to other places where opportunities seem better.

A key development in recent years has been the feminization of migration. About 1.5 million Asian women, for example, worked abroad by

the end of the 1990s, most in jobs regarded as 'typically female': domestic workers, entertainers (often a euphemism for prostitution), restaurant and hotel staff, assembly-line workers in clothing and electronics. Domestic service may lead to isolation and vulnerability for young women migrants, who often have little protection against the demands of their employers. In 1995, the execution of Flor Contemplación, a Filipina maid in Singapore who was convicted of murder, made world headlines and highlighted the vulnerability of Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs).

However, few migrant-sending countries would be willing to hobble what has become an important commodity. Estimates of migrant workers' remittances have been placed at more than US\$225 billion in 2004 (making labour second only to oil in global trade), and US\$318 billion in 2007, of which US\$240 billion went to developing countries. However, 'brain drain' is another consequence of migration, especially in recent years with the adoption by some receiving countries of

**Box 1.1 The migration factor**

new immigration policies looking for highly qualified migrants to meet the needs of their labour markets (see also chapter 8 and map 8.1).

While economic globalization has made labour more mobile, it has also made the available work more temporary. The era of permanent settlement that characterized post-war migrations from Europe is over. Labour markets in many countries now look for workers, both skilled and unskilled, to occupy specific jobs with a fixed duration rather than invite them to participate in the economy and infrastructure of a country. This is partly due to the difficulties migrant-receiving countries have in coping with permanent settlement by workers or refugees. The unplanned shift from temporary sojourn

to new ethnic diversity places in question traditional ideas about culture and identity. Thus, developed countries with democratic traditions founded on individual freedoms are redefining who can and cannot belong.

Citizenship is now a prized possession as it means access not just to the economy but to broader social institutions that determine rights and freedoms. Post-colonial states, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Republic of Korea, find it difficult to reconcile immigration and growing cultural diversity with the formation of their own national identity. Deportation campaigns, stricter border controls and measures to prevent permanent settlement are increasingly the

norm. However, closing borders usually only makes a legal movement illegal. Trafficking of migrants has become a lucrative trade, with private agencies providing everything from information and travel assistance to forged documentation and direct smuggling of people across borders. The rapid internationalization of economics and culture virtually guarantees that migration will continue to grow in the years ahead. The pressure for long-term solutions remains. Encouraging the mobility of labour to fit the needs of a globalized world is one thing. Managing immigration to admit only those who are 'economically desirable' is something else altogether.

Source: UNESCO, 1998 updated in 2009.

International tourism is another phenomenon with a potentially significant impact on cultural diversity. Its growth in recent decades is suggested by comparing the number of international tourists in 1950, estimated at 25.3 million, with the 800 million recorded tourists in 2005 (see Statistical Annex, Table 17) and the World Tourism Organization's forecast of a global tourist flow of almost 1 billion in 2010. A significant trend has been the increase in tourism to the developing world, reflected in the average annual growth in tourist arrivals in the Middle East (9 percent), East Africa and the Pacific (7 percent) and Africa (5 percent) (Teller and Sharpley, 2008). The *qualitative* — as distinct from the *quantitative* — impact of this increase in the volume of intercultural contacts is obviously difficult to gauge. On the one hand, international tourism is to some extent self-contained and can generate new sources of income for local populations within the tourism industry and positively contribute to greater knowledge and understanding of different cultural environments and practices. On the other hand, the sheer volume of exchanges, even if in large part functional and transitory, carries with it with the risk of culturally 'freezing' local populations as objects of tourism. Such cultural fixity further marginalizes these populations 'since it is their marginality that they exhibit and sell for profit' (Azarya, 2004). While the immediate prospects for tourism growth remain unpredictable, it seems clear that intercultural contacts, including

substantive exchanges, will continue to grow as a result of increased — and increasingly multidirectional — tourist flows, both real and virtual.

**Both positive and negative impacts**

Within a broader international context, the globalization of international exchanges is leading to the integration of a diversity of multicultural services and expressions in many countries. An obvious example is the expanding range of foreign restaurants found throughout the industrialized world, catering for immigrant and local populations alike. Reproduced in a wide variety of contexts, notably in the worlds of fashion and entertainment, this juxtaposition of cultural expressions and experiences is leading to a greater interaction and merging of cultural forms. Such examples, reflecting a more general intensification of transnational flows, are consistent with a trend towards multiple cultural affiliations and a 'complexification' of cultural identities. These new and growing intercultural phenomena reflect the dynamic character of cultural diversity, which cannot be assimilated into fixed repertoires of cultural manifestations and is constantly assuming new forms within evolving cultural settings.


Yet such positive outcomes should not lead us to underestimate the negative impacts of globalizing trends on the diversity of cultural expressions and on

those for whom these expressions are intrinsic to their ways of life and very being (see Box 1.2). What is at stake for them is existential loss, not simply the disappearance of manifestations of human diversity. UNESCO's action in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage has highlighted some of the threats to traditional cultural expressions posed by what many see as the juggernaut of globalization. The supporters of the Carnaval de Oruro in Bolivia, for example, complain of the 'ill-conceived globalization trends that impose common rules and behaviour, disregarding cultural particularities' and the 'neoliberal tendency to analyze human activities from a cost-benefit perspective, without considering the magical and spiritual aspects of the Carnaval'. For the epic storytellers of Kyrgyzstan, it is the rise of the modern entertainment market that explains why the younger generations in their country are ceasing to identify with ancient cultural performances. These clashes between 'tradition' and 'modernity' are ubiquitous and problematic in terms of how they are to be perceived and addressed.

Over the last decade, a wide range of threats to traditional cultural expressions have been brought to the attention of UNESCO as the United Nations agency mainly responsible for protection of the world's cultural heritage in its tangible and intangible expressions (Amescua, 2007). They include:

- The development of sedentary lifestyles, reflected in increasing urbanization: this is the case, for example, with the indigenous Záparas people in Ecuador and Peru. In Morocco, the strong urbanizing tendencies in the Sahara have brought about a progressive disappearance of the nomadic lifestyle, together with whole segments of cultural life, such as traditional handicrafts and poetry.
- Religious intolerance: the defenders of Maya Achi identity in Guatemala stress the grave harm that can be done to their culture by the influence of fundamentalist Christian sects that view their traditional customs as pagan — if not 'diabolic' — activities to be eliminated.



 The Samba de Roda of Recôncavo of Bahia, Brazil

### Box 1.2 Globalization and indigenous populations

Among the negative impacts of globalization on indigenous populations, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), has highlighted the following:

- Violation of rights to ancestral lands, territories and resources, including forced eviction and displacement of indigenous peoples by governments or by the private sector; competing claims and increased conflicts over lands, territories and resources; erosion and destruction of indigenous subsistence economic systems and other traditional livelihoods, such as pastoralism, trapping, hunting and gathering, in favour of cash-crop mono-production for the global market (flowers, agro-fuels, paper and pulp, etc.); massive extraction of natural resources in indigenous territories without prior informed consent of indigenous peoples, leading to environmental devastation, expropriation of indigenous peoples' land and water, increased conflicts, over exploitation of forests, marine and mineral resources; militarization of indigenous territories; increased out-migration to urban areas and overseas, including increased numbers of indigenous women becoming domestic helpers, prostitutes or victims of trafficking.
- Weakened enforcement by states and multilateral institutions of laws, policies and international instruments that promote indigenous peoples' rights and autonomous development, resulting in the displacement of populations, commercialization of their cultural artefacts and appropriation of traditional knowledge.
- Reduced access to education, health and other social services for indigenous peoples, leading to deteriorating health conditions, rising illiteracy rates and degeneration of quality of life:
- Increased use of forests and fertile agriculture lands for cash crops and livestock (agriculture, plantation crops and cattle breeding) and poorer land for food crops, thereby reducing food production and increasing food insecurity.
- Cultural homogenization through the influence of globalized multimedia, universalization of mainstream development paradigms, disappearance of indigenous languages.
- Undermining of indigenous governance and political systems.
- Commercialization of culture through the promotion of tourism.

Source: Tauli-Corpuz, 2007.



- Lack of respect for forms of knowledge transmission in certain traditional societies: thus, in Nigeria, the Isa see the introduction of free primary education in the west of the country, dating from 1955, as the reason for a growing lack of interest among younger generations in their culture, particularly since Christian and Islamic doctrines are taught in school to the exclusion of traditional African religions. In Vanuatu, the time young children spend at school and in school activities are said to have kept them from learning the traditional practice of sand drawing, which is in decline.
- The world culture relayed by the media: in India, defenders of the art of Kutiyattam say that they are unable to compete with the mass media, especially radio and television programmes. This complaint is echoed in China by the practitioners of the Guqin, a seven-string musical instrument related to the zither.
- Failure to respect the sacred or devotional character of certain ceremonies: this is emphasized by the defenders of the Mask Dance of the Drums from Drametse, who deplore the growing lack of interest among the young generation in the deep spirituality of these practices.
- The ‘museification’ of practices that were previously forms of collective leisure serving to preserve and strengthen social bonds, as in the case of the Opera dei Puppini in Sicily (Italy).
- The replacement of ancient forms of cultural expression by new communication technologies: thus portable telephones and e-mails in Jamaica have rendered virtually obsolete the traditional means of communication in the form of the drum and abeng (conch shell), undermining the ancient musical traditions.
- The impact of global distribution networks on local cinema productions: one example among many is French-speaking African cinema, which, following a splendid decade in the 1980s, has experienced a period of crisis mainly attributable to a decline in local demand; local viewers are influenced by foreign television and film as a result of the proliferation of parabolic antennae and low-cost access to recent films through DVDs.

To meet these threats to cultural diversity — to its expressions in word, sound, image, print and artistic works and activities — the international community

### Box 1.3 Digital cultures and new diversity

The rise of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the context of globalization has broadened the scope of possible interactions and experiments with personal identity, particularly among young people:

A July 2006 survey found that 100 million video clips are viewed daily on YouTube — a video-sharing website developed in February 2005 and bought by Google in November 2006 — with an additional 65,000 new videos uploaded every 24 hours. The website averages nearly 20 million visitors per month, according to Nielsen/NetRatings, of which 44 percent are female, 56 percent male, and the 12- to 17-year-old age group is dominant. In July 2008, 258 million users were reported, including almost 100 million in the United States alone.

Facebook was launched in February 2004, and as of July 2009 could claim 250 million users, of whom over 120 million log on at least once a day. The largest user group appears to be Euro-Americans; the fastest growing age-group consists of those 35 years old and above.

Founded in August 2003, MySpace had 230 million accounts as of April 2008. Second Life (SL) is an Internet-based virtual world — developed by Linden Lab and launched in 2003 (but not popularized by the media until late 2006) — that offers a ‘virtual’ environment in which people can interact, work, play and learn.

In these and many other ways, the Internet offers new possibilities to experiment with personal identity in an entirely anonymous, disembodied and synchronous way (chat,

blogging, etc.). By enabling virtual selves to be superimposed on real selves, the Internet opens up a new realm of self-expression. According to some experts, it thereby functions as an indicator of the hidden forces and trends at work in the societies in which it operates.

The access or exposure to a virtually infinite range of content on the web (including hoaxes, rumours and false information) may provoke unexpected encounters and cultural hybridization. However, some maintain that the overload of information on the Internet, and the massive use of filters and search engines, encourages Internet users to limit their contacts to peers with similar tastes, leading to self-enclosure and the rejection of differences (Sunstein, 2004).

Source: Caldwell, 2007; statistics updated using data from Social Media Statistics.

adopted, in 2003, the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* and, in 2005, the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

It would be a mistake, however, to see the effects of globalization on cultural diversity as wholly negative, if only because there is nothing inevitable about the general trend towards cultural homogenization. As Claude Lévi-Strauss (2007) noted in a recent communication to UNESCO: 'Time does not always move in the same direction. Periods of pervasive uniformity can be followed by unexpected reversals. This has happened in the past, and there are grounds for hoping that at the heart of the globalization process itself new forms of diversity whose nature we do not suspect may be in gestation'. The rapid growth of digital cultures, for example, has given rise to new forms of cultural diversity, particularly among the young. Computer-mediated interactions through Internet sites, such as YouTube, Teen Second Life, FaceBook or MySpace, are means whereby people today 'live' increasingly in more than one reality. The innumerable possible combinations of the new media for cultural expressions and cultural practices creates a whole host of 'do-it-yourself cultures', which open the way to a broad range of new forms of cultural diversity.

Rather than attempting to evaluate the overall effect of globalization, to draw up a balance sheet of the forms of diversity that are disappearing compared with those coming into existence, it is more important to focus on the dynamic character of cultural diversity and to devise approaches to better managing the impact of cultural change on our individual and collective identities. Such efforts must also be complemented by the awareness that we cannot hope to preserve everything that is threatened with disappearance. As Claude Lévi-Strauss has observed, it is 'diversity itself which must be saved, not the outward and visible form in which each period has clothed that diversity'. It is important, then, to envisage new strategies for revitalizing cultural expressions and practices while helping vulnerable populations to acquire the tools necessary to 'manage' cultural change more effectively. A dynamic conception of this kind leads us to question a number of inoperative dichotomies and received categories, such as the opposition between tradition and modernity. Every living tradition is susceptible to continual reinvention, which makes it relevant to the present. Tradition is no more reducible to the past than is modernity to the present or future. For tradition, like memory or culture, is inscribed within a process of becoming. Cultural diversity, like cultural identity, is about innovation, creativity and receptiveness to new cultural forms and relationships.

*Cultural diversity, like cultural identity, is about innovation, creativity and receptiveness to new cultural forms and relationships*

## 1.2 National, religious, cultural and multiple identities

The contemporary world is marked by strong attachments to national, religious, ethnic, linguistic, social, cultural and/or even 'brand' or consumer-based identities. Such identities have become the refuge for many individuals and groups who see globalization and cultural change as a threat to their ways of life and standards of living. In this context, we witness the culturization of political claims, which run counter to the essentially dynamic and multifaceted nature of identities.

### ***A resurgence of the question of identities***

Culture and religion can be seen to be intimately linked in this often conflictual affirmation of separate identities. Religions have a collective dimension involving religious authorities and sometimes embodying religious dogma that is non-negotiable. Allied to political activism, religious affiliations can be a powerful marker of identity and a potential source of conflict. While in democratic

societies religious views can play an active role in shaping public policy on health, education and social services, religions run the risk of being instrumentalized for other purposes, for example, as vehicles for the promotion of ideological, political and/or economic agendas (Dallmayr, 2007). In such cases, religious differences, while not inherently incompatible, can potentially lead to violent clashes between religious groups (as recently played out, for example, between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, or Hindus and Muslims in India) or between secularism and religious belief and practice (such as in Malaysia and Australia, but also in Europe), between those who wish to confine religious identification to the 'private sphere', apart from the public and civic spheres, and those who see secularism as another committed value-standpoint with its own (declared or undeclared) presuppositions, biases and prejudices.



Woman smoking, Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2006

*Religion is but one factor among others constitutive of individual and collective identities, to which we may add race, gender, and language*

Generally speaking, this resurgence of religion has brought the issue of identities back into the civic and public arenas, as countries across the globe vigorously debate the question of abortion (especially in countries with a strong Catholic tradition), of the Islamic scarf (in France and the United States), or the legality of conversion from Islam to another religion (in Malaysia). Religion, however, is but one factor among others constitutive of individual and collective identities, to which we may add race, gender, and language, as noted by Bahjat Rizk (2009), who makes a parallel with the UNESCO Constitution that emphasizes that no distinction shall be made along the lines of race, sex, language and religion.

Until quite recently cultural diversity has been equated with the diversity of national cultures. Even within UNESCO's Constitution (1945), reference to cultural diversity appears in a domestic jurisdiction clause intended to guarantee respect for national sovereignty, with a view to 'preserving the independence, integrity and fruitful diversity of cultures and educational systems of [Member States]' (Art. 1, para. 3). Throughout the period of decolonization and the rise to independence of new nations, *culturalism* referred to a conception of cultural identities that served to legitimate the emergence of new national pathways. It may be that the resurgence of the religious factor is directly linked to the retreat of the nation as the source of cultural identity.

#### ***From monolithic to multiple identities***

National identities are not monoliths: they are constructions, reflecting a multitude of collective experiences, memories and references, and encompassing differences of gender, class, race and religion. They evolve constantly, along a path prescribed by a sometimes mythical past towards a future dependent on adaptive change (see Box 1.4). In a globalizing world, which tends to blur national boundaries and re-energize cultural identities, it makes less and less sense to equate cultural identities with national identities.

This said, national identity plays a central role in providing a focus for our sense of commonality. The nation is a key principle of identification, operating through a shared set of collective memories, as narrated through popular culture, school curricula, the media and so forth (Benedict, 1948; Geertz, 1973). Ideas about the continuity of nations

are often conveyed through a cultural perspective that emphasizes traditions and cultures as a set of fixed and repetitive practices, as a means of forging identity and combating the indeterminacy of changing events (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1984). Like any work of memory, the concept of nation is selective and, in the case of official national identity, often reflects the interests of dominant elites. National identity can also be constructed around the myth of ethnic superiority, as the history of human conflict all too often and tragically attests.

Yet while national symbols and traditions tend to persist, the realities they represent do not stand still. For cultures are ever-changing and self-transforming in a process that is not linear. Culture is like a river, flowing 'through vast areas giving life to people. It changes all the time, although we go on referring to it as if it were the same river' (Fasheh, 2007). It has been suggested that we need to understand culture not as a substantive but as a verb: 'The most important issue is to avoid reification, to move along the grammatical continuum from substantives towards verbs. The "problem" with reification is that it tends to consolidate what is, to mask what is becoming' (Alexander, 2007). Some have even claimed that cultural identity is an 'illusion' (Bayart, 1997). Others have said that culture should be conceived less in terms of a past inheritance than in terms of a future project (Appadurai, 2004). In short, cultural identity — like culture — should be regarded as a process and envisaged in terms of creative growth.

In a world made more complex by the unprecedented reach, intensity and immediacy of human interchanges, national identities no longer represent the sole dimension of cultural identity. Reflecting a reality defined and constructed in response to projects of a political nature, the foundation of national identity is typically overlaid with a multiplicity of other affiliations. We increasingly define ourselves, as individuals and societies, in terms of *multiple identities*. The point is well made by Amartya Sen (2006a) when he says:

*The very odd presumption that people of the world can be uniquely categorized by single and overarching systems of partitioning does not work anymore. [...] In everyday life, human beings do not belong only to one group. [...] In our normal lives, we see ourselves as members of a variety of*

*groups—we belong to all of them. The same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theater lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a jazz musician [. . .]. None of them can be taken to be the person's only identity or singular membership category.*

This plasticity of cultural identities mirrors the growing complexity of the globalized flows of people, goods and information and the increasing interdependence of economic systems and frames of governance.

Each individual exposed to this multiplicity of potential identities lives or manages it differently. Some affirm their right to dispense with old identities and choose new ones as a distinct phase in a process of identity construction. Others — and this is particularly true

*Each individual exposed to this multiplicity of potential identities lives or manages it differently*

#### Box 1.4 Reconstructing Central Asian identities in the post-Soviet era

The Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), which gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, all face the same dilemma: how to legitimize the borders of a geo-political entity inherited from the recent Soviet past while the only available and functioning identity reference points are those dating from the medieval period? The shifts in identity that have emerged from the redefinition of the national identities of these young republics continue to be an uncommon phenomenon with serious political consequences.

According to many specialists, the five new republics of Central Asia were the least prepared for political independence when the Soviet Union was suddenly dissolved in 1991. This imposed freedom forced the peoples of Central Asia to reflect on their origins, who they are and what they wish to become. Owing to its history, Central Asia is a region of sharp contrasts, its nomadic northern areas (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) differing from those of the more sedentary south (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

This north-south opposition strongly influenced the way Islam spread and mingled with regional identities over the centuries of Islamization. While Uzbekistan was profoundly Islamized between the eighth and tenth centuries (the first mosque was built in Bukhara in 712), the nomadic peoples of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did not embrace Islam until about the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, this process occurred in a sporadic and uneven manner.

The rapid Islamization of the sedentary southern regions of Central Asia was propitious to the emergence of identities firmly rooted in the religion. By contrast, the gradual encounter of Islam and pagan and shamanistic beliefs in the northern nomadic regions paved the way for the emergence of the present-day Sufi communities whose identities continue to be nourished by pre-Islamic traditions. The Russian conquest and the settlement of many groups of Christian origin in northern Central Asia have contributed to further blurring the map of identities in the region, where, comparatively speaking, identity reference points remain considerably less religious.

The region's religious identities were profoundly influenced by the atheistic policies of the Soviet Union as well as by the creation of national identities to the detriment of religious identities. All 'citizens' found themselves endowed with a 'nationality' associated with an assumed ethnic belonging and superimposed on the borders of the State to which they were supposed to belong. Yet, even though the religious practice and cultural presence of Islam have suffered, Islam often remained the principal identification reference point. The de-Stalinization process and the 1960s and 1970s enabled the Central Asian Republics to 'relive', to a certain extent, their identities and to reclaim their historic Islamic heritage, which was used to reflect a shared and unifying heritage.

After independence, Islam became the requisite identity reference point on which the elites based their new legitimacy. At

the same time, Islam was strictly controlled and secularism explicitly affirmed in the constitutions of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

In an attempt to reconstruct national identities without calling into question the borders inherited from the Soviet Union, the region's medieval and Islamic past were re-evaluated and exploited as a new component of identity, thereby making it possible to overcome ethnic and group divisions.

In Uzbekistan, for example, Tamerlane was rehabilitated and then elevated to the status of hero symbolizing the new-found Uzbek conscience and identity. In Tajikistan, national history now relies on the idealization of the resistance of Persian culture to the unrelenting spread of Turkish influence in Central Asia.

The politicization of cultural reference has gone hand-and-hand with the elimination of numerous Russian words from the vocabularies of national languages. They have been replaced by words of Arabic — or in the case of Tajikistan — Persian origin. In the 1990s, there was a noteworthy renewed interest in Islam with an overall increase in religious practices even though the latter remain largely a personal matter limited to the private or family sphere.

Nonetheless, the traditional ethnic, group and regional divisions have been perpetuated, and they sometime surface as a threat to regional stability. The sense of ethnic identity is strengthened along with tribal and regional identity, particularly in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Source: UNESCO.



in the case of migrants confronted by a new cultural environment — can exist in contradictory or ambivalent modes (Bhabha, 1994). Still others, confronted by a context of cultural mixity, decide to live in it as if this state were a genuine choice involving the exercise of their cultural freedom, creating for themselves an original cultural profile by combining elements borrowed from a diversity of different cultural contexts (UNDP, 2004). It is

📞 Aboriginal elder uses mobile phone, central Australia



significant in this connection that a number of prominent contemporary novelists, including Salman Rushdie, Gabriel García Márquez, Milan Kundera and J. M. Coetzee, have been drawn to this topic of migrants confronted with new cultural environments and obliged to construct new cultural identities.

The notion of *hybridity* is widely used to designate this latter form of cultural mixing. The term ‘draws attention towards individuals or cultural forms that are reflexively — self-consciously — mixed, [comprising] syntheses of cultural forms or fragments of diverse origin’ (Eriksen, 2007). A more general, and less self-conscious, form of hybridity with deeper historical roots is the kind of continuous cultural intermingling that took place, for example, between migrants, colonizers and first nations, giving rise to new hybrid identities regarded as typical of Latin American cultures (Canclini, 1992). A distinction is often made between the concept of hybridity and that of creolization. The latter term has somewhat different connotations depending on language and locale, but generally refers to ‘the intermingling and mixing of two or several formerly discrete traditions and cultures’ (Eriksen, 2007). While the reference here is mainly to the distinctive mix of linguistic and cultural elements in the French Afro-Caribbean territories, ‘creolization’ has tended to be used more generally to describe various processes of cultural mixing involving the aggregation rather than the fusion of disparate elements. Many other examples of syncretic cultural forms show the phenomenon of mixing to be a constant feature of cultural diversification.

One of the effects of globalization has been a paradoxical loosening of the grip of modernity through a reconstitution of the relationship between individuals and their communities of allegiance, thereby inaugurating new conceptions of identity (Appadurai, 1996). In this context, individuals are called upon to act, respond and create in the process of negotiating a new sense of identity. While often reduced to a possession or an inheritance, identity is revealed through such examples as fluid, permeable and evolving. It is essentially an experience in the making. Individual and collective identities, while deriving from the past, are to some extent the creation of time and place, developing out of a complex articulation of social determinants and individual agency (Giddens, 1984; Long and Long, 1992). In this way, the blurring of frontiers and the

partial disenmeshment of the individual in the context of globalization have favoured the emergence of a *nomadic spirit*, which some regard as the new horizon of contemporary cultural experimentation (Clifford, 1997).

As information and communication technologies (ICTs) reach into the remotest corners of the planet, paving the way for a world of multiple cultural affiliations in which hybrid and multicultural identities become ever more

### 1.3 Regional and international initiatives on cultural diversity

In a world marked increasingly by the intermingling of cultures, efforts to safeguard the manifestations of cultural diversity assume particular importance for national governments, as well as for the international community as a whole. Political and economic interests, as well as concerns linked to heritage, inform a wide variety of initiatives — governmental and non-governmental — which converge at national, regional and international levels. From the standpoint of sustainable development, the tangible and intangible expressions of cultural heritage — as markers of cultural identity and tokens of cultural diversity — are the cornerstone in the construction of a more harmonious, polyphonic and pluralistic world.

While impossible to review here, myriad country-specific initiatives support cultural diversity, many of which are referred to throughout this report. It is equally difficult to do justice to the many programmes undertaken in a non-governmental context. Suffice it to say that all the projects, actions and activities pursued at the inter-governmental level rely considerably on the activities of a vast number of non-governmental bodies operating at all levels throughout the membership of the United Nations. A few of these organizations may be singled out here, however, for their close cooperation and significant contributions to the promotion of cultural diversity within the framework of the United Nations system: the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Music Council (IMC), the International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD) and MEDIACULT.

The following sections sketch in broad outline first the regional and then the international initiatives taken to protect and promote cultural diversity, including the various strategies adopted in support of regional

widespread, the challenge posed to the international community is to manage these far-reaching changes so as to safeguard the manifestations of cultural diversity while at the same time recognizing the opportunities offered by cultural diversity to further the ability to adapt to different social and political contexts and circumstances and to favour innovation and a cross-fertilization of cultural expressions and practices.

integration in the cultural field. In keeping with its mandate, UNESCO has played a leading role in the formulation, promotion and implementation of these international instruments — in fields as varied as cultural, physical and intangible heritage, cultural expressions, cultural exchanges and the illicit traffic in cultural goods and intellectual property — in an effort to safeguard and promote various facets of the complex reality encapsulated in the term ‘cultural diversity’. These different initiatives and agreements represent a collective response by the international community to the challenges inherent in the preservation of our creative diversity.

#### Regional initiatives

National projects and international standard-setting activities and related programmes are often reflected in regional action plans for the promotion of cultural diversity, contingent upon a broad convergence of views. Such plans correspond to the wish of many states for a greater pooling of resources and exchange of best practices and experiences at the regional level, or are framed in response to specifically regional problems, which can be properly addressed only at that level.

In Africa the *Charter for African Cultural Renaissance*, adopted in Khartoum in January 2006 by the Member States of the African Union, affirms that ‘African cultural diversity and unity are a factor of equilibrium, strength in African economic development, conflict resolution and reducing inequality and injustice to promote national integration’. It underlines in particular the urgent need ‘to edify educational systems which embody the African and universal values’, ‘to resolutely ensure the promotion of African languages’, and ‘to carry out a systematic inventory with a view to preserving and promoting tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in particular in

*The challenge posed to the international community is to safeguard the manifestations of cultural diversity while at the same time recognizing the opportunities offered by cultural diversity to further the ability to adapt to different social and political contexts and circumstances*

📍 A fantasia, during the Moussem of Tan Tan, a festival of nomad tribes, Morocco





Children with the sacred balafo instrument known as the Sosso-Bala, Guinea

the spheres of History, Traditions, Arts and Handicrafts, Knowledge and Know-how'. A growing awareness of Africa's exceptionally rich heritage — represented by the diversity of cultures, languages and historical trajectories of its different societies — is reflected in the resolve to preserve and manage that heritage. Thus, to prevent the resurgence of inter-ethnic conflicts linked to adverse economic conditions (such as the xenophobic riots in South Africa at the start of 2008) or to processes of political transition (as in Kenya at the end of 2007), the issue of reconciliation in post-conflict situations (as in Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda) has become a focus of attention. A similar concern with the challenges posed by cultural diversity for social governance is reflected in the activities of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), which, in addition to seeking to preserve the continent's linguistic diversity, proposes to transform that diversity into a principle of harmonious coexistence through the promotion of multilingualism.

In Latin America various declarations have been adopted in recent years at Ibero-American conferences of high-level cultural officials (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, May 2006), Ministers of Culture (Córdoba, Spain, June 2005) and Heads of State and Government (Salamanca, Spain, October 2005). The *Salamanca*

*Declaration* (UNESCO, 1994), in particular, prepared the ground for the drafting of an *Iberoamerican Cultural Charter* (OEI, 2006), 'placing priority [ . . . ] on cultural rights, the cultural and natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cultural industries and links between culture and development, education and training, innovation, the economy, employment, the environment, tourism, science, technology and communications media'. The growing awareness of the continent's cultural diversity has led not only to a rediscovery of the indigenous cultures threatened by large-scale deforestation and growing impoverishment, but also to reflection on the specificity of cultural identities born of the encounter between the Old and the New Worlds and on the need to ensure that cultural mixing and multiple identities, as part of the colonial legacy, do not lead to splits that are difficult to reconcile. Moreover, political recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru have led some younger members of traditional societies to reclaim an indigenous status bestowing rights — the reforms underway having in some cases made land redistribution and other social advantages dependent on mastery of an indigenous language.

In Southeast Asia the 2003 *Bali Concord II* (*Declaration of ASEAN Concord II*) reaffirmed that ASEAN 'is a concert of Southeast Asian nations, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies, committed to upholding cultural diversity and social harmony'. The 2005 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting endorsed the aim 'to increase the capabilities and competitiveness of Asian countries by maximizing on cultural diversity and abundant resources'. Mention should also be made of the Jodhpur Initiatives, a specific regional initiative for the development of creative industries, launched in February 2005. In Southeast Asia, the harmonious coexistence of extremely modern and highly traditional societies is not always easily achieved. A large gap separates the rural world, which is relatively shielded from the effects of globalization, from the large urban centres, which have undergone considerable modernization in recent decades (an example being the construction of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur). The scale of the rural exodus is creating potentially conflictual situations, exacerbated by mutual misunderstanding, mistrust and indifference.

In the case of the Arab States, the *Riyadh Declaration* of the League of Arab States (2007) expresses the determination to

*act diligently to protect the Arab identity, boost its components and bases, and strengthen belonging to it in the hearts and minds of children, adolescents and young men and women, since Arabism is not a racist or ethnic concept but rather a unified cultural identity, with the Arabic language as its means of expression and preservation of its heritage, and a common cultural framework based on spiritual, moral and humanistic values, enriched by diversity and plurality, by openness to other human cultures, and by corresponding to accelerating scientific and technological advances.*

Reflection on Arab identity and on ways to combat cultural isolationism (one of the essential dimensions of fundamentalism) is linked to questions concerning the relationship between the 'Arab world' and the 'West', particularly around the Mediterranean Basin. As underlined by recent events, the failure to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict in Palestine and the West Bank continues to fuel deep resentment, which contributes to problems involving issues of identity in the region. Another prominent issue is the so-called 'colonization of minds', which is prompting large numbers of young people to chance their luck in Europe or North America.

In Europe the European Commission's 2007 *Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World* states,

*The originality and success of the European Union is in its ability to respect Member States' varied and intertwined history, languages and cultures, while forging common understanding and rules which have guaranteed peace, stability, prosperity and solidarity — and with them, a huge richness of cultural heritage and creativity to which successive enlargements have added more and more.*

It specifies the role of the European Union's internal policies and programmes, with particular reference to 'facilitating mutual understanding, stimulating creativity, and contributing to the mutual enrichment of our cultures'. It notes in that connection the contribution

of a number of initiatives in the sphere of educational exchanges (Erasmus programme) and in the cinema and audiovisual sector (MEDIA programme), and reaffirms the objective of a 'European Agenda for Culture'.

The Council of Europe has also played an important role in recognizing the importance of cultural diversity between and within the European States. The December 2000 *Declaration on Cultural Diversity* recognizes that 'respect for cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society' and that 'cultural diversity has always been a dominant European characteristic and a fundamental political objective in the process of European construction'. It stresses that cultural diversity, 'expressed in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products [...] cannot be expressed without the conditions for free creative expression, and freedom of information existing in all forms of cultural exchange, notably with respect to audiovisual services'. It reaffirms the links between cultural diversity and sustainable development and invites the members of the Council of Europe to support and promote cultural and linguistic diversity, particularly through cultural, linguistic and audiovisual policies. Finally, a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, entitled *Living Together as Equals in Dignity*, was adopted in May 2008 within the framework of the Council of Europe.

A broad convergence of views on the safeguarding of cultural diversity is thus apparent at the regional level. A similar convergence is observable between the different regional approaches, despite the diversity of historical and political contexts and the variable impacts of globalization. These varied approaches testify to the common concern to identify ways of adequately addressing the wide-ranging challenges inherent in the protection and promotion of a common cultural heritage.

### **International initiatives**

International initiatives in the field of cultural diversity correspond to a number of evolving concerns relating to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and, later on, creativity. UNESCO has played a leading role in this respect, as the only organization within the United Nations system possessing a mandate in the field of culture, including a standard-setting function.

*This progressive development ... reflects a dual recognition of a 'common heritage' ... and of the specificities of cultures, which, although fluctuating and transitory in nature, must be valued in their own right*



*A new era has begun with the exploration of the concept of cultural diversity, representing a growing concern of the international community, affirming the simultaneous need for the recognition of cultural differences and the promotion of intercultural dialogue*

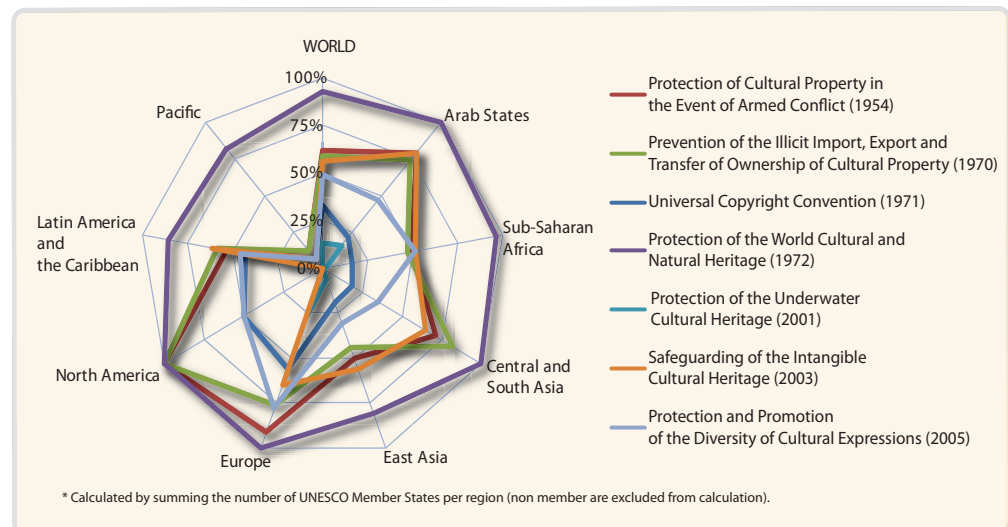
In order to contribute to the 'intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind' and to combat ignorance and prejudice, UNESCO is called upon, under its Constitution (1945), to 'give fresh impulse to the spread of culture' and to promote 'the fruitful diversity' of the world's cultures, implying both their interaction and the preservation of their independence and integrity. Cultural diversity is thus understood in terms of both heritage (tangible and intangible) and creativity. It is on this basis, influenced by changing perspectives on culture, that the institutional content of the notion of cultural diversity has been forged and furthered at UNESCO since its creation in 1945, and has led to the adoption of a range of standard-setting instruments in the spheres of artistic creation, the movable and immovable heritage, intangible cultural heritage and, most recently, the diversity of cultural expressions (see Figure 1.2).

Following the adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, UNESCO responded to its task of increasing the circulation of educational, scientific and cultural materials and protecting scientific, literary and artistic property through the successive adoption of the *Beirut Agreement for Facilitating the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character* (1948), the *Florence Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials* (1950) and the *Universal*

*Copyright Convention* (1952). The concept of 'cultural property' was consecrated internationally with the adoption of the 1954 *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. This Convention laid the basis for the concepts of 'common heritage' and 'global' commons, which later found resonance in the UNESCO-led campaign to safeguard the Nubian Monuments threatened by the rising waters behind the newly constructed Aswan Dam. This major project served to highlight the universal significance of manifestations of cultural heritage, which the international community had a duty to safeguard as expressions of a common human inheritance.

In 1966 the UNESCO General Conference outlined this philosophy in the *Declaration on Principles of International Cultural Co-operation*. This Declaration states that each 'culture has a dignity and value which must be protected and preserved' and that every 'people has the right and the duty to develop its culture' before going on to affirm that 'all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind'. While this Declaration may in some instances have served to justify certain *culturalist* or localist tendencies, UNESCO always sought to correct such imbalances by underlining that the Declaration is designed to facilitate the relations between cultures by *emphasizing their unity in diversity and fostering the capacity for shared enjoyment of a universal culture constituted by the*

**Figure 1.2 Ratifications of the seven cultural conventions of UNESCO, per region\***



Source: Data from UNESCO, Standard-Setting Instruments, 2009.

*creations representing the common heritage of humanity.* Subsequently, at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the international community recognized that the planet as a whole constitutes an inheritance held in trust for future generations. The concepts of cultural and natural heritage were formally united in 1972 with UNESCO's adoption of an instrument that would become a landmark in the heritage field, namely the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.

At each successive stage in the debate on globalization and its positive and negative effects, it became increasingly obvious that cultures identify themselves not only with their material expressions in stone, wood, metal, cloth, paper, etc., and with their permanence in defiance of time, but also with a vision of the world embodied in beliefs, representations, celebrations, customs and social relations that are by nature intangible, fluctuating and transitory. These cultural manifestations — including oral traditions, performing arts and traditional know-how with respect to crafts or nature — are the ferment of cultures. Conscious that cultural heritage as defined in the 1972 Convention covered only one aspect of cultural creation, UNESCO adopted in 2003 the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. The concept of 'outstanding universal value' is not employed in this Convention, which considers all those expressions and traditions recognized as important by a given community to be equally valuable, without hierarchical distinction. What matters for the international recognition of this living heritage is its importance for the sense of identity and continuity of the communities in which it is created, transmitted and re-created rather than any implicit valuation of the practices concerned.

This progressive development in the concept of cultural heritage, and the shift of emphasis with respect to its connection with identity and continuity, reflect a dual movement: one leads to the recognition of a 'common heritage' that the international community has a duty to safeguard as the expression of a shared human inheritance; the other leads to the recognition of the specificities of cultures, which, although fluctuating and transitory in nature, must be valued in their own right.

A new era has begun with the exploration of the concept of cultural diversity, representing a growing concern of the international community. A long process of reflection during the 1980s and 1990s was to lead eventually to the adoption in 2001 of the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. Key moments in this process included: the Declaration of World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT, Mexico City, 1982), which in defining culture as 'the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group [including] not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs' reconciled the universal dimension of culture with its particular constituents; the 1996 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, entitled *Our Creative Diversity*; and the conclusions of the 1998 Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, which affirmed the simultaneous need for the recognition of cultural differences and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. The 2001 *Universal Declaration*, developing the earlier Mexico City Declaration, identifies culture as 'the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, [that] encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs' (Preamble) and reminds us that 'culture takes diverse forms across time and space', that '[t]his diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind' and that 'cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature' (Art. 1).

While the 2003 Convention focuses primarily on the processes of transmission of knowledge within the communities and groups that are the bearers of this heritage, the goal of the 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* is to create the conditions in which the diversity of cultural expressions can flourish and freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner. It recognizes the distinctive character of cultural activities, goods and services, aims to stimulate cultural diversity, and is committed to sustainable development and international



➡ Traditional Japanese puppet theatre, Ningyo Johruri Bunraku

*Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are essentially linked, diversity being both the product and precondition of dialogue*

cooperation. In addressing the exchanges between the cultures that constitute our universal heritage, the 2005 Convention marks the dawn of a new era in standard-setting instruments in which those instruments are aimed at preserving the specificities of cultures while promoting their development on a global scale through exchange and commercialization. Indeed, culture has two meanings, which are different yet wholly complementary. Firstly, culture is the creative diversity embodied in particular 'cultures', each with its own traditions and tangible and intangible expressions. Secondly, culture (in the singular) refers to the creative impulse at the source of that realized diversity. These two meanings of culture — one self-referential, the other self-transcending — are indissociable and the key to the fruitful interaction of all peoples in the context of globalization.

Through its normative apparatuses, UNESCO promotes these two approaches simultaneously: encouraging the world's cultures to affirm themselves in their infinite diversity, while furthering recognition of the universality of their expressions. By awakening a shared sense of wonder at the myriad manifestations of cultural creativity, it seeks to highlight the common sources of our humanity.

## Conclusion

Often seen as a threat to cultural diversity, globalization is in practice far more diverse in its effects, for while it may in some respects deplete cultural diversity it also serves to reconfigure certain of its forms, not least in association with the development of digital

technologies. The challenge is thus to limit the negative consequences of globalization for cultural diversity, which calls in the first instance for a more informed and nuanced understanding of its impacts. The establishment of a World Observatory on Cultural Diversity, as proposed in this report, could play a significant role in this regard.

It is also important to recognize that national — as distinct from cultural — identity is always to some extent an historical construction. Like any work of memory, the concept of nation is selective. No culture is ever wholly fixed or isolated, and national identity is always the product of processes of evolution and interaction. In a globalizing world, such changes are pervasive and make for the increased complexity of individual and group identities. Indeed, the recognition — and even affirmation — of multiple identities is a characteristic feature of our time. One of the paradoxical effects of globalization is thus to provoke forms of diversification conducive to innovation of all kinds and at all levels.

Yet cultures are not equal in the face of globalization processes, and every effort must be made to safeguard cultural expressions struggling to survive. However, safeguarding measures by themselves will not be enough: we must also find ways to help the communities in question to better manage cultural change within a context of intercultural dialogue. For cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are essentially linked, diversity being both the product and precondition of dialogue.

**Consideration should be given to establishing a World Observatory on Cultural Diversity to monitor the impacts of globalization on cultural diversity and to serve as a source of information and data for comparative research with a forward-looking function.**

To this end, action should be taken to:

- a. Collect, compile and widely disseminate data and statistics on cultural diversity, building *inter alia* on the revised 2009 UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS).
- b. Develop methodologies and tools for assessing, measuring and monitoring cultural diversity that are adaptable to national or local conditions by governments and public and private institutions.
- c. Establish national observatories to monitor policies and advise on appropriate measures for the promotion of cultural diversity.

In focus:

## Standard-setting instruments adopted by UNESCO

The Universal Copyright Convention, which was adopted in 1952 and entered into force in 1955, introduced the idea that culture (literary, scientific and artistic works) embodies universal values requiring common protection and accordingly a shared responsibility of the international community. Among its essential features are the preferential provisions for developing countries (introduced by the *Paris Act of the Convention* in 1971) to take account of the role of works of the mind in the general context of development and the economic, social and cultural needs of developing countries. After establishing international copyright protection worldwide, the *Universal Copyright Convention* began to lose ground in the 1980s, with many countries preferring to adhere to the stronger standards of the *Berne Convention for the protection of Literary and Artistic Works* (1886, completed in 1896, revised in 1908, completed in 1914, revised in 1928, 1948, 1967, 1971 and amended in 1979).

At the same time, reflecting dramatically heightened awareness of the need to protect heritage in times of war, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict was adopted in The Hague, Netherlands, in 1954. This international treaty, together with its *First Protocol* adopted the same year, introduced the expression 'cultural property' as a comprehensive and homogenous category of movable and immovable property deemed worthy of protection due to their unique cultural value — such as architectural, artistic or historical monuments and centres, archaeological sites, *museums, large libraries and archive depositories*, works of art, manuscripts, books, and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest. The 1954 *Convention*, now complemented by the *Second Protocol* of 1999, laid the foundation for the concepts of common heritage and the common good of humanity.

In 1966 the UNESCO General Conference adopted the *Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation*. The Declaration established the essential features of UNESCO's cooperation policies in the field of culture by stating that 'each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved', and that 'every people has the right and duty to develop its culture and that all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind', thereby positing the notion that humanity as a whole constitutes a foundation shared by all individuals and that it possesses rights superseding those of nations.

In 1972 the General Conference adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage of the World. Like the 1954 *Hague Convention*, this landmark instrument focuses on immovable cultural property (in this case 'of outstanding universal value') but introduces the key notion of 'heritage of mankind'. With its programmatic approach, based on a listing system and the use of operational guidelines for its implementation, the 1972 Convention strengthened heritage conservation policies and became the standard reference for including conservation policies as a means of development, with particular emphasis on tourism. At the present time, 890 cultural, natural or mixed sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. These sites are located across the globe, enabling developed and developing countries alike to benefit from the opportunities associated with this Convention. The World Heritage label carries with it great prestige and is much coveted by the signatories to the Convention to gain recognition for their heritage, protect sensitive sites, landscapes and species, and attract tourism. More generally, World Heritage sites serve to sensitize and educate people to the need to protect the heritage for future generations, and to foster intercultural respect and understanding through appreciation of the diversity and wealth of expressions forming part of humanity's common patrimony.

The purpose of the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, adopted in 1970, is quite different. It does not aim to protect cultural property in the name of its universal value but rather to recognize the national ownership of that property. The issue of the looting of cultural objects (or property) and the illicit trafficking of such property were also addressed in 1995 by the complementary *UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* and by the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2001. This Convention established a standard for the protection of archaeological sites underwater comparable to that granted by other UNESCO Conventions to land-based cultural heritage. Its regulations are linked to the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention insofar as it contains detailed provisions concerning the prevention of the illicit trafficking of cultural property recovered from the sea. However, it is not intended to arbitrate quarrels or claims to ownership and does not contain a restitution clause.



The 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, unanimously adopted at the 31<sup>st</sup> session of UNESCO's General Conference, broke new ground in its specific reference to cultural diversity as 'the common heritage of humanity', which is to be 'recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations' and whose defence is deemed to be 'an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity'. Such recognition is also seen to embody the practical imperative that 'care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known', with implications for freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, and equal access to art and scientific and technical knowledge. The *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* states that 'respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding' is one of 'the best guarantees of international peace and security' and affirms the need for 'international cooperation and solidarity' based on partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society.

The 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* grew out of UNESCO's programme on the *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, launched in 1997, with proclamations in 2001, 2003 and 2005. Intangible cultural heritage, which this Convention calls a 'mainspring of cultural diversity', is widely recognized as a key element in the protection of cultural identity, the promotion of creativity and the preservation of traditional cultural expressions. The definition of intangible heritage contained in the 2003 Convention — comprising a non-exhaustive list of domains, such as oral traditions and expressions (including language), performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and traditional craftsmanship — constitutes an important contribution towards the recognition of the multifaceted nature of cultural diversity. It aims to safeguard a heritage that is living, constantly evolving and embodied in human practices. In the 2003 Convention, the role assigned to communities and groups of tradition-bearers is therefore considerable. International recognition — for example, through inclusion of intangible heritage elements in the *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding* (UNESCO, 2003, Art. 17) and the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* — is based on inventories drawn up by State Parties and on criteria adopted in June 2008 by the Assembly of State Parties to the Convention.

The *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, adopted in 2005, deals more specifically with cultural expressions produced, circulated and shared by contemporary means. Cultural diversity is innovatively defined as 'the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used' (Art. 4).

The 2005 Convention also includes the important statement that 'cultural diversity is strengthened by the free flow of ideas, and [...] is nurtured by constant exchanges and interaction between cultures', that 'linguistic diversity is a fundamental element of cultural diversity', that 'while the processes of globalization [...] afford unprecedented conditions for enhanced interaction between cultures, they also represent a challenge for cultural diversity, namely in view of risks of imbalances between rich and poor countries' (Preamble), as well as that 'equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding' (Art. 2.7).

The 2005 Convention recognizes the distinctive role of cultural activities, goods and services as vehicles of identity and values, aims at stimulating creative diversity and is committed to sustainable development and international cooperation. It establishes rights for contracting parties: each state party may adopt measures aimed at protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory. In turn, State Parties have a number of duties, notably to ensure, within their territory, an environment that encourages individuals and groups to create, produce, disseminate and distribute their cultural expressions and have access to them. They also are required to pay particular attention to the special situation of minority and/or marginalized individuals and groups and to commit themselves to international cooperation. Parties are likewise requested to raise awareness and foster public understanding of the importance of the diversity of cultural expressions and

to encourage the active participation of civil society in efforts by parties to achieve the Convention's objectives.

In the field of cultural policies, UNESCO's work pertaining to cultural diversity also includes a series of Recommendations, notably the *Recommendation concerning the Most Effective Means of Rendering Museums Accessible to Everyone* (1960), the *Recommendation concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private Works* (1968), the *Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas* (1976), the *Recommendation concerning the International Exchange of Cultural Property* (1976), the *Recommendation for the Protection of Movable Cultural Property* (1978), the *Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images* (1980), the *Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist* (1980) and the *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* (1989).

Outside the field of cultural policies, other significant UNESCO instruments related to cultural diversity include the following:

- a. In the field of the fight against racism, the:**
- 1978 *Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice*, which reaffirms the 'right to be different', significantly making reference to the complexity of cultural identities as irreducible to identity of origin;
  - 1995 *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance*, which re-situates the issue of living together with our differences, in view of the new challenges arising from globalization and the emergence of worldwide networks.
- b. In the field of freedoms and rights, the:**
- 1976 *Recommendation on Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and Their Contribution to It*, which includes provisions related to diversity in the media, bearing in mind the 'extreme diversity of audiences, in order to 'enhance the cultural quality of programmes intended for the public at large';
  - 1997 *Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations*, which states that 'it is important to make every effort to ensure [ . . . ] that future as well as present generations enjoy full freedom of choice [ . . . ] and are able to preserve their cultural and religious diversity'.
- c. In the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the:**
- 2003 *Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage*, which — building on the Memory of the World programme launched by UNESCO in 1992 and dedicated to increasing worldwide awareness of the existence and significance of documentary heritage by drawing up international inventories — advocates the development of strategies and policies for the protection and promotion of digital heritage;
  - 2003 *Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace*, which notes that 'linguistic diversity in the global information networks and universal access to information in cyberspace are at the core of contemporary debates'.
- d. In the field of education, the:**
- 1960 *Convention against Discrimination in Education*, which refers in its Preamble to the objective of 'respecting the diversity of national educational systems';
  - 1974 *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* and the 1993 *Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education*, which are aimed at promoting better understanding between cultures and peoples, including mutual respect for their diversity.

 UNESCO Headquarters, Paris



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 A mosque in the Dubai airport

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*The Mostar Bridge was rebuilt  
after the war in Bosnia*

# Intercultural dialogue

Human beings relate to one another through society, and express that relationship through culture. All of our actions, thoughts, behaviour, attitudes and material or intellectual creations imply a cultural relationship. Even the natural world that we name, describe and analyze may be said to be informed by human culture, to be invested with 'inward meaning'. In this fundamental sense, our similarities are more profound than our cultural differences. These differences, moreover, embody a positive potential, for it is through them that we complement one another in devising novel solutions for living together in our social and natural settings. Cultural diversity represents the sum of these solutions, and dialogue is the bridge between them.

If we are to respond to the challenges inherent in a culturally diverse world, we must develop new approaches to intercultural dialogue, approaches that go beyond the limitations of the 'dialogue among civilizations' paradigm. The prerequisites for such a dialogue include consideration of the ways in which cultures relate to one another, awareness of cultural commonalities and shared goals, and identification of the challenges to be met in reconciling cultural differences and identities.

*A caravan of camels at Mingsha Shan in Dunhuang, China*





# Intercultural Dialogue

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A young boy in Kihnu Island, Estonia

## 2.1 Cultural interactions

Cultures are not self-enclosed or static entities. They overlap and interact, if only to distinguish themselves from one another. ‘Cultures are like clouds, their confines ever changing, coming together or moving apart [. . .] and sometimes merging to produce new forms arising from those that preceded them yet differing from them entirely’ (Droit in UNESCO, 2007). Even cultures long regarded as isolated or hermetic can be shown to have had contacts with other cultures in the form of economic or proto-political exchanges. One of the fundamental obstacles to intercultural dialogue is our propensity to hypostasize other cultures, to conceive of them as fixed entities, as if fault lines separated them. Where such fault lines are seen as absolute, often as a result of totalitarian ideologies or beliefs, we pass into the realm of confrontation or conflict. One of the main objections to Huntington’s thesis of a ‘clash of civilizations’, apart from the risk that it could become a self-fulfilling prophecy, is that it presupposes singular rather than multiple affiliations between human communities and fails to take account of cultural interdependency and interaction (Huntington, 1996). To describe as fault lines the differences between cultures — even those characterized by divergent or opposing beliefs — is to overlook the porosity of cultural boundaries and the creative potential of the individuals they encompass.

Civilizations, societies and cultures, like individuals, exist in relation to one another. As one historian has noted, ‘consciously or otherwise [. . .] civilizations observe one another, seek each other out, influence one another, mutually define one another. Their founding texts may endure, but they themselves do not remain static’ (Baubérot, 2003). Culture, it has been said, is contagious. Down through the centuries, exchanges and interactions of all kinds — through travel, trade and trespass — have acted as *translations* between cultures. ‘Translation cannot be reduced to a technique practised spontaneously by travellers, traders, ambassadors, smugglers and traitors, and elevated to a professional discipline by translators and interpreters. It constitutes a paradigm for all exchanges, not only between languages but also between cultures’ (Ricoeur, 2004). These translations merge with endogenous features to give rise to new traditions as part of the complex tectonics of cultures and civilizations.

This intermingling of cultures through the ages has found expression in a multitude of cultural forms and human practices. Some of these are reflected in the Representative List of the intangible cultural heritage of Humanity, created under the 2003 Convention — a repository of oral traditions, social practices, performing arts and traditional knowledge and crafts, transmitted from generation to generation, constantly recreated and providing communities with a sense of identity and continuity (see Table 1 in the Statistical Annex). Underlying this multifarious heritage, it is possible to distinguish three main modes of cultural interaction: cultural borrowings, cultural exchanges and cultural impositions. While ethically distinctive, all these forms of interaction have impacted very significantly, and in many cases very fruitfully, on forms of cultural expression.

Cultural *borrowing* occurs when the cultural practice of one population is assimilated by another in recognition of its perceived advantages over the one it has previously employed. Populations may be prepared to abandon even very ancient customs when enabling mechanisms are found to facilitate the integration of new practices. An example is the use of snow scooters by the Sami people in Finland, who, while remaining attached to their traditions and beliefs, have adapted to a harsh environment by embracing modern technology. The ‘borrowing’ of practices or customs can become the basis for entirely new forms or modalities through adaptation to their new setting or divorce from their original meaning. In the rainbow cultures characteristic of many modern societies, borrowing has sometimes become so pervasive as to challenge the distinction between endogenous and exogenous cultural elements.

Cultural *exchanges* can become generalized between neighbouring and mutually dependent cultures. The Silk Roads represented a common trading framework that ensured relatively peaceful relations between neighbouring peoples and fostered a genuine receptiveness to difference, which benefited the cultural development of the populations concerned and enabled significant cultural transfers to take place across large geographical areas. Generally speaking, trade between different cultural regions has contributed



 The Samba de Roda of Recôncavo of Bahia, Brazil

**Box 2.1 UNESCO Slave Route Project: Celebrating the cultural expressions generated through enforced dialogue**

The slave trade and slavery constitute one of the darkest chapters in human history. This dehumanizing enterprise, which challenged the very basis of universal values and has been roundly condemned by the international community, has nonetheless contributed to the development of some of the most valuable forms of cultural human resistance to domination.

Beyond its economic impact, the slave trade has also given rise to significant interactions among the peoples of Africa, Europe, the Americas, the Indian Ocean, the Arab-Muslim world and Asia, which have profoundly and lastingly transformed their cultures, knowledge, beliefs and behaviour. The intercultural process that began with the slave trade is still going on and continues to transform humanity. Hence, the concept of 'route' was chosen to illustrate this flow of exchanges among peoples, cultures and civilizations, which transformed the geographical areas affected by slavery — a unique interaction generating forms of intercultural dialogue of considerable importance to the building of modern societies.

By retracing these cultural interactions brought about by the slave trade, which transported so many African men and women far from their birthlands, the Slave Route Project is contributing to a better understanding of cultural traditions, forms of ingenuity, technical and scientific knowledge, skills and spirituality which were transferred from Africa to the Americas, the Caribbean, Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Arab-Muslim world. It draws attention to the major imprint of African cultures on the formation of the world's identities, cultures and civilizations, the African contribution to the world's rich diversity as expressed through Creole cultures, languages, religions, music and dance.

The influence of African art and particularly music is widely acknowledged today. Jazz and other styles of Afro-American music, such as the blues, appeared in the 1890s, over a quarter century after the abolition of slavery in the United States. The syncopated rhythms of this music fused traits of African folk music with European popular music, but also Native American music, and reflected the mores and social situations of the first generation of African Americans born outside of slavery.

African heritage is also a primary basis of Brazilian samba, Cuban rumba and Trinidadian calypso. Combining the skills of African storytelling, singing and instrument making, calypso usually involves some social commentary, typically in the form of satire, with an infectious beat. It has since been influenced by European, North American and other Caribbean cultures to produce reggae and the latest creation of black music today: rap.

Rooted in Bantu traditions of Angola, Capoeira was used by Africans enslaved in Brazil to practice their fighting skills, unbeknownst to their enslavers. When colonial authorities discovered its real purpose, it was banned on penalty of death. Capoeira continued to be practiced by fugitive slaves who set up independent settlements, known as Quilombos, although it remained illegal in Brazil until the 1930s, when it finally

received national recognition as a martial art. In recent years, Capoeira has spread beyond Brazil and continues to grow in popularity. According to the International Capoeira Angola Foundation, it is now practiced in 74 countries, and over 1,000 Capoeira schools are listed on the Internet.

Enslaved Africans also carried spiritual traditions to the New World, where they were modified to meet the conditions of slavery. While many believe that Voodoo hails from Haiti, it in fact originated in West Africa (*voodoo* means 'spirit') and took on new forms in Haiti, including elements of Roman Catholicism, as a means of survival and resistance to slavery. A Voodoo temple in Cotonou, run by a Haitian-born priest, features candles, bells and a cross, and the gods are identified with Roman Catholic saints.

Africans enslaved in America blended African musical forms with European Christian hymns to create spirituals, which developed into gospel music. Gospel and blues merged in America to produce yet another popular genre known as soul, which also gives its name to a cuisine commonly associated with African Americans in the southern United States. Soul food reflects gastronomic responses to racial discrimination and economic oppression and makes creative use of African products, such as yams, peanuts, okra, black-eyed peas and rice.

While the diversity of cultural expressions generated through the slave trade and slavery continues to influence our societies beyond the regions in which slavery was practiced, the added values of such cultural enrichment still need to be properly acknowledged as part of Africa's contribution to the world's cultural heritage. This is a one of the major objectives of the Slave Route Project launched by UNESCO in 1994 and the new strategy for highlighting the African presence throughout the world.

Source: UNESCO.

*Zoungbodji Memorial commemorating the slave route in Ouidah, Benin*





to the mutual enrichment of humanity and to the interconnectedness between cultures for the benefit of all. What would the scientific revolution of Renaissance Europe have been without the contribution of the Arab sciences, which themselves drew on the intellectual heritage of the ancient world? Cultural exchanges refer to the many collective developments and are at the origin of most human achievements and tend to invalidate claims to exclusivity for any one civilization.

Cultural *imposition* through war and conquest has constituted a major form of cultural interaction down through the ages. More recently, processes of colonization imposed Western culture with little regard for the value and meaning of the cultures of the populations 'discovered' or conquered. Yet even in the extreme condition of slavery, discreet processes of reverse enculturation take place and the cultural practices of the dominated populations come to be assimilated by the dominating culture (Bhabha, 1994). The resulting cultural interactions are today exemplified in all those parts of the world touched by the African diaspora (see Box 2.1). Of course, past legacies continue to weigh heavily on many cultures, and globalization processes have in many cases compounded inequalities in the cultural field. Yet the achievement of independence by subjugated populations, the progress of the human sciences (in particular, ethnography), and the recognition of the cultural dimension of human rights have made it increasingly possible to arrive at fairer valuations of previously misunderstood cultures and to think in terms of genuine exchanges between all cultures.

## 2.2. Cultural stereotypes and intolerance

Cultural stereotypes are ubiquitous. In the workplace, the classroom, the press and the media, they are perpetuated through jokes, anecdotes, songs and images. While the degree to which they intend or not to give offence varies, these reductive simplifications of the 'outsider' contain the seeds of prejudice. Stereotyping is a way of demarcating one group from an alien 'other' and implicitly asserting its superiority. Stereotypes carry with them the danger that dialogue may stop short at difference and that difference may engender intolerance.

In many ways, the emergence of information and communication networks is facilitating contacts between

Today globalization, international trade and the rise of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the media are making for more systematic encounters, borrowings, juxtapositions and cultural exchanges. Yet this new degree of mutual receptiveness among cultures will not place them on an equal footing if we do not begin to rethink our shared cultural categories. The transcultural ties that manifest themselves across the complex interplay of multiple identities are potentially powerful facilitators of intercultural dialogue. Irrespective of the stances adopted by the various parties, or their identification with the particular culture of which they believe themselves to be the 'representatives', the acceptance of multiple identities shifts the focus away from 'differences' and towards our shared capacity to interact and to accept encounters, coexistence and even cohabitation between different cultures.

Knowledge of the forms of cultural interaction in a country, subregion or region is an asset for identifying ways and means of facilitating intercultural dialogue. Even where such interaction has been marked by imposition or oppression, recognition and discussion of past grievances can help, paradoxically, to ensure that the focus of such dialogue does not remain negative. All this implies historical awareness and the capacity to engage in the critical examination of different cultural frames of reference. Knowledge of cultural interactions should also include the resources employed by societies and individuals to build dialogue, even in situations of tension. Observing these as conventions is an important step towards overcoming cultural stereotypes on the path to intercultural dialogue.

*Stereotyping is a way of demarcating one group from an alien 'other' and implicitly asserting its superiority. Stereotypes carry with them the danger that dialogue may stop short at difference and that difference may engender intolerance*



A Central Asian performer at UNESCO Headquarters

different cultures and multiplying the possibilities for mutual knowledge. Yet it would be a mistake to underestimate the tenacity of prejudice, the depth of the reflex that prompts us to define our identity in opposition to others. Intercultural dialogue is necessary as a permanent corrective to the diversity of our cultural allegiances. Cultures belonging to different traditions are particularly prone to mutual stereotyping. With reference to Western attitudes towards the non-Western world, Edward Said (1978) has argued, for example, that 'Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with



*Intercultural encounters between individuals, communities and peoples invariably involve a certain cultural tension... Within a multicultural society, the two main axes involved are those of memory and values*

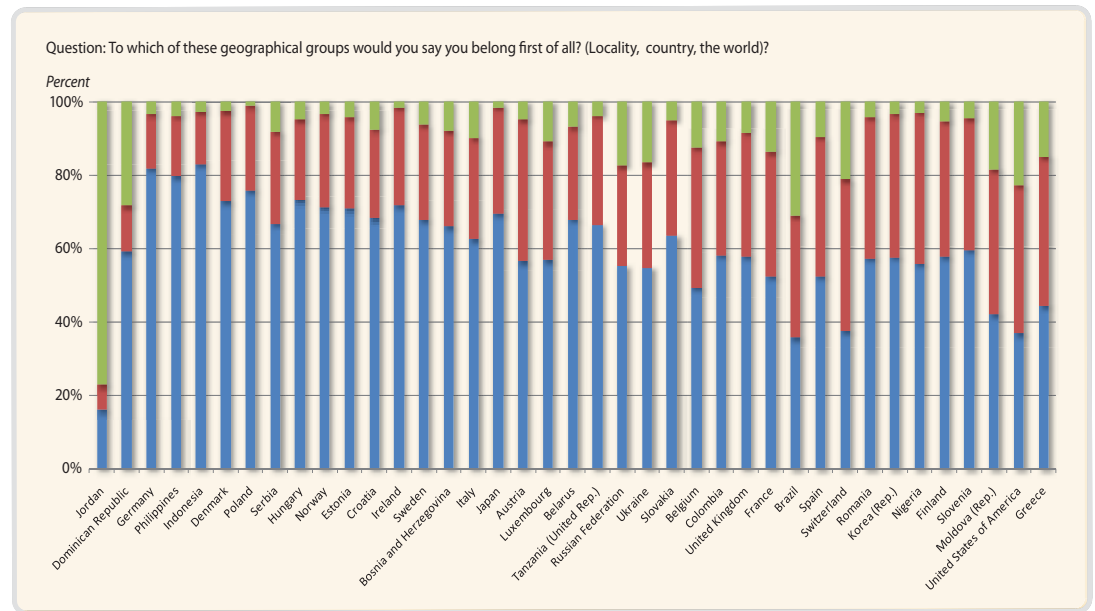
its weakness. [...] As a cultural apparatus, Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge'. If this is the case, then it can equally well be asserted that 'Occidentalism' is no less reductive of Western cultural identity. Human beings are all too ready to define themselves in opposition to one another, to have recourse to reflex stereotyping.

Several methods exist for measuring the stereotypes prevalent in a given society. Public opinion surveys conducted in different countries involve interviewing people and asking them to categorize others according to various criteria — from nationality to standardized attributes (such as 'hardworking', 'brave', 'intelligent', 'cruel'). Yet here too a danger of stereotyping lurks: the underlying biases of such approaches (through choice of categorization, terms used, etc.) must themselves be questioned, since the same traits may refer to different realities in different languages, and the very choice of a given list of attributes is already a way of influencing the answer. Other methods for measuring stereotypes and prejudices include, for example, the 'serial reproduction investigation technique', according to which a person is shown a picture and asked to describe

it to someone else, who is in turn asked to describe it to a third person, and so on. The serial reproduction amplifies the stereotype so as to make it more apparent. On another level, national census classifications can also be interesting with regard to the different ways in which difference is categorized.

Intercultural encounters between individuals, communities and peoples invariably involve a certain cultural tension, whose terms depend on the context in which they occur and the value systems brought into play. Within a multicultural society, the two main axes involved are those of *memory* and *values* (Diène, 2007). The particular memories of different groups, communities or peoples make up the collective memory of a multicultural society. Competing memories may stem from or provoke open or latent conflict — such as between the constitution of a national memory by a dominant group and the demands by other groups that their own memories be taken into account. This applies *a fortiori* to the competing memories of the colonizer and the colonized. National memory, formalized and legitimized by its place in national history texts and transmitted by national and civic educational systems, often leads to the denial, omission or

**Figure 2.1 World Values Survey on geographical belonging**



Source: World Values Survey database, 2008.

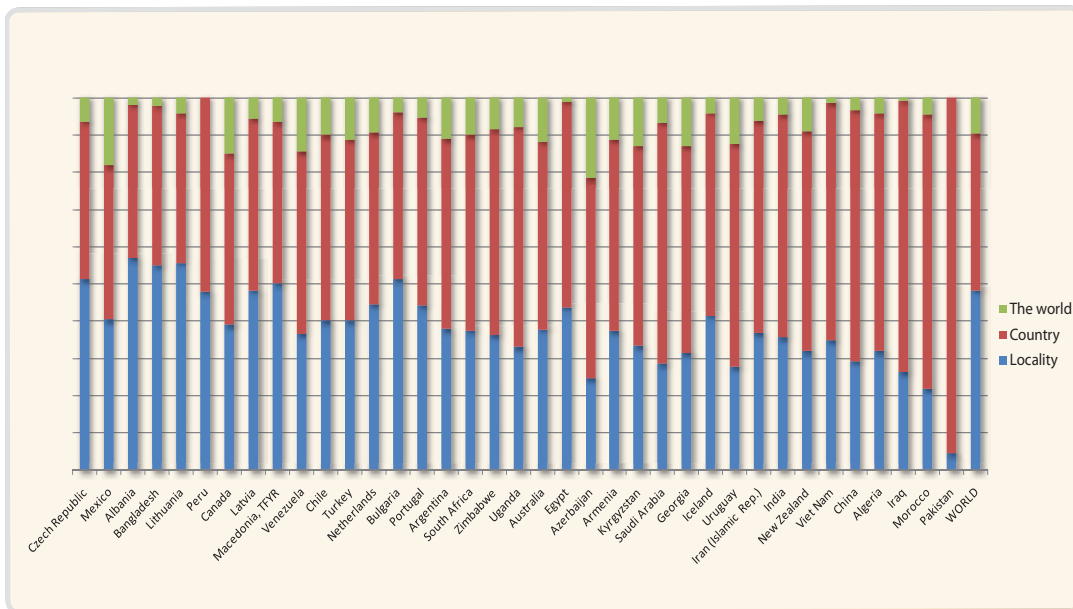
perversion of the specific memories of certain minority groups or communities.

It is often in the realm of cultural, spiritual or religious values that the identity of each group, community or people has its deepest roots. The search for one's identity can be open and dynamic, oriented towards a definition of the self always in the making. It can be backward-looking or fixed according to ethnic or even genetic differences, as illustrated by the new market of genetic ancestry.<sup>1</sup> In the multicultural process, identity strain occurs, according to historical circumstance and political context, when a group or a community intentionally or otherwise imposes its cultural and spiritual values on other minority groups, or when a group or community tries to ignore or deny the values of other groups or communities. Such identity strain can insidiously play itself out generations later, as sometimes happens in the suburbs of megacities in former colonial countries in which forms of discrimination going back to the colonial era are perpetuated with regard to certain population groups (Diène, 2007). The civilizing and proselytizing discourse of colonialism — which is still echoed in some conceptions of cultural and scientific progress — is a particularly egregious example of the kind

of ideological-cum-political hegemony that is inimical to cultural diversity.

If diversity is not to be experienced as a restriction of identity or unbridgeable difference, and if it is to favour dynamic interactions between ethnic, cultural and religious communities, it is essential to promote intercultural dialogue within each society, as well as at the international level, as the only enduring response to identity-based and racial tensions. The cultural challenge that faces each multicultural society is to reconcile the recognition and protection of, and respect for, cultural particularities with the affirmation and promotion of universally shared values emerging from the interplay of these cultural specificities. Indeed, as illustrated by opinion surveys such as the World Values Survey (see Table 6 in the Statistical Annex), when individuals are asked to which geographical groups they feel they belong, in many countries in the world they declare multiple identities (see Figure 2.1). But the tension between different identities can become the driving force for a renewal of national unity based on an understanding of social cohesion which integrates the diversity of its cultural components.

*The tension between different identities can become the driving force for a renewal of national unity based on an understanding of social cohesion which integrates the diversity of its cultural components*



1. Genetic ancestry involves the analysis of an individual's DNA in order to determine its historical pattern based on comparison with participants from

around the world and thereby to ascertain the individual's genetic roots. See the Genographic Project's website.



© 'Korean Fantasy', two Korean intangible heritage expressions at UNESCO Headquarters

### Box 2.2 'What went wrong with the dialogue between cultures?'

The last two decades, with their increasing numbers of events for a Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations, are lost decades. Most efforts were invested in a much too limited concept of dialogue, which remained within the logic of Huntington's 'clash' scenario even while contradicting his conclusions. This scenario was never a cause of problems; it is just one example of an almost omnipresent limited understanding of culture as heritage alone rather than also as a space for human creativity and liberty. To be sure, cultural forces shape attitudes and behaviour; but this is only one side of the coin. Such a passive view of culture has its roots in 19<sup>th</sup> century traditions of nation-building. The related concept of 'national cultures' reduces the creative dimension of culture to a collective instrument for national cohesion and identity. This definition is at the expense of the right to cultural self-determination, which is among the core values enshrined in all international human rights conventions and agreements.

To contain and resolve the present crisis in cultural relations, a number of key arguments need to be communicated among actors already involved or interested in organizing the dialogue between cultures. The following six arguments are considered particularly important:

1. Traditional modalities of dialogue between cultures, developed over the past decade, have largely failed because of their almost exclusive focus on what cultures and religions have in common. The present crisis calls for dialogue on differences and diversity.
2. The lack of mutual knowledge about sensitive issues linked to religions and any other belief is obvious. This gap needs to be

filled as a matter of urgency. Information on religious pluralism needs to be provided at all levels of formal and non-formal education, in a terminology that is not faith-loaded but accessible to people maintaining diversified beliefs and opinions. This information must include difficult concepts, such as what is 'sacred,' 'holy' or 'insulting'.

3. Too often, dialogue events have stressed collective identities (national, ethnic, religious) rather than identities of individuals or social groups. Dialogue fora composed of 'representatives' of religious or ethnic groups are counter-productive and contribute to the clash of civilizations scenario rather than preventing it. Dialogue between cultures must create space for mutual perception and appreciation of overlapping, multiple and dynamic cultural identities of every individual and social or cultural group.
4. There is urgent need for strengthening the human-rights-based dimension of dialogue. Rather than seeking values common to all religions and cultures, the core values of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* need to be stressed. No discrimination based on origin, race, colour, gender, language, religion or any other belief or opinion has been agreed upon by the international community 60 years ago. In line with recent UN terminology, all cultures must be considered having equal dignity.
5. Active tolerance, involving mutual respect, needs to be promoted rather than mere acceptance of diversity.

Calls for boycotting a whole people are an alarm signal. They are an indicator of tendencies towards deepening

stereotypes, of desires to balance perceived discrimination with discrimination against others, and of perceived double standards regarding their application to others.

What we need now is to develop a common language for understanding and respecting cultural differences, without doing harm to our universal values. Many elements of such common language have been developed over the past decade. The following five elements of such a common language are of particular importance:

1. Cultural diversity between as well as within countries is as essential for humankind as biodiversity is for nature.
2. The right to be different is a core element of a rights-based understanding of culture.
3. Overlap between cognitive and emotional elements of intercultural relations is the rule and not the exception.
4. Deconstructing self-referential systems of belief and knowledge is essential.
5. Freedom of opinion or any other belief is not only a basic human right; it is also intrinsic to any human understanding of religion. Enforcing belief would be a contradiction in and of itself, as much as imposing values 'comes down in the end to negating them' (Jacques Delors).

Much more needs to be done to enable citizens of the increasingly multicultural world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to know about, understand and respect their differences in cultural and religious expression.

Source: Schoeithaler, 2006.

## 2.3 The challenges of dialogue in a multicultural world

Just as it can provoke a retreat into separate identities, cultural diversity can also be experienced as an invitation to discover the other. It is somewhat misleading to speak of *cultures* in this context, however, for, in reality, it is not so much cultures as *people* — individuals and groups, with their complexities and multiple allegiances — who are engaged in the process of dialogue. To be effective, intercultural dialogue must free itself of the concept of exclusive and fixed identities and embrace a worldview predicated on pluralism and multiple affiliations. It is not enough simply to acknowledge our differences: genuine dialogue presupposes a reciprocal effort to identify and inhabit a common ground on which encounter can take place.

In practice this calls for capacities of negotiation and compromise, allied to a commitment to mutual understanding and deployed in a wide range of cultural contexts, including the fields and sectors discussed in Part II of this report. A further requirement for meaningful dialogue is a level playing field and the strict equality of status for all participants in intercultural initiatives. In this respect, particular attention must be paid to the needs and expectations of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, the very poor and women (see Box 2.2). It is essential that provisions be made for the empowerment of all participants in intercultural dialogue through capacity-building and inclusive projects that permit interaction without loss of personal or collective

identity. Building intercultural competencies, promoting interfaith dialogue, and reconciling conflicting memories may be seen as the three major challenges of dialogue in a multicultural world.

### **Intercultural competencies**

Intercultural dialogue is dependent to an important extent on intercultural competencies. Defined as the 'complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with those who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself' (Fantini, 2007), these abilities are essentially communicative in nature, but they also involve reconfiguring our perspectives and understandings of the world (see Box 2.3). They are the means whereby a shift can occur away from a 'clash' and towards an 'alliance' of civilizations.

Various strategies exist for acquiring intercultural competencies and facilitating cultural encounters in the promotion of intercultural dialogue (Bennett, 2009). Many of these have been formalized by intercultural management and communication teams on the basis of the lived experiences of migrant workers and their families, who have had to adjust to the realities of living in and/or between two cultures (UNESCO, 1982; Hoffman, 1989). The ultimate goal would be that intercultural competencies become an indispensable element of school curricula within a larger framework of cultural literacy training (see chapter 4).

### **Box 2.3 Intercultural competencies: The basics**

In an intercultural encounter, basic capacities include the ability to listen, dialogue and wonder:

- *Listening* is understood here in the sense of 'resonating with an experience', similar to the 'participant observation' required of an anthropologist in a field study (Sperber, 1985). Robert Vachon (1998) has put it as follows:

*Interculturalism [...] is to experience another culture, to accept the truth of the other culture. It is therefore allowing the other culture and its truth to affect me directly, to*

*penetrate me, to change me, to transform me, not only in my answers to a question, but in my very questions, my presuppositions, my myths. It is therefore a meeting in myself of two convictions. The place of that meeting is the heart (not the head) of a person, within a personal synthesis which can be intellectually more or less perfect. There is no co-existence possible without a co-insistence, i.e. without their penetrating into each other's heart. It is therefore a matter of approaching the other from inside. It is contemplative listening to the other where one begins to see the possibilities not*

*only of solutions, but of radically different fundamental questions.*

- *Dialogue* is born from the resonance with others and within ourselves, in the process of which we realize our own untapped dimensions, potentials other than those we have developed (making us feel either comfortable or uncomfortable), and we begin a process of 'understanding from within'. As Raimon Panikkar (1979) has said: 'I shall never be able to meet the other as he meets and understands himself if I do not meet and understand him in and as



**Box 2.3 Intercultural competencies: The basics**

myself. To understand the other as “other” is, at the least, not to understand him!

- *Wonder* is the capacity to be touched by difference, a state of mind that has to be continuously trained, especially in the information society where, paradoxically, we believe we already know everything (because we know it exists or we saw it on TV or in newspapers).

Wonder is a form of ‘active openness’, in which the other is not simply positioned on a scale of differences/resemblances with us. Too often, we fail to recognize the originality of others and simply reduce them to an

inverted image of ourselves and fall into the trap of essentialism. When we start to think that we have developed intercultural competences, it is very likely that we have in fact started to close ourselves off from what is actually going on and that we are ‘losing’ it. Interculturality is an ongoing discovery, a perpetual wondering, the recognition that the other is not a void to be filled but a plenitude to be discovered.

The intercultural encounter thus reveals our own rootedness at the same time as it unveils that of our counterpart. There cannot be *intercultural* competency without a *cultural* competency that allows us to realize where we

speak from, our bias, what makes our point of view different from the other’s point of view. It is then through critical distance from oneself that one may open oneself to encounter the other. The intercultural encounter is very much about overcoming one’s own resistances, becoming aware of one’s ethnocentrism or even racism, and starting to discover the possibility of radically different existential choices. It is only after the first cultural shock is over, and one starts to gain some understanding of another culture, that a more complex picture of the other and of oneself arises.

Source: Eberhard, 2008.

The most obvious way to reduce intergroup conflict and prejudice is to increase contacts between members of different groups in such a way as to break down boundaries and build bridges between self-enclosed communities, thereby fostering more complex and personalized views of others’ worlds through knowledge. Such strategies are successful when they meet certain conditions — an equivalent social status, a positive context, an equal knowledge-base and reasonable objectives — while not seeking to solve all social-isolation issues at once (Allport, 1954). While more ambitious goals for reducing social gaps should not be abandoned, the strategy should begin by overcoming cultural boundaries by focusing on the concrete goals at hand. Since the aim is to foster authentic encounter between human beings who, beyond their differences, share common expectations, the contact should involve a more intimate dimension and not be seen as merely functional or circumstantial. For it is not so much knowledge of others that conditions the success of intercultural dialogue; rather, it is cognitive flexibility, empathy, anxiety reduction and the capacity to shift between different frames of reference (Pettigrew, 1998). Humility and hospitality are also crucial: ‘humility because it is impossible to understand another culture totally; and hospitality because one needs to treat other cultures like many traditional societies treat strangers, i.e. with open arms, open minds and open hearts’ (Fasheh, 2007).

Numerous initiatives aimed at fostering dialogue and empathy between young people from different cultures are being initiated, from school projects and educational programmes (such as the Children International Summer Village and AMIDEAST programmes) to exchange programmes that bring together participants from diverse cultural backgrounds for semester-long study trips (such as the EU’s Erasmus and the Scholar Ship programmes). Projects and initiatives involving participatory cultural, artistic and sports activities are a particularly powerful means for providing intercultural dialogue incentives, particularly to underprivileged children in conflict-ridden countries. Indeed, the arts and creativity testify to the depths and plasticity of intercultural relations and the forms of mutual enrichment they embody. By the same token, they help to combat closed identities and promote cultural pluralism. Notable examples can be gleaned from the experiences of the DREAM programme; established in 2003, it has implemented projects in Afghanistan (Kabul), Cambodia (Phnom Penh), East Jerusalem, Haiti (Pétion-ville) and Liberia (Monrovia) to help street children express themselves freely in a safe and culturally aware environment. Art, painting, drawing, dancing, music, theatre, photography, crafts and sports are seen as the means for addressing the basic needs and rights of children, building creativity and self-esteem, helping them to work on personal issues and traumas (UNESCO-Felissimo, 2008).

*It is not so much knowledge of others that conditions the success of intercultural dialogue; rather, it is cognitive flexibility, empathy, anxiety reduction and the capacity to shift between different frames of reference. Humility and hospitality are also crucial*

In the 'global cities' existing in many parts of the world, which serve as hubs or networks for multiculturalism, cultural festivals have emerged that enable the intermingling of different cultures and transcend the barriers between them — whether linguistic, religious or otherwise — in order to share moments of urban communion and entertainment. In this way, public spaces become spheres of pluralism, conviviality and interaction. As noted by United Cities and Local Governments (Pigem, 2006), carnivals that had been ignored or not scorned between 1960 and 1980 have today been recognized as genuine cultural activities in which heritage and contemporary creation can meet and evolve.

Through the founding and fostering of intercultural relationships, a gradual shift has occurred among long-established ethnic and cultural festivals; they have become less mono-ethnic and more pluralistic celebrations. The Vancouver Chinese New Year's Festival is a good illustration of this phenomenon: while it initially celebrated specifically Chinese culture, it now also showcases Brazilian, Afro-Canadian, Japanese, and Aboriginal cultures. While the 'ownership' of spaces or venues by specific cultural communities

remains an extremely contentious issue, some cities have provided spaces in which ethnic communities can interact, such as Clissold Park (Northeast London) and Cannon Hill Park (Birmingham) in the UK. On the other hand, some cities have found it necessary to create physical spaces for members of specific cultural communities, such as in Helsinki, where a new space, a 'cultural living room', called 'The Veranda' was built for cultural events in Swedish. Whatever the specific circumstances, effective intercultural dialogue entails promoting dialogue between individuals in all the complexities of their multiple identities and ensuring the necessary conditions of equality among them. Since the latter involves recognition, by all parties, of the dignity and value of all cultures involved, we need to reflect on the specific circumstances confronting vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In all these ways, the promotion of intercultural dialogue converges significantly with the 'multiple identities' approach. This refers not only to the possibility of coexisting allegiances but also to the potential of these allegiances to evolve without loss of our sense of rootedness. Dialogue is openness, but it is not self-loss. As Raimon Panikkar (1979) has said:

*Dialogue is fundamentally opening myself to another so that he might speak and reveal my myth that I cannot know myself because it is transparent to me, self-evident. Dialogue is a way of knowing myself and of disentangling my own point of view from other viewpoints and from me, because it is grounded so deeply in my own roots as to be utterly hidden from me [...]. Dialogue sees the other not as an extrinsic, accidental aid, but as the indispensable, personal element in our search for truth, because I am not a self-evident, autonomous individual [...]. Dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other, just as dialectics pursues truth by trusting the order of things, the value of reason and weighty arguments.*

When we cease to perceive others in fixed and unilateral terms, the potential for authentic dialogue increases significantly: we open up the possibility of moving from mere compromise between fixed positions towards mutual enrichment upon newly discovered common ground.


*When we cease to perceive others in fixed and unilateral terms, the potential for authentic dialogue increases significantly: we open up the possibility of moving from mere compromise between fixed positions towards mutual enrichment upon newly discovered common ground*



*The teaching of different religions, belief systems and spiritual traditions is essential to breaking down the walls of ignorance, which are often buttressed by pseudo-knowledge that encloses the different communities within hermetic universes*

 Woman in prayer, Lao People's Democratic Republic



 The Ifa divination system, practiced among Yoruba communities (and by the African diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean), Nigeria

### **Interfaith dialogue**

Interfaith dialogue — understood to encompass spiritual and animistic traditions, as well as religions — is a crucial dimension of international understanding, and thus of conflict resolution; it is indissociable from a critical debate on the rights of all stakeholders to freedom of conviction and conscience (see chapter 8 on religious mediation for social cohesion). Religious and spiritual convictions invariably inform cultural affiliations, even if they rarely define a culture in its totality. Thus, religion is now on the agenda of the international community, which has realized that misunderstanding and ignorance of religion only heighten tensions and revive communitarianism. The lack of instruction in schools about the historical and sociological aspects of religion or the predominance of religious instruction in only one faith may also lead to a lack of understanding among individuals and groups belonging to different faiths or having non-religious convictions. Such a lack of understanding may also give rise to a lack of sensitivity with regard to religious expressions and events and religious symbols and signs, which may then be misused (UNESCO, 2007b).

Some view interfaith dialogue as inherently problematic. This is however to overlook the myriad interactions between religions and other philosophical and cultural traditions that have taken place over four millennia. For example, Israeli archaeologists date the Bible from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE and link it to specific historical events. Mithraism shows intriguing similarities with Christianity, and Parmenides' thought may have been nurtured by contacts with Tibetan monks (Hulin, 2001). Such interactions are often concealed from a sectarian standpoint, as if a religion were somehow diminished by being set in an historical context, shown to reflect the state of knowledge at a particular time or shown to have benefited from exchanges with other belief systems. In fact, openness to dialogue is a mark of the resilience of a belief, showing that it does not shrink from confronting opposing viewpoints and even from questioning its own basic tenets. This is why interfaith dialogue should not be restricted to institutional exchanges between authoritative or representative figures. Insofar as interfaith dialogue is understood as dialogue between representative authorities of the major religions, difficulties will arise for not all major religions necessarily have representative authorities and it is not religions themselves that engage in dialogue but the people

who belong to the various religions who interact and eventually engage in dialogue (UNESCOCat, 2008).

Informal networks, at the local or community level, can play a valuable role in reconciling different viewpoints, particularly when they involve people who have previously been excluded in some cases from interfaith dialogue, including women and young people. The teaching of different religions, belief systems and spiritual traditions is essential to breaking down the walls of ignorance, which are often buttressed by pseudo-knowledge that encloses the different communities within hermetic universes. While the teaching of the history of religions will inevitably take place in a particular cultural context, the approach adopted should be inclusive and ideally not confined to the monotheistic traditions. In this sense, there is a need to foster competences and skills in interfaith dialogue in the wider context of furthering intercultural understanding. In this spirit, UNESCO places emphasis on capacity-building, which involves developing pedagogical materials related to inter-religious dialogue in partnership with the regional UNESCO Chairs, the Oslo Coalition and the Central Asian Women's Cultural Network (training of trainers, diffusion of the proceedings of the various conferences organized on that issue, preparation and publication of teaching materials, etc.). Strengthening of the knowledge-base for the promotion of interfaith dialogue is also important. For example, an adult-education course has been developed at the University of Geneva; while initially intended for journalists, it has been open for the past three years to individuals who are in contact with other cultures and confessions. In the same vein, a manual for young people on the cultural and ritual aspects of Christianity and Islam which offers an objective and detailed description of each religion and explains their symbology and meaning has been developed in Lebanon.

### **Reconciling conflicting memories**

Divergent memories have been the source of many conflicts throughout history. The different forms of institutional memory preservation and transmission (state archives, museums, media, school textbooks) tend to embody alternative views of the past, each with its own logic, protocols and perspectives. States often hold an historical monopoly on such records and testimonies, which often tend to be reductive of

other cultures. Traditional cultures in particular have been subject to such appropriation of their history. The path to reconciliation — which may involve acts of repentance and even compensation — lies in a process of active dialogue, which requires that the interlocutors contemplate other points of view in order to assess the plausibility of competing claims. Some international initiatives, such as UNESCO's Slave Route project, are committed to facilitating such forms of reconciliation. In some cases, States themselves have initiated these procedures through recognition of the suffering of a particular population group, as did Australia and Canada with respect to their indigenous communities. A key element of intercultural dialogue is the building of a

common, shared memory base, recognized and accepted by all parties involved. Engaging in such dialogue may require participants to admit faults, openly debate about competing memories and make compromises in the interests of reconciliation and social harmony.

At a time when memory conflicts in numerous multicultural environments undermine social cohesion, there is an urgent need to place divergent histories in perspective. A number of attempts have been made to transcend competing memories by framing a common historical narrative in situations where the conflict has been resolved but also where the conflict has just ended or is ongoing (see Box 2.4).

#### Box 2.4 Reconciliation through common narrative: Revised history textbook initiatives

When the passage of time has blurred the memory of war, it becomes possible to envisage the drafting of a shared history. In this way, some States have launched bi- or multilateral initiatives aimed at integrating the viewpoint of their erstwhile enemies into school textbooks and reducing prejudices caused by mutual ignorance.

A novel experiment took place in East Asia between China, the Republic of Korea and Japan in 2002, when the three countries established the 'Forum for Historical Knowledge and Peace in Central Asia' bringing together a number of public or para-public research institutions, historians and secondary-school teachers from the three countries in order to draft a joint history textbook. The chapters were divided up among three authors, one from each of the three countries; each author was free to express national viewpoints and disagreements before the introduction of modifications necessary for the establishment of a joint text. Three international meetings were convened in the process: one in Nanjing in 2002, one in Tokyo in 2003 and one in Seoul in 2004. In the interest of East Asian integration, national histories and the major phases of international history (such as the 'Korean War' or the role of the US or the USSR) were generally excluded from the undertaking. Conceived as a school

textbook, the volume devotes space to the problem of memory, citing the testimony of many victims and instancing a number of memorial places (museums, monuments, commemorations). Published in 2005, the textbook has met with great popular success: the initial print run of 20,000 copies sold out in two days; and a year after publication, 110,000 revised manuals had been sold in China, 50,000 in the Republic of Korea and 70,000 in Japan.

A similar initiative was launched in Europe in 2003 between France and Germany, on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French-German Elysée Treaty, and was strongly promoted by the educational institutions in both countries. In September 2006, French and German schools were given the opportunity to use a common manual, jointly published in the two languages and drafted, over a period of about ten months, by a Franco-German team of about ten history professors. Each chapter is made up of intersecting French and German perspectives, on which consensus was reached through multiple discussions and critical terminological analyses. Following the success of the 2006 textbook, which sold more than 75,000 copies on both sides of the Rhine, a second volume was released in 2008.

Even where conflict is still ongoing, progress towards dual-history textbooks is being made

in different parts of the world, as illustrated by the work of the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME), established in 1998 following the Oslo Accords. Since 2002, a group involving Israeli and Palestinian history teachers, under the supervision of two historians from the Universities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, has produced three booklets for use in Palestinian and Israeli high schools that present the two groups' contradictory visions of history. Each page is divided into three parts: one section each for the Palestinian and the Israeli narratives and a blank third section, which is for the pupil, Israeli or Palestinian, to fill in. As explained by Sami Adwan, co-founder with Dan Bar-On of PRIME, while 'the dates may be the same, the interpretation of each side is very different' (Chen, 2007). Entitled *Learning Each Other's Historical Narratives*, the booklet has been translated into English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Catalan and Basque, and has sold over 23,000 copies in France alone.

This model has also been followed in other conflict-ridden societies, notably by the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution at Skopje University in Macedonia, which has published parallel Macedonian-Albanian narratives. Such initiatives are crucial first steps in the process of reconciliation.

Source: Giaccone, 2007.



*Showcasing 'places of memory', as physical sites for dialogue between communities with opposing memories, can also contribute to post-conflict reconciliation*

We need to think carefully about ways in which intercultural dialogue can be integrated into conflict prevention strategies or employed in post-conflict situations. Without proper attention, painful memories — of a 'past that is still present' — can lead to the resumption or exacerbation of conflict. As pointed out by Paul Ricoeur (2003), the obscuring of a crime or a conflict (*amnesia*) ultimately leads to a return of memory (*anamnesis*), and care must be taken to ensure this does not result in the crystallization of memory conflicts (*hypermnesia*). Conflicting memories of the same event by people who have experienced a dispute from opposing sides can sometimes be reconciled through the presence of a *mediator*, even in cases where the differing positions seems unbridgeable. This issue assumes particular importance in cases where memory fractures occur within the same country.

In the 1990s, South Africa invented a new model for dealing with the traumas caused by apartheid, the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. They were designed to re-establish the new South African State on the basis of a shared memory while allowing repressed memories to resurface. Reconciliation thus became a collective enterprise in which no community or group was able to represent itself as totally innocent. This model, although it did not entail any reparation by former perpetrators of torture, has been followed in other States emerging from civil war, including some countries in Central America. In the wake of the civil wars and ethnic massacres in Rwanda, national reconciliation processes (as distinct from international initiatives for judging those responsible for the genocide) have included the removal of references to the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups on identity cards, the celebration of a national commemoration day (7 April) and the introduction in 2002 of *gacacas*, or ancestral courts, aimed at promoting reconciliation and justice by trying the accused in the presence of family and neighbours (Anheier and Isar, 2007).

Showcasing 'places of memory', as physical sites for dialogue between communities with opposing memories, can also contribute to post-conflict reconciliation. The Robben Island Prison in South Africa, where most of the leaders of the African National Congress, including Nelson Mandela, were held and which was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, demonstrates the educational potential of





such sites. Too often, because it is regarded as enemy heritage, a site or monument can become threatened by destruction, as happened with the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia and the Buddhas of Bamyán in Afghanistan. In this context, the concept of the 'common natural and cultural heritage' embodied in the 1972 World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972) retains all its relevance. It demonstrates that what distinguishes us can also become what unites us, and that a community of experience in contemplation of the achievements of very different cultures and civilizations can strengthen the sense of our common humanity.

## 2.4 Empowerment

Ensuring a level playing field for cultural encounters and guaranteeing equality of status and dignity between all participants in initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue involve recognizing the ethnocentric ways in which certain cultures have hitherto proceeded. Central to the many problems arising in this context is the Western ideology of knowledge transparency, which cannot do justice to systems of thought recognizing both 'exoteric' and 'esoteric' knowledge and embodying initiatory processes for crossing the boundaries between them. This recently became an issue, for example, in the field of museography in connection with the public exhibition of ritual objects from Vanuatu at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. Before the exhibition opening, it was found necessary to construct separate viewing areas for male and female visitors in order to safeguard the 'power' of certain sacred objects, as traditionally required in their place of origin (Huffman, 2007). This highlighted the particular sensitivities associated with cultural resources and the need for dialogue to take account of the value systems embedded in the practices surrounding them.

Cultural or community mapping (which began with Inuit indigenous populations in the 1970s) can significantly contribute to this dual objective of making the intangible heritage and local/indigenous knowledge of different communities visible, and ensuring that it is appropriate and relevant by allowing knowledge bearers to express themselves in confidence, without fear of being dispossessed of the knowledge in question. Typically used when communities need to negotiate about territories and rights (such as access to, control over and use of natural resources), cultural mapping allows

*The 1972 World Heritage Convention demonstrates that what distinguishes us can also become what unites us, and that a community of experience in contemplation of the achievements of very different cultures and civilizations can strengthen the sense of our common humanity*

non-dominant or marginalized cultural groups to be fully represented in a context of intercultural dialogue and mutual respect. Various forms of cultural mapping and methodologies have evolved around the world (more so in Latin America and South and Southeast Asia than in Africa) which serve to express the myriad levels of relationship between the natural, mental and spiritual worlds: a wide array of techniques and activities ranging from community-based participatory approaches in identifying and documenting local cultural resources and activities, to the use of innovative and sophisticated information tools like Geographic Information Systems

(GIS) and 3D-modelling (see Box 2.5). The resulting 'map' can be of an anthropological, sociological, archaeological, genealogical, linguistic, topographical, musicological and/or botanical nature and often represents a matrix combining a number of these elements simultaneously.<sup>2</sup>

As an exercise in dialogue across generations or among subgroups within a community, participatory mapping exercises also provide an opportunity to reinforce communicative participation and collaborative processes in spatial problem analysis and decision-making to produce stand-alone scale relief models, which have

### Box 2.5 Through the eyes of hunters-gatherers: Participatory 3D modelling among the Ogiek indigenous peoples in Kenya

As part of a 2006–2008 project aimed at 'Strengthening the East African Regional Mapping and Information Systems Network' (ERMIS-Africa), a participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM) exercise took place in the village of Nessuit (Nakuru District, Kenya) in August 2006, following a ten-month preparation period involving the Ogiek, traditionally one of the larger hunter-gatherer communities in Eastern Africa. Using a fully participatory method and drawing on P3DM experiences in other regions of the world, particularly Southeast Asia and the Pacific, this was the first exercise of its kind in Africa.

During the 11 days of the mapping exercise, members of the local communities (including schoolchildren, teachers and about 120 Ogiek elders, men and women delegated by the 21 clans), facilitators, and national and international trainees discussed facilitation techniques and P3DM practices, constructed a scaled and geo-referenced 3D model, composed the map legend and extracted these data via digital photography. On-screen digitizing, ground-truthing and thematic map generation took place in the following months. The exercise led to the construction of a solid three-dimensional, 1:10,000-scale model of the Eastern Mau Forest Complex

which covered a total land area of 576 km<sup>2</sup> and depicted the local bio-physical and cultural environments as they had been in the 1920s, with a highly dense forest cover, a permanent river network flowing from the upper water catchments and a dense population of beehives, among other characteristics. It was decided to visualize the 1920s landscape because it was during that period that Nessuit became a site of both colonial missionary activity and industrial forestry, compounded thereafter by overtly or tacitly accepted logging practices on the Mau Forest Complex, which have led to serious ecological disasters, forest and related biodiversity depletion, and consequently the destruction of the Ogiek natural and cultural landscapes.

While community mapping exercises have many interesting components, it has been argued that the collaborative development of the map legend is the key process on which the quality of such an exercise and its outputs depend, allowing local spatial knowledge to be expressed in an objective manner but in contrast to the dominant intellectual framework of 'official' maps. The making of the legend involved intense discussions among elders, reaching agreements among clans on the naming and description of the way the

Ogiek traditionally discern the territory and its eco-cultural-systems', in order to define and code culturally acceptable land units. This process benefited from skilled facilitation, beginning with individual consultations and followed by focused group discussions, including storytelling, in order to redress the shortcomings resulting from differing categorizations of land units. A matrix was used to provide elders from different clans with the opportunity to achieve consensus, or at least common understanding, about the terminology and categorization of areas. New legend items were added, updated and reworded, and new paints and pin codes were invented to capture the full diversity of the Ogiek worldview.

The final model features hundreds of labels, which locate place names, names of watercourses and water bodies, and clan classifications. The 3D mapmaking exercise proved to be an excellent way to enable people of all ages to engage with their landscape and heritage in an inspiring and motivating collegial environment, as well as to become a catalyst in stimulating memory and creating visible and tangible representations of natural landscapes for the transmission of crucial knowledge, wisdom and values.

Source: Rambaldi et al., 2007.

2. UNESCO has supported many participatory mapping initiatives, including: the South African San Institute's project with the Khomani San community; PROCED's project with the Pygmies of Gabon; the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture's project with Philippine indigenous cultures (the Mamanua,

the Higaunon, the Manobo, the Eastern Manobo, the Banwaon and the Subanen); the Buffalo Trust's project with the Kiowa people of Oklahoma; and the project with Bolivia's Iritu community.



proven to be particularly user-friendly. This both facilitates a community's reflection on its specific cultural traditions, resources and institutions, as well as their forms of intergenerational transmission, and helps to better equip the community to defend its rights and interests, thereby revitalizing its identities and cultural resources.

A specific task of intercultural dialogue is to be sensitive to the fact that all communities do not experience and respond to phenomena such as globalization in the same way. Indigenous peoples, for example, are likely to see it as an exacerbation of certain trends — such as the encroachment of extractive industries on their territories — that are eroding their traditional ways of life and livelihoods. At the same time, globalization and global networks favour the emergence of indigenous movements at the international level, enabling the collective memory of domination and struggle to serve as an 'ideological weapon' in support of claims regarding ancestral land and resources and self-determined development (see chapter 1). Thus, indigenous activists have become strongly engaged with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and the United Nations *Framework Convention on Climate Change*, and have helped to secured the adoption, on 13 September 2007, of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which now serves as a primary reference in the formulation of policies and national laws concerning the rights of indigenous peoples (an example being the Philippines' 1997



*Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act*). It is likewise being used as a framework for the UNDP's principles of engagement with indigenous peoples (UNDP, 2001), the World Bank's *Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples* (2006) and the Asian Development Bank's *Policy on Indigenous Peoples* (1998). Furthermore, since the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, it has been cited in a judgement by the Supreme Court of Belize, in a case filed by the Maya against the Government of Belize, and has served in Bolivia as the basis for its *National Law 3760 on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, as

📍 Mbende Jerusarema Dance, a popular dance style practiced by the Zezuru Shona people living in eastern Zimbabwe



📍 Kutiyattam, a form of sacred theatre from Kerala, India



📍 Traditional ceremonies of the Kallawayta, Bolivia



📍 A performer of Kun Qu Opera



*The key to successful intercultural dialogue lies in the acknowledgement of the equal dignity of the participants... based on the premise that all cultures are in continual evolution and are the result of multiple influences throughout history*

announced by President Evo Morales on 7 November 2007 (Tauli-Corpuz, 2007).

In many social contexts, women can also be counted among the 'new voices' that have a distinctive role to play in the promotion of cultural diversity. Women are identifiable agents for cultural change since they are often the ones engaged in processes involving the validation and reinterpretation of cultural meaning and practices. The role of women as 'value carriers' in the transmission of language, ethical codes, value systems, religious beliefs and behavioural patterns to their children is increasingly augmented by their role as 'value creators' (feminist theory having contributed to this development). Recognition of the multiple identities of groups and individuals enables women not only to contest mainstream or dominant views from within but also to belong to other groups and even voluntarily to exit their communities of origin. Cultural diversity is to this extent bound up with recognition of women as autonomous agents in the construction of their identities.

A major obstacle still to be overcome is the pervasive gender discrimination and stereotyping that subordinate women to male-dominated interpretations of cultural traditions and religion. Demands by women for access to the public sphere and to full enjoyment of civil and political rights are increasingly widespread and insistent. Other demands concern gender equality in the private sphere, where women have often been subject to legal discrimination, since family law has assumed either implicitly or explicitly that the traditional male-headed family is the natural household unit. Gender inequality is multidimensional and manifests itself in all areas of social life (the household, the labour market, property ownership, etc.) and interacts with other forms of inequality (racial, social, economic, age-based, etc.). Issues relating to the promotion of women's role in opening up new avenues of intercultural dialogue have been highlighted in the *Dushanbe Declaration* on 'the Role of Women in Intercultural Dialogue in Central Asia' (UNESCO, 2003) and in the *Baku Declaration* on 'Expanding the Role of Women in Cross-cultural Dialogue' (UNESCO/ISESCO, 2008).

Tension can arise between the advocacy of gender equality and claims made in the name of cultural

diversity. While it is possible in general terms to argue for accommodating 'contexts of choice', there are cases in which 'there are clear disparities of power balance between the sexes, such that the more powerful [...] are those who are generally in a position to determine and articulate the group's beliefs, practices and interests. In such circumstances, group rights are potentially, and in many cases actually, anti-feminist' (Benhabib, 2002; Song, 2005). In such cases, to accept the 'group' claims would be to do injustice to the women concerned, who could well be contesting the values and ways of life of the group and, more specifically, the status, roles and rights accorded to them. In short, group rights adduced in the name of cultural diversity cannot claim precedence over fundamental human rights, as sometimes occurs in connection with the dramatic examples of female genital mutilation (FGM) or female infanticide.

The key to successful intercultural dialogue lies in the acknowledgement of the equal dignity of the participants. This presupposes recognition of — and respect for — the diverse forms of knowledge and their modes of expression, the customs and traditions of participants and efforts to establish, if not a culture-neutral context for dialogue, then at least a culturally neutralized context that enable communities to express themselves freely. Although intercultural dialogue cannot hope to settle on its own all the unresolved conflicts in the political, economic, social and historical spheres — as there are divergences in moral premises that individuals and groups are not prepared to discuss — no effort should be spared in the endeavour.

## Conclusion

Any effort towards intercultural dialogue must be based upon the premise that all cultures are — and have always been — in continual evolution and are the result of multiple influences throughout history, both external and internal. From this perspective, the perceived fixed traits or identities that seem to isolate us from one another and plant the seeds of stereotype, discrimination or stigmatism should be seen not as barriers to dialogue but as the very ground upon which such dialogue can begin. New initiatives for intercultural dialogue have been launched in recent years, including the UN General Assembly's proclamation of 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

and its proposed designation of 2011–2020 as the United Nations Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace.

Intercultural capacities can be developed as tools to help level the ground of encounter between people from different cultures, on the basis of a strict equality of rights and an awareness that it is not so much cultures but *people* — individuals and groups, with their complexities and multiple allegiances — who are engaged in the process of dialogue. What conditions the success of intercultural dialogue is not so much knowledge of others but rather the basic abilities to listen, dialogue and wonder. These prompt cognitive

flexibility, empathy and the capacity to shift between different frames of reference, humility and hospitality. Informal networks, at the local or community level, and the arts and creativity generally speaking, must not be underestimated as valuable means by which to combat closed identities and promote cultural pluralism. Hence the need for continued reflection on ways to establish genuine intercultural dialogue today, including the development of appropriate skills (based on respect for others, receptiveness, learning to listen), support for initiatives and networks of all kinds (including those convinced of and those sceptical about the value of dialogue) and the involvement of many new actors (women, young people) and so on.



© Muslims praying in Jakarta, Indonesia

## Chapter 2 Recommendations

**Support should continue to be given to networks and initiatives for intercultural and interfaith dialogue at all levels, while ensuring the full involvement of new partners, especially women and young people.**

To this end, action should be taken to:

- a. Develop measures to enable members of communities and groups subject to discrimination and stigmatization to participate in the framing of projects designed to counter cultural stereotyping.
- b. Support initiatives aimed at developing real and virtual spaces and provide facilities for cultural interaction, especially in countries where inter-community conflict exists.
- c. Showcase ‘places of memory’ that serve to symbolize and promote reconciliation between communities within an overall process of cultural rapprochement.

## In focus:

## The history of dialogue at UNESCO and institutional initiatives on intercultural dialogue

UNESCO and the United Nations have long been at the forefront of international efforts to strengthen dialogue among civilizations and cultures. Over the past decade, in opposition to the different currents of thought epitomized in the notion of a 'clash of civilizations', they have sought to propose alternative visions and frameworks for cultural encounters and exchanges.

From its inception, under its programme for easing tensions and conflicts throughout the world, UNESCO has been concerned with institutional initiatives for promoting 'dialogue' as a means to the peaceful resolution of disputes. The second session of its Executive Board in 1947 saw the adoption of an educational programme for international understanding, formalized by a resolution of the General Conference in 1949, which subsequently gave rise to a whole series of studies on tensions and national stereotypes as related to international understanding (e.g. research studies by Otto Klineberg, Margaret Mead and Jean Stoetzel). The inauguration in 1948 of the *UNESCO Collection of Representative Works* likewise reflected this concern to help revitalize international cultural exchanges and mutual understanding, as did the creation in 1949 of the *UNESCO*

*Catalogue of Reproductions* and in 1961 of the *UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music*. From 1948 to 1983, over 900 titles deriving from over 90 national literatures were translated and published by UNESCO, including the works of 11 Nobel Laureates or future Laureates in Literature.

UNESCO has also launched a number of projects aimed at providing new bases for studying interactions between cultures and civilizations, including the establishment in 1953 of the collection entitled *Cultural Unity and Diversity*, the first volume of which consisted of an opinion poll on the 'current conception of cultures, which are native to the different countries of the world and their relationships with one another' (Stenou, 2003). From 1957 to 1966, the *Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values* contributed to a better knowledge of the civilizations of Southern Asia and the Far East, under the direction of Jacques Havel and the supervision of the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Jean Thomas. Over 250 works were published under the Programme for the Translation of Oriental Literatures, including the works of Yasunari Kawabata, which led to his being awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968.

➡ Maranao women, expressing their history and beliefs through the Daragen epic, Philippines





Other major projects followed, including studies on Islamic civilization and the major project on the Silk Roads, which was launched in 1988 under the title 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue' and which, by its completion in 1997, had benefited from the contributions of over 2,000 scholars from more than 30 countries and from five international scientific expeditions (the 'Desert Route' from Xi'an to Kashgar, the 'Maritime Routes' from Venice to Osaka, the 'Steppe Route' in Central Asia, the 'Nomad Route' in Mongolia and the 'Buddhist Route' in Nepal). The aim of the Silk Roads Project was to recreate the context for their renewal by rediscovering the extraordinary fertility of the cultural exchanges along the Silk Roads. The passing expeditions prompted the creation or establishment in several countries of research institutes or international institutes working in fields closely linked to the Silk Roads, with particular reference to nomadic and Buddhist cultures. The Silk Roads were followed by other routes, including the Slave Route (to end the silence that had long surrounded the question of the slave trade), the Iron Route, the Routes of Al-Andalus and the Chocolate Route.

UNESCO's series 'General and Regional Histories' and 'History of Humanity', the outcome of a project going back to 1952, were likewise aimed at mobilizing scholars worldwide around an ambitious agenda, concerning a critical challenge of our time. The History of Humanity series is concerned in particular with highlighting the common inheritance, the reciprocal influences and the contributions of the different peoples and cultures to the progress of Humanity. From 1968 onwards, the five other multi-volume regional histories (*General History of Africa*, *General History of Latin America*, *General History of the Caribbean*, *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia*, and *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture*) have attempted to 'decolonize' the history of those regions by giving a voice to local historians while encouraging the exchange of viewpoints and intellectual discussion on a particular regional historical context. Over 1,600 historians and other specialists have participated in the drafting of these histories, which comprise some 50 volumes. The challenge now is to improve the spread of the historical knowledge thereby gained so as to reach the widest possible public and to strengthen mutual understanding among peoples. This should involve, in particular, the inclusion of these histories in educational curricula and the drafting of textbooks that adapt their content for school learners.


© Girls at the nakamal dancing place after a ceremony, hills of Tanna, Vanuatu





The term 'dialogue of civilizations' first appeared on the international scene in 1961 during a symposium organized by the European Centre of Culture. According to Denis de Rougemont, he coined the term in response to the first wave of globalization induced by Western 'technologies of production, transportation and information' and the 'coming into contact of all regions of the earth ineluctably, irreversibly and literally superficially' (cited in de Libera, 2003). The theme of dialogue — previously a largely intellectual exercise — took on a new political dimension as of the end of 1993, when Samuel Huntington published his thesis of the conflict of civilizations in the review *Foreign Affairs*.



 Women in burkas, Kandahar, Afghanistan

Following the proposal of President Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the year 2001 was proclaimed the 'United Nations Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations', and in November of that year the General Assembly adopted the 'Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations'. UNESCO was assigned the lead role within the United Nations system for the 'Dialogue among Civilizations', adopting for the purpose a multi-stakeholder approach with a special focus on youth and women and involving the mobilization of its existing networks, such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO Institutes, Centres and Clubs.

Key dates and documents in framing the Organization's contribution to reflection on the dialogue among civilizations

over the current decade have included the *New Perspectives in UNESCO's Activities Pertaining to the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures* adopted by the General Conference in 2003, the *Rabat Commitment* adopted in June 2005 (which identified a series of concrete and practical actions in UNESCO programme-related areas) and the 2006 intersectoral *Plan of Action for the Promotion of the Dialogue among Peoples and UNESCO's Contribution to International Action against Terrorism*. International, regional and national conferences were also held in order to raise awareness among decision-makers and civil societies about the value and potential of intercultural dialogue, as well as to debunk myths arising from prejudice and contributing to the ignorance of other people's histories, languages, heritage and religions.

Along with other system agencies and programmes, UNESCO is also contributing to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) initiative, which was launched following the release in November 2006 of the latter's *Report of the High-Level Group*. The AoC focuses on the challenges of the 'relations between Western and Muslim societies'.

UNESCO's Interreligious Dialogue programme aims to highlight the dynamics of interaction between spiritual traditions and their specific cultures by emphasizing the borrowings that have taken place between them. This programme's landmark achievements include the:

- *Tashkent and Bishkek Declarations* (of 1998 and 1999, respectively), which prepared the way for the development of consultative mechanisms and processes between religious communities and governments as a means of resolving disputes and drawing on religious capacities; and
- Philippine Initiative, based on the outcome of the first Informal Summit of Leaders and Interfaith Leaders on Cooperation for Peace in 2005.

Discussions concerning the establishment of a Religious Advisory Council under the United Nations or UNESCO are ongoing. Other UNESCO initiatives in the field of interreligious dialogue include combating defamation of religions, investigating the role of religions as mediators for social cohesion and hosting interreligious meetings, such as the third World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace in December 2008.

In November 2005, the United Nations General Assembly recognized that 'mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace' and expressed its appreciation of UNESCO's work in this area and 'its focus on concrete action at the global, regional and subregional levels and its flagship project on the promotion of interfaith dialogue' (UN, 2005). Discussions are ongoing about the possible celebration of a United Nations Decade of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace in 2011–2020.

Other regional institutions pursuing initiatives for the strengthening of dialogue among civilizations include:

- The Council of Europe, whose White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008), representing the outcome of a process launched in 2005 at the Summit of Heads of State and Government (*Faro Declaration*), is aimed at identifying 'how to promote intensified intercultural dialogue within and between societies in Europe and dialogue between Europe and its neighbours'. This initiative pursues a longstanding commitment on the part of the Council of Europe to support intercultural dialogue. Its key dates include: the First Summit of Heads of State and Government of Member States in 1993, which affirmed that 'the diversity of traditions and cultures has for centuries been one of Europe's riches and that the principle of tolerance is the guarantee of the maintenance in Europe of an open society' (*Vienna Declaration*); the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995); and the European Youth Campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance ('All Different — All Equal').
- ALECSO, ISESCO and other regional institutions and NGOs active in the field of international cooperation, such as the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, regularly participate in expert meetings on intercultural dialogue, in particular those organized by UNESCO.

☺ Gelede ceremony, performed by the Yoruba-Nago community spread over Benin, Nigeria and Togo



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Old believers from the cultural space of the Semeiskie, Russia





*A man in Niamey, Niger*

## PART II.

# KEY VECTORS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Faced with the challenges of rethinking intercultural dialogue, countering stereotypes as well as tendencies towards withdrawal into closed identities, a deeper examination of the implications of cultural diversity in areas outside of culture in its restricted sense is equally important to public policy-making today. While virtually all human activities are shaped by and in turn help to shape cultural diversity, the prospects for the continued vitality of diversity are crucially bound up with the future of languages, education, the communication of cultural content, and the complex interface between creativity and the marketplace.

From the most immediate manifestation of cultural diversity — languages — to its pervasiveness across the entire social and economic fabric — the marketplace — including its role in education, media and communication policies, Part II explores these often overlapping fields — all central to UNESCO's mandate — with a view to identifying trends and factors that impact on the state of cultural diversity and refining our political agendas for its preservation and promotion in keeping with the complex realities of today's world.

### CHAPTER 3 – Languages

Chapter 3 addresses the need to safeguard linguistic diversity in the wider context of managing cultural change, while facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding through the promotion of multilingualism and translation capacities.



### CHAPTER 4 – Education

Chapter 4 argues the case for broadening the compass of educational systems to take account of informal learning environments and learning needs in culturally diverse settings, with a view to enhancing the quality of education and preparing us to live together with our differences through the development of intercultural competencies.



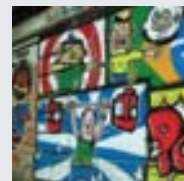
### CHAPTER 5 – Communication and cultural contents

Chapter 5 analyzes recent trends in the communication of cultural contents, highlighting the challenge of ensuring that the expansion of media diversity and outreach is matched by efforts to redress the imbalances inherent in the digital divide so as to further processes of cultural exchange and mutual understanding.



### CHAPTER 6 – Creativity and the marketplace

Chapter 6 explores the continuum across artistic creativity, social innovation and economic growth, highlighting the added-value of cultural diversity in key sectors ranging from contemporary art practices, crafts and tourism to corporate activities ranging from management and human resources to marketing and 'cultural intelligence'.







**TRANSLATION IN  
ALL LANGUAGES**

**D.T.P  
TELUGU, HINDI &  
ENGLISH**

*A translation and typing service in Hyderabad, India*

# Languages

Languages mediate our experiences, our intellectual and cultural environments, our modes of encounter with others, our value systems, social codes and sense of belonging, both collectively and individually. From the perspective of cultural diversity, linguistic diversity reflects the creative adaptation of groups to their changing physical and social environments. In this sense, languages are not just a means of communication but represent the very fabric of cultural expressions; they are the carriers of identity, values and worldviews.

While languages have always been susceptible to the political, socio-economic and cultural pressures of more influential language communities (as in the case of the marginalization or eclipse of vernacular languages in the context of European colonialism), today's pressures are impacting with increasing force on all communities as a consequence of globalization and the far-reaching communication developments accompanying it. In opening up previously self-enclosed societies and subjecting some minority languages to increasing competition, globalization and urbanization are major factors in contemporary patterns of linguistic erosion — the bulk of today's languages being far from equal in the face of these developments and the most vulnerable among them being threatened with rapid extinction. Yet, the effects of globalization on languages are complex and multidirectional (see chapter 1), and new linguistic practices are appearing among different social groups, especially young people. These practices are opening up a broad range of new forms of cultural diversity.

The importance of languages as identity markers becomes evident when dealing with issues relating to language loss and the emergence of new linguistic practices. From the perspective of intercultural relations, safeguarding linguistic diversity goes hand-in-hand with promoting multilingualism and must be matched by efforts to ensure that languages serve as a bridge between cultures, as a means to promoting the 'fruitful diversity' of the world's cultures.



*A sign outside a school in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania*



# Languages

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A calligrapher in Hangzhou, China

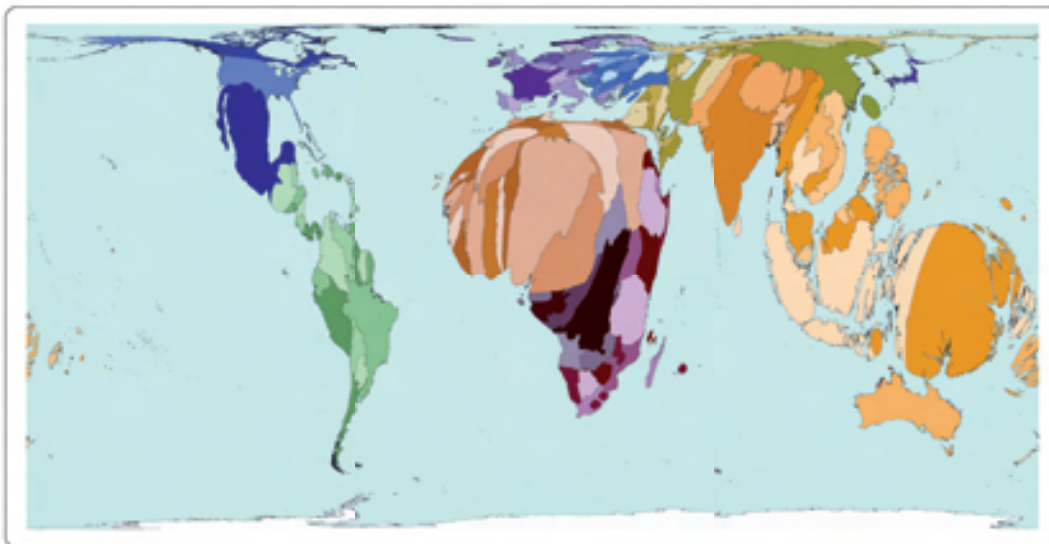
### 3.1 Language dynamics today

Linguists believe that a large percentage of the world's languages are likely to disappear in the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the precise number of languages spoken in the world today is disputed, inventories such as the *Ethnologue* and *Linguasphere* put the total at somewhere between 6,000 and 8,000. Half of the existing languages are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people, and one such language is said to be disappearing every two weeks (Crystal, 2000). The prospects for language communities that are small in number or economically weak are particularly bleak. One study has calculated — on the assumption that languages with less than 150 speakers are in grave danger — that 600 (or 11.5 percent) of the world's languages are on the brink of extinction. If the threshold of viability is set at 10,000 speakers, language loss in the medium term will amount to some 60 percent. If the threshold is set at 100,000 speakers, over 80 percent of the world's languages will be lost, including most of the indigenous tongues in Australia and the Pacific. If one assumes a medium-term threshold of 1 million speakers, then '95.2 percent of all languages will be lost, including every single language indigenous to North America, Central America, Australia, New Guinea and the Pacific, plus almost all of those in South America' (Nettle, 1999).

A language under pressure is often a language whose speakers shift to a different, dominant language in response to political, social, economic and cultural pressures. The failure of the intergenerational transmission of a language can be likened to the reproductive failure of a species (Krauss, 1992). If such pressures persist across generations, such languages will be endangered (UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, 2003a), a language being considered moribund when its speaking community no longer passes it on to younger generations. The point at which a language can be said to be critically endangered varies from language to language — for example, a language with 500 speakers may be in trouble in parts of Africa but not in the Pacific because of differing social and political conditions (Grimes, 1995). Likewise, many other conditions related to linguistic extinction cannot be inferred from the number of speakers alone (see section 3.3). Such conditions include the community's own attitudes towards its language and other sociolinguistic factors, as well as governmental attitudes and policies towards minority languages, and the presence or absence of programmes to preserve or perpetuate languages (Maffi and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999).

#### Map 3.1 Living languages in the World according to Ethnologue

The countries and territories are re-sized according to the number of indigenous living languages identified by Ethnologue.



Source: Ethnologue, 2005; worldmapper.org



*Globalization seems to be affecting the linguistic make-up of countries throughout the world in varied and often contradictory ways*

Linguistic homogenization typically accompanied the creation of nation-states in the wake of decolonization and, more recently, the collapse of the Soviet Union and its affiliated satellites. Nation-states can constitutionally define the status of languages spoken in their territory and decide on the spheres in which they are to be used. A language that is given official status is generally that used in the educational system, public media, courts and public administration. In addition to official languages, some countries explicitly nominate a number of national languages in their constitution (in Senegal, for example, the official language is French and the national languages include Diola, Malinke, Pular, Serer, Soninke, Wolof<sup>3</sup> and all codified languages<sup>4</sup>), yet this rarely influences their use in public domains. In most countries, official languages are associated with modernization and economic progress, the rest (usually local languages) tend to be restricted to the private domain, compounding the social and political marginalization of their speakers.

While its full impact is difficult to estimate, globalization seems to be affecting the linguistic make-up of countries throughout the world in varied and often contradictory ways. With more than 1 billion (first- and second-language) speakers, English is undeniably the most widespread language of communication. It is the official or main language in almost 60 countries (nearly one-third of the Member States of the United Nations), is present in another 75 countries, and is also the matrix language of more than 40 creole and pidgin languages. English has been described as 'the only shared medium across the vast Asian region' (Kachru, 2005), home to the world's largest population, and remains the dominant language across cultural industries, the Internet and media, as well as in diplomacy (Crystal, 2000; Camdenton, 2001). Two billion people — one-third of the world's population — could be learning English by 2010–2015, with as many as 3 billion people, or half the world's population, speaking the language in the near future (Graddol, 2006), leading to the oft-stated conclusion that the world has already adopted a de facto international auxiliary language. This trend is further confirmed by translation statistics, with most translations being from

English as source language and comparatively little of the work published around the world in other languages being translated into English — somewhere between 2 and 4 percent of total books published in the US and the UK (see Venuti, 1995, and section 3.4 below). One need look no further than cyberspace to note the preponderance of a handful of the most widespread written languages, which is having detrimental impacts on the representation of other languages and on the viability of non-written languages (see Box 3.1).

While it has fore-grounded the expanding role of English, the effects of globalization on languages are nonetheless multidirectional, making it hard to predict the impact of the expansion of English on multilingualism. While English appears to occupy a unique position as a convenient vehicular code across the world in tandem with the rise of information and communication technologies (ICTs), further technological innovation promises to make electronically mediated communication better able to support character-based languages (without romanization or alphabetization)<sup>3</sup> and oral-based communication (through voice recognition, for example) in the future (Lo Bianco, 2007). It may also be that the widespread use of English will be limited to specific purposes, such as transactions and functional communication. Globalization has also encouraged more plural and hybrid approaches to English, notably in India and Nigeria (Kachru and Smith, 2008; Kachru, Kachru and Nelson, 2006; Kachru, 1992, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007), which reveal the immensely complex modes in which language, identity and relationships interact and in which speakers adapt inherited forms of language to new cultural contexts and for new purposes.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, in many instances of language loss, transfer away from minority languages is not towards English but towards other rival languages and regional dialects, such as Bangla (Bengali) in Bangladesh and India, and Kiswahili in Eastern Africa. Indeed, across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific, a range of widely spoken regional languages serve as vehicular languages or lingua francas (Giddens, 1999; Miller, 2003).

3. On internationalized domain names (IDNs), see ICANN (2001) and the corresponding Wikipedia entry.

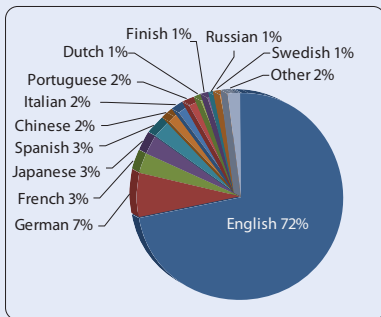
4. For more information on the diversity of World Englishes, see also the following scientific journals: *English World-Wide: A Journal of Varieties of English*,

*World Englishes: Journal of English as an International and Intranational Language, and English Today: The International Review of the English Language.*

**Box 3.1 Languages in cyberspace<sup>1</sup>**

Few studies have undertaken large-scale quantitative analyses of the languages used on the Internet, and those that haven't done so have tended to focus on the World Wide Web to the exclusion of other communication modes, such as email and chat, because the Web is more directly observable and easier to survey than other forms of Internet communication.

**Languages on the Web, 2003**



Source: O'Neill, Lavoie and Bennett, 2003.

Studies from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) (Lavoie and O'Neill 2000 and 2003), for example, have used a random sample of available websites on the Internet as the basis of an initial survey conducted at two different times, one year apart, in order to assess trends in the use of different languages. The 1998–1999 survey suggested that some international expansion of the Web was taking place (some 29 identifiable languages in the 1999 sample of some 2,229 random websites), and that the use of different languages was closely correlated with the domain in which each website originated. As expected, English was clearly dominant, representing 72 percent of the total websites surveyed. The 2002 follow-up survey showed the proportion of English on the web to be fairly constant in relation to the previous study, although small differences appeared for other languages.

Overall, the conclusion was that linguistic diversity of the web, while approaching that of many multilingual countries, is a poor reflection of linguistic diversity worldwide.

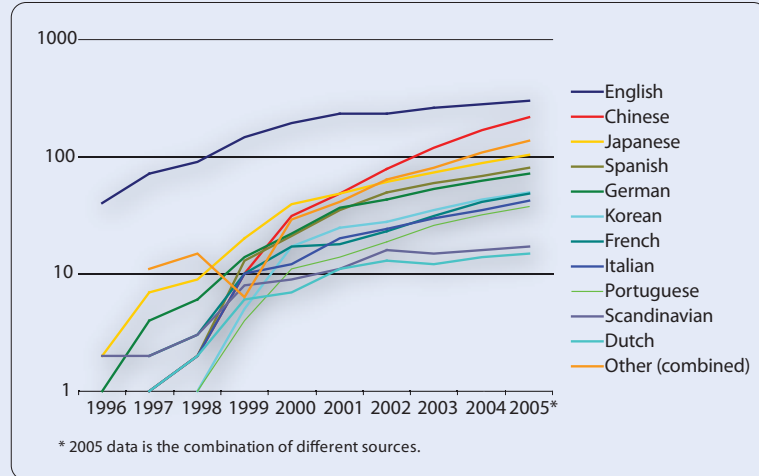
The 1999 OCLC survey also determined the proportions of Web pages that are multilingual from each domain of origin, and noted which language pairs are used. If a website used more than one language, English was always one of these. In total, 100% of the 156 multilingual sites surveyed used English (and 30% of these also used French, German, Italian and Spanish), even though 87% of the multilingual websites originated in domains outside major English-speaking countries (Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States). This finding directly contradicts the popular notion that the web somehow promotes linguistic diversity.

The most direct effort to estimate the linguistic diversity of Internet users comes from the translation services company Global Reach,

which produced yearly estimates between 1996 and 2004 based on International Telecommunication Union (ITU) estimates of user populations in each country. They define a 'user' as someone who has used the Internet in the past three months, and have divided 'user populations' into language populations calculated from *Ethnologue* estimates and adjusted with UN population data. Another set of estimates, from Internet World Stats, was used for the period from March 2004 through March 2009.

The findings resulting from the compilation of estimates are consistent with those of the OCLC studies: English, with an estimated 464 million users in March of 2009, is the most used language on the Internet, followed by Chinese, with approximately 321 million users. A remarkable trend is the dynamism of Spanish, which since 2006 is the third most frequently used language on the web, followed by Japanese, French and Portuguese. Thus, while English-speaking users represented

**Estimated language populations of Internet users (millions)**

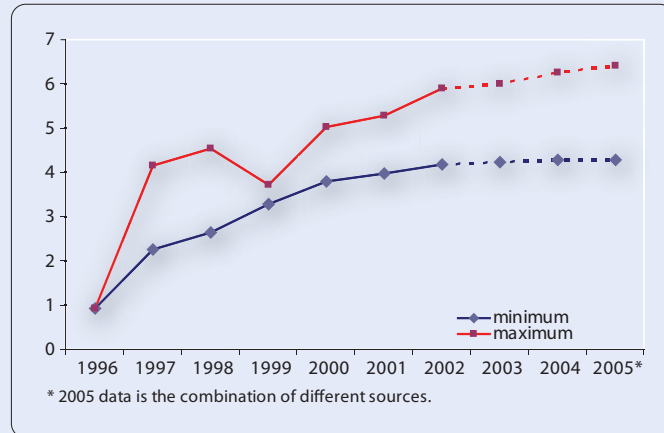


Source: Global Reach, 2004.

1. For a regional overview, see the website 'Recent Experiences on Measuring Languages in Cyberspace'.

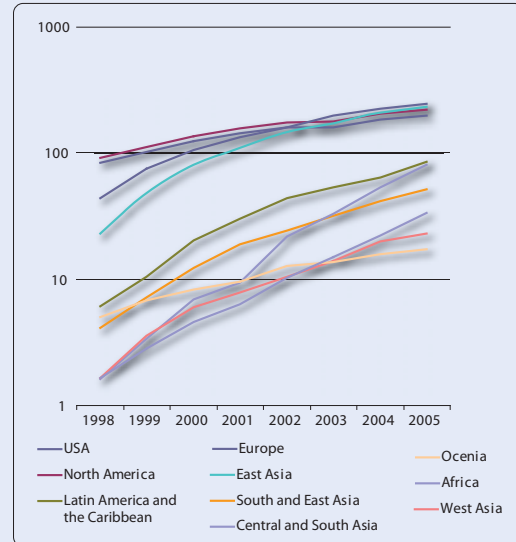
### Box 3.1 Languages in cyberspace

#### Estimated linguistic diversity of Internet users



Source: Global Reach, 2004.

#### Internet users by region (in millions)



Source: International Telecommunication Union, 2008.

approximately 53 percent of total Internet users in 2000, by 2009 they represented only 29 percent of total Internet users.

Linguistic-diversity indices for the global population of Internet users can be calculated using Global Reach estimates. Minimum and maximum values for the index have been calculated based on the assumption of single-language representations (the minimum diversity) and a uniform distribution across 6,000 languages (the maximum diversity).

Yet linguistic diversity on the Internet is nowhere near as large as the index of any other region of the world as a whole (perhaps because Internet hosts remain concentrated in North America and Europe), the Internet cannot be said to embrace linguistic diversity.

The prevalence of English in cyberspace, while difficult to quantify, can largely be explained by computer-systems development

and the effects of the digital divide. In the mid-1990s, for example, Microsoft chose not to develop non-roman versions of its products, despite the availability of commercial technological solutions (such as Apple Computer's WorldScript), seemingly because non-roman markets were too small to justify creating a new version of their product.

When correlated with the existing imbalances in global access to the Internet per region, the link between lower linguistic-diversity areas (such as in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and East Asia) and higher Internet usage is striking.

According to some, low linguistic diversity facilitates the provision of Internet access based on the small number of standardized technological solutions needed to target each of the major language populations. Regions and countries with greater linguistic diversity typically require more complex arrangements

for Internet access, and resource customization for each of a large number of minority languages. This situation appears in the extreme in India, where even large languages like Hindi have a plethora of duplicate solutions, such that almost every Hindi website has its own Hindi font set, which is incompatible with other Hindi font sets. People who wish to read Hindi material on these websites must separately install the fonts required by each site; this renders searching across different sites extremely difficult, since words do not match up in the different representations (Information Sciences Institute, 2003). Furthermore, regions such as Africa remain serious challenges, as even some of the larger languages in some countries are not yet in use on the Internet. Significant technological work remains to be done before the goal of reaching these language groups can be realized.<sup>2</sup>

Source: Based on Paolillo and Das, 2006.

2. UNESCO is highly committed to improving linguistic diversity in cyberspace, as expressed in the *Recommendation on the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace* (2003) and the outcomes of the 2005 World

Summit on the Information Society. See the UNESCO webpage 'Multilingualism in Cyberspace'.

Through migration, colonial expansion, refugee displacement or professional mobility, many language communities are now dispersed across the world. As connections between language and place are becoming increasingly multiple, communication patterns also become highly variegated, characterized by code-switching, multilingualism, different receptive and productive competencies in different languages or dialects, and are marked by mixtures of full, partial and specialized proficiencies. Just as globalization contributes to cultural hybridization (see chapter 1), it also favours the emergence of new linguistic forms and practices, especially among young people. In this way, continuously expanding networks based on mobile phones, broad-band Internet and other ICTs are creating new forms of human association of unprecedented scale and flexibility, spanning cities, nations and cultures. These are in turn forging new cultural identities that are broadening and redefining existing boundaries, extending them across public/

private domains and social, cultural and educational contexts (Ito et al., 2008). A special case of this phenomenon are 'third culture kids' (TCK), transcultural youth who live with their parents but grow up in a culture different from their parents' originating culture and are thus faced with creating new ethnic and/or national identities (some of which may be at odds with one another) and innovative cultural systems (Fail, Thompson and Walker, 2004).

While the impacts of digital communication on languages and forms of social identity and organization have yet to be fully understood, it is nonetheless clear that the assumption that 'language equals culture equals identity' is too simple to account for the intricate linkages between languages and cultural identities. Consequently, today's policy-makers must take very many factors into account when devising language policies, including advances in linguistics, the human, social and political sciences, and market economics.

### 3.2 Languages and identities

People tend to hold strong beliefs when it comes to their language, which has the important function of marking boundaries between groups; these beliefs play a key role in the construction and maintenance of distinctive human identities, both between different and within same-language communities. For even within linguistic communities, distinctive features will distinguish speakers' origins: the English spoken in England is different from that spoken in the United States, New Zealand and South Africa; and even within a country locally distinct varieties tied to specific areas or social status will arise, so that the English spoken in New York City is different from that spoken in New Orleans or Boston, and Cockney English is distinct from that spoken by the British upper middle class. Like human cultures and species, languages adapt to specific ecological niches, and like cultural artefacts, they have historicity, and express the worldviews, values and belief systems inherent in a given culture. Even today, despite the complexity of the modern world in which languages have come to reflect many identities, histories, cultures, sources and places, the majority of the world's languages are 'narrow-niched', that is to say, they are confined to a single group, village or territory.

A language's vocabulary is an organized catalogue of a given culture's essential concepts and elements. Taking the case of indigenous cultures, the requirements of Pacific Island cultures differ from those of Siberian reindeer-herding cultures. The language traditionally associated with a culture is in general the language that relates to that culture's environment and local ecosystem, the plants and animals it uses for food, medicine and other purposes, and expresses local value systems and worldviews (Fishman, 1991). The naming of geographic features of the landscape ensures a sense of connection to place and the histories linked to it. The Apache language in the southwestern United States, for example, includes descriptively specific place names, which often consist of complete sentences ('water flows down on a succession of flat rocks') and are essential to the genealogies of Apache clans since place names are also associated with kin groups. Thus, native claims about symbolic links to land and personal relationships tied to environment may not be so readily interpretable.

From this perspective, the displacement of indigenous peoples from their traditional lands and the loss of key cultural sites is likely to involve far more than physical dislocation: it can represent a break in the historical

*Languages are not just a means of communication but represent the very fabric of cultural expressions, the carriers of identity, values and worldviews*



**Box 3.2 Monitoring linguistic diversity for biodiversity**

Research on the relationship between cultural and biological diversity is becoming increasingly pertinent. Findings point to the remarkable correlations between the world's areas with high biological richness and those with high diversity of languages (the single best indicator of a distinct culture). Based on the comparative analysis of eight main biological groups (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fishes, butterflies, tiger-beetles and flowering plants), 12 'mega-diversity' countries (hosting the largest numbers of species and endemic species) can be identified, nine of which represent the countries with the highest number of languages: Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mexico, Peru, Philippines and Venezuela. Thus, nine of the countries with the highest species richness and endemism are also in the list of the 25 nations with the highest number of endemic languages (Toledo, 2001).

To exhibit such a correlation between the richness of some groups of organisms and the number of languages worldwide, an *Index of Biocultural Diversity* (IBCD) was created. It represents the first attempt to quantify global biocultural diversity by means of a country-level index. The IBCD uses five indicators: the number of languages, religions and ethnic groups (for cultural diversity), and the number of bird/mammal and plant species (for biological diversity). The application of this index revealed three 'core regions' of exceptional biocultural diversity.

UNESCO recently addressed the biocultural diversity paradigm at an operational level, through its Main Line of Action on 'Enhancing linkages between cultural and biological diversity as a key basis for sustainable development,' including activities focused on traditional knowledge and indigenous languages. Of note are the efforts to develop an indicator of the status of and trends in linguistic diversity and the numbers of speakers of indigenous languages. The indicator is being developed within the framework of the 2010 Biodiversity Target, adopted in 2004

by the Conference of States Parties to the 1992 *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), which aims 'to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth' (CBD, 2005).

This indicator will serve as a proxy for measuring the status and trends in 'traditional knowledge, innovations and practices', one of the seven focal areas identified for 70 the 2010 Target (CBD, 2005; see UNESCO webpage on 'Linguistic diversity in relation to

on numbers of speakers and the lack of comparability among different sources made it difficult to develop an indicator at the global level. UNESCO is currently conducting a comprehensive study on the variables and phrasing of the questions used in national censuses to collect data on languages. The aim thereby is to develop a set of guidelines that will increase the reliability and international comparability of census data on languages.

This newly developed methodology aims to establish a baseline for identifying and



*A local flower market in Antananarivo, Madagascar*

biodiversity'). Two parallel approaches have been used in developing this indicator:

- An informant-based survey of language vitality and endangerment was conducted through a Standardized Tool for primary data collection operationalized as a questionnaire entitled *Linguistic Vitality and Diversity*. The questionnaire was based on the framework developed by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003b) to assess the degree of language vitality/endangerment (see Box 3.3).
- A desk study was conducted on the numbers of speakers of indigenous languages using national censuses and secondary sources. However, the low quality of available data

tracking trends on the numbers of speakers of indigenous languages in the coming years. Data from the third edition of UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (2009) are also complementary to the data collected through the *Linguistic Vitality and Diversity* questionnaire and the information provided by national censuses.

Increasingly, alliances are being established along these lines by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, academic institutions and scholars to support language policies for indigenous languages, thereby linking language preservation to ecological conservation (see also chapter 7).

Source: UNESCO.


continuity of a community's consciousness of its distinct identity and culture. When people are forced to move or resettle on land that differs from that on which they traditionally lived (e.g. Gaelic speakers displaced from the Scottish Highlands), the links between language, culture and the environment are weakened. Languages are thus in large part culture-specific: they carry with them extensive indexical and symbolic content, which comes to represent the particular ethnic, cultural and/or national groups that speak them. When a language is lost, it is far more difficult to recover it than other identity markers.

Furthermore it is increasingly obvious that the anticipated loss of the majority of languages will have a detrimental impact on all kinds of diversity — not only on cultural diversity in terms of the richness of worldviews and philosophical systems but also on diversity in environmental and ecological terms, for research is making increasingly clear the link between the erosion of linguistic diversity and that of the knowledge of biological diversity (Harmon and Loh, 2008; see Box 3.2). It is precisely the awareness of this link between biological diversity and cultural diversity — most distinctively represented by the loss of languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi and Harmon, 2003) and the related loss of knowledge of nature, history, memory, cultural knowledge, practices, norms and values (Mühlhäusler, 1996; Grenoble and Whaley, 1998; Diamond, 2001) — that led to the International Society of Ethnobiologists' 1988 *Declaration of Belem* on cultural diversity and biological diversity. The conclusions of a study on a number of small languages that had remained stable over time and their relations with the biological richness of these areas highlight the extent to which knowledge is encoded in a given language, such that cultural systems can be said to co-evolve in small-scale groups with local ecosystems (Nettle and Romaine, 2000). Stated differently, 'Life in a particular human environment is [. . .] dependent on people's ability to talk about it' (Mühlhäusler, 1996). In this sense, the magnitude of the threat to the world's linguistic

diversity and the serious implications of its loss plead strongly for the identification and the adoption of best practices in this area.

Of course, no systematic or necessary correlation exists between language and culture: languages are in constant flux, and socio-economic, political or other factors have continuously played a role in language shifts. Where there is ethnic or cultural stigmatization, a language may be abandoned as an act of survival or self-defence; some parents, for example, do not speak their native language at home so as to prepare their children for school in the dominant language. In some places where traditional languages have disappeared, people may vest their identity in a new language — in some cases in a distinctive form of the dominant language; in other cases, a creole language.<sup>5</sup> In large parts of Australia, many Aboriginal people speak Aboriginal English, Torres Strait Creole, or Kriol as their first language. In other parts of the world, many speak English or another language as a second or additional language. Although European colonial encounters have produced the best known and most studied indigenous pidgins and creoles, there are examples predating European contact, such as Sango in the Central African Republic and Hiri Motu in Papua New Guinea. Such languages may spring up wherever speakers of different languages have to work out a common means of communication (Romaine, 2006). Most creoles coexist with the original language with which they share most of their vocabulary; often, negative attitudes have prevented pidgins and creoles from receiving official recognition or being used in education, even where the majority of a population speaks them. Even in the few countries where pidgins and creoles have received some token recognition as an official or national language, they have not been widely integrated in schools. In the few instances in which they have been, results have generally been positive (e.g. Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu in Papua New Guinea, Sango in the Central African Republic, Seselwa in the Seychelles, Papiamentu



 The Moussem of Tan Tan, a festival of nomad tribes, Morocco

5. A *pidgin* is a contact language restricted in form and function and native to no one, formed by members of at least two (and usually more) groups of different linguistic backgrounds. Tok Pisin ['talk pidgin'], for example, is spoken by millions of people in Papua New Guinea. A *creole* is a nativized pidgin, expanded in form and function to meet the communicative needs of a community of native speakers (e.g. Creole French in Haiti). While some creole speakers will use the term 'creole' to refer to their languages (e.g. Kriol

in Australia, Krio in Sierra Leone, Kreyòl in Haiti), in other places it is unknown as such to its speakers. The term *patois* is used throughout much of the Anglophone Caribbean. Other names are also used, in some cases pejoratively, e.g. Broken (i.e. broken English) for Torres Strait Creole English, spoken by about 5,000 people in the Torres Strait Islands of Australia, and Papiamentu (from Spanish *papear*, 'to jabber/chat') spoken by around 250,000 in the Netherlands Antilles (Brown, 2005).

*A guiding principle of cultural diversity is therefore to continue to strengthen and maintain the diversity of languages, all the while supporting international languages that offer access to global communication and exchange of information*

in the Netherlands Antilles) and have led to increased motivation and academic performance (Eckkramer, 2003; see chapter 4 below).

People who speak two or more languages will often index more than one identity, and even avoid aligning themselves with only one identity. In 1997, a heated debate took place in Hong Kong over a speech to be delivered by the first new chief executive, Tung Chee Wah, in the handover ceremony to China: Should it be delivered in Putonghua or Cantonese, each being symbolic of different alignments and identities? Tung finally delivered it in Putonghua, the official language of mainland China, but he delivered his first policy address in Cantonese, which has always been the lingua franca for Chinese ethnic groups in Hong Kong and is the spoken medium of instruction in primary schools and Chinese-medium secondary schools there (Tsui, 2007). Obviously, choice of language use suggests that languages and forms of speech may not enjoy equal status or be regarded as equally appropriate or adequate in all circumstances. The emotional strength of words spoken in a local language as opposed to those spoken in the language of a former colonizer will not be the same for the bilingual speaker and are not interchangeable. Through such selection processes, we display what may be called 'acts of identity'

(Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985) and throughout our lives we develop allegiances to a variety of groups, based on the values and attitudes in our surrounding community and then extended to broader society, defined in the different ways (cultural, ethnic, religious, national) that shape and influence who we are and how we perceive ourselves (see chapter 2).

Thus the idea of fixed identities, cultures and languages must yield to a view of them as constructed and dynamic, subject to change in endless processes of symbolic reconstruction and negotiation. At the same time, even as we increasingly engage with both local and global cultural systems (through mass communication, technology, tourism, migration), the link between racial, ethnic and religious affiliations and cultural and linguistic identity remains very strong. Local and national languages therefore remain crucial, even if global languages are a necessary tool of communication for expressing our identities as citizens of the world. A guiding principle of cultural diversity is therefore to continue to strengthen and maintain the diversity of languages (including those of nomadic or scattered populations), *all the while* supporting international languages that offer access to global communication and exchange of information.

### 3.3 The challenges of language assessment and revitalization

For many, language vitality is a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture, from kinship classification to religion, is dependent on language for its transmission (Haarmann, 2004). Yet, as we have seen, language is not equivalent to culture. There are numerous instances in which the same language is spoken by groups with otherwise radically different cultural practices and worldviews. When ethnic identification is in question, the complex relationship between an individual and a group may occur along with language affiliation, but this is not always the case.

Traditional approaches to documenting and assessing language shifts have focused mainly on linguistics and have tended to neglect socio-economic realities and

political contexts. Yet language loss is a late onset form of cultural attrition, indicating an already advanced process of cultural decline (Fishman, 2001). The variety of circumstances surrounding language health and its prospects for revitalization when threatened by erosion depend upon the specific socio-cultural, economic, political and historical configurations that apply uniquely to each language, and thus language health tends to defy generalization and broad analysis (see Box 3.3). While many of today's approaches to minority language revitalization and preservation recognize and integrate these factors,<sup>6</sup> the process remains profoundly political (Walsh, 2005). Indeed, active preservation of an eroded language can be perceived as competing with the instrumental value of the dominant language (e.g. as it affects economic opportunity and social status),

6. The ecological approach focuses on the communication context to which languages belong, their role in the economy and processes of communication

(see Mühlhäusler, 1996); the socio-linguistic approach addresses the issue of specialization of languages (see Fishman, 2001).

### Box 3.3 Assessing language vitality

Documentation is an essential component for counteracting the seemingly inexorable loss of the world's linguistic resources, and UNESCO has long sought to alert the international community to the chain reaction resulting from language loss. Since the publication of the 1994 *Red Book of Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, which already at that time claimed that 90 percent of all languages were in danger of disappearing within two generations, UNESCO has supported many studies on language endangerment. At the invitation of Tokyo University, an International Clearing House for Endangered Languages was established in 1995, and in 1996 the first edition of its *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* was published. The second updated edition was produced in 2001, listing by region some 900 endangered languages and their degrees of endangerment. The third, fully revised and updated edition, prepared within the framework of the United Nations International Year of Languages (2008) and recently released in both print and online interactive versions (2,500 endangered languages listed on a revisable basis), uses more subtle and sensitive indicators of language endangerment, based on a multi-factorial schema adopted by the UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages (2003a). It identifies five degrees of endangerment: i) vulnerable (607 languages), ii) endangered (652 languages), iii) severely endangered (530 languages), iv) critically endangered (573), and v) extinct (242 languages).

According to the Expert group, nine factors can be identified for assessing the vitality of a language. Since a language that has a favourable situation in terms of one or more factors may have a very unfavourable situation with regard to others, a combination of these nine factors is the best guide to a language's overall sociolinguistic situation.

Other methodologies exist for assessing a language's vitality. In a quantitative study, Statistics Canada used 1996 census responses

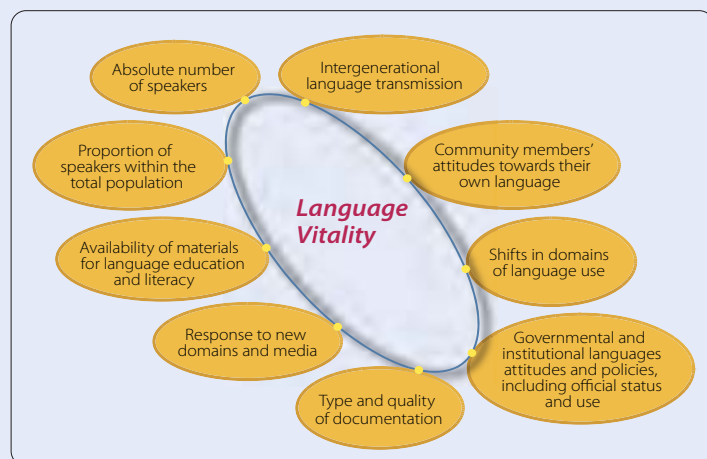
to calculate an 'index of continuity' and an 'index of ability' for the country's indigenous languages (Norris, 1998). The *index of continuity* measures a language's vitality by comparing the number of people who speak it at home with the number who learned it as their original mother tongue. In this index, a 1:1 ratio is scored at 100 and represents a perfect maintenance situation in which every mother-tongue speaker keeps the language as a home language. Any score lower than 100 indicates a decline in the language's strength. The *index of ability* compares the number of those who report being able to speak the language (at a conversational level) with the number of mother-tongue speakers. Here, a score of over 100 indicates that an increment of people have learned it as a second language and may suggest some degree of language revival.

The report found that only three of the country's 50 native languages have speaking populations large enough to keep them secure over the long term, and the index of continuity for all native languages declined almost 15 percent between 1981 and 1996 (Norris, 1998). The vast majority of indigenous languages in North America is in trouble and up to 80 percent are moribund in Canada and in the United States jointly (Krauss, 1992). If current trends continue, the general outlook

for the continued survival of these languages is very poor (Robins and Uhlenbeck, 1991).

A review of the native languages of California paints a similar picture: of the 50 contemporary languages in the State (some 50 having already been lost following European contact), more than 15 have recently become extinct and many others have fewer than 10 speakers (all elders), and only 2 or 3 have as many as 150 or 200 speakers (Hinton, 1994). Along the temperate rainforest coast, stretching from northern California to Alaska, 26 languages of the 68 native language groups present at European contact are now extinct, 18 are spoken by fewer than 10 people, and only 8 are spoken by more than 100 individuals (Wolf, Mitchell and Schoonmaker, 1995). In Mexico, the danger of extinction exists in every area where indigenous languages are found (Garza Cuarón and Lastra, 1991). Most endangerment information comes from anecdotal reports that young people no longer speak the language in certain social situations, or that they have given it up altogether.

Still, current indicators and indices, including the linguistic diversity index (see Map 7.1 and Table 7 in the Statistical Annex), cannot for the moment fully account for the vitality of languages, since it varies widely depending on the different





**Box 3.3** Assessing language vitality

situations of speech communities and since societies are endowed with a complex array of language competencies among their members (Beacco, 2007). And while it may be possible to aggregate language statistics on a global basis, we are a long way from having highly accurate figures on global language use: indeed, our capacities for language census cannot capture

the nuances of language use, let alone those of cultural affiliation (on the limitations of *Ethnologue* data, see Harmon, 1995; Paolillo and Das, 2006). Experts even disagree about what constitutes a language or a mother tongue. While the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of *Ethnologue* (2000) cites some 41,000 distinct languages based on native speakers throughout the world,

linguists and anthropologists tend to regroup languages into families and count approximately 7,000 languages. Such divergences indicate the degree of subjectivity inherent in assessment of the state of linguistic diversity.

Source: UNESCO.

giving rise to a situation in which advocates of language preservation may be regarded as backward-looking and parochial or, even worse, as biased against national unity and cohesion.

The survival of many indigenous peoples is often dependent on modern means of production. Many appreciate that there are benefits to be derived from increased interaction with the dominant society, but wish to preserve a certain cultural autonomy and have a say in determining their own future, with particular reference to the right to educate their children in their own way and to safeguard their language and culture (see the 2007 *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*). However, to preserve their distinctive identities, what is needed is access to economic resources available in the marketplace. Today, the preservation of Inuktitut in the Eastern Canadian Arctic is partly a product of its integration into the dominant linguistic market and political economy, where it has been standardized and promoted in education, government publications, and other written forms. This process has been further strengthened by the development of an Inuktitut version of the Windows operating system. Despite modern paradoxes and lifestyle transformations, indigenous peoples seek to maintain their language and culture. Driving snowmobiles, wearing jeans and listening to pop music are not inherently incompatible with cultural and linguistic continuity and indigenous identity any more than speaking English need be at odds with speaking Inuktitut or Navajo. According to the 2001 Canadian Census, however, overall only 15 percent of the country's Aboriginal children learn an indigenous mother tongue, and fewer still are spoken to in such a language at home.

The reasons behind endangerment may be either external (e.g. effects of globalization, political or other pressures) or internal (e.g. a negative community attitude to the language). The dominant languages of nation-states, and colonial languages, which prevail in all areas of public and official life (government, school and media), often hamper the ability of speakers of other languages to preserve them as the domains of usage become increasingly restricted. The prestige of the dominant language and its predominance in public institutions lead communities to undermine the value of their own language in a process of symbolic domination. This has been the case in almost all countries of Francophone Africa, where the newly independent States chose French as their official language (to be used in schools, public media, courts and administration), leaving the many African languages spoken as mother tongues restricted to private usage. In Latin America, Quechua speakers, numbering some 7–10 million in the Andean regions of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have largely succumbed to the assimilative pressures of Spanish over the last century.

Language revitalization, which is often the key to recovering cultural identity, depends first and foremost on a community's reassertion of the value of its own cultural identity. Even where a language has not been transmitted over a long period of time (the case of so-called 'sleeping languages'), it is possible for them to be reclaimed through the mobilization of identities. Two examples come from Australia and the United States. First, Kaurna, once used by Aboriginal people around Adelaide in South Australia but not spoken for over a century, is today being reclaimed through greetings, songs and activities relying on earlier documents and records of the language (Amery, 2001). Another example of a language

*The prestige of the dominant language and its predominance in public institutions lead communities to undermine the value of their own language in a process of symbolic domination*

linguists thought to be extinct since the 1960s is that of an Algonquian Miami tribe in Oklahoma; it is currently being reclaimed by families that have incorporated the language into their daily household activities, and young children are now acquiring conversational proficiency in it (Baldwin, 2003). Although such reappropriated languages are likely to be substantially different from the languages historically spoken — and some have dismissed these less-than-fluent uses — they clearly have the potential to serve important community and cultural functions for many native groups throughout Australia, North and South America and other parts of the world. Such efforts will become increasingly important wherever people claim a link to a linguistic heritage that is no longer actively transmitted.

New ICTs may have a positive impact on revitalization, especially when digital technologies are utilized to collect documentation on languages or when computers are used to transcribe and translate endangered languages into languages of wider communication. In some cases, revitalization would imply the development of writing systems (Austin, 2008). Such initiatives are particularly fruitful in the case of unwritten languages, whose native speakers are usually unable to benefit from all the advantages that would be offered by written communication. But opting for a system of transcription should be made only in close consultation with the concerned communities, since it is not without its political dimensions. Thanks to Unicode, an initiative involving several companies in the information technology sector (programmers, research institutions and users associations) and facilitating the encoding of more than 65,000 different characters, some minority languages are now in a position to reach a much larger public on the Internet. But such ICT-based initiatives of language revitalization are most successful in combination with wider media efforts. In the Canadian Province of Nunavut, efforts for the revitalization of Inuktitut (made compulsory at school and for the recruitment of civil servants) have been supported by the development of an Inuktitut version of the Windows operating system. In New South Wales (Australia), the Gamilaraay language, which was almost extinct at the end of the 1970s, has been revived thanks to a clear commitment by the State and concrete initiatives involving the release of a paper and online dictionary, the teaching of the language at school, and the production of textbooks, books and CDs.

In general there is a great need for communication across minority and majority communities. Preservation of all languages, especially those small and endangered, is in everybody's interest, members of 'majority' and 'minority' communities alike. While positive measures to protect the variety and diversity of languages are implicit in many existing international instruments, the question of language rights remains contentious, as illustrated by the debates over the 1996 Barcelona Draft of the *Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights*. The adoption in September 2007 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, though a non-binding instrument, may yield the most immediate effects on the preservation, revitalization and perpetuation of linguistic diversity among indigenous and minority peoples. UNESCO's Executive Board is currently debating the feasibility of a new standard-setting instrument on languages, including the issue of whether it should be focused on the safeguarding of linguistic diversity generally or on the protection of the linguistic rights of certain vulnerable groups (see chapter 8). What is clear is that effective language policies for marginalized populations must integrate knowledge of community practices and relationships, taking into account the specificity of each setting, and stress the need to conduct the functional activities of everyday life in ways that are culturally appropriate (Fettes, 1997).

 [Playing the duduk, an Armenian oboe](#)



*There is a need to both preserve global linguistic diversity as a prerequisite for cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism and translation in order to foster intercultural dialogue*

### 3.4 Multilingualism, translation and intercultural dialogue

Multilingualism and translation have necessary and complementary roles in the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Multilingualism fulfils the dual function of facilitating communication between individuals of different cultures and contributing to the survival of endangered languages. Translation for its part serves as a necessary bridge over the many linguistic divides that multilingualism is not able or available to fill. Both multilingualism and translation are essential components of a pluralistic society.

#### **Multilingualism as a resource**

In a world in which we all have overlapping and intersecting identities, it is no longer possible to classify people on the basis of a single language, religion or culture. While distinctive food, dress, song, etc. are often accepted and integrated into mainstream culture, this is much less true of language diversity. Despite claims that multilingualism is socially disruptive, there is no necessary connection between linguistic variety in a given society and difficulties of cross-group communication. In fact, social cohesion and citizenship require shared forms of communication and comprehension, not monolingualism.

A common criticism levelled at language policies promoting multilingualism in schools is that they usually involve invidious choices, since it is not possible for all minority languages to be supported. From this standpoint, it is preferable to choose a single foreign or international language of prestige or a trade language, or even to refrain from offering other languages altogether. Many examples around the world prove the fallacy of this argument.

Multilingualism in schools is now practised in many countries, though the world is still far from the objective of trilingual education (see Table 7 in the Statistical Annex and chapter 4 below). In Australia for example, following years of ambivalent or hostile attitudes towards the inclusion and transmission of indigenous and immigrant languages, some school systems today offer as many as 47 languages, though not necessarily all during normal school hours. Some are supported by radio broadcasts, digital media or after-hours community providers integrated into the schools' examination and

assessment system; others are simply acknowledged formally within mainstream education proper, thereby validating community language preservation efforts. Australia's adoption in 1987 of a comprehensive *National Policy on Languages* (Lo Bianco, 1987) — the first explicitly multilingual national policy in an English-speaking nation — links sub-national multilingualism with national economic interests and social cohesion (rather than seeing these as being in competition with one another) and highlights the potentially powerful effects of collaboration across diverse language interests. Significant progress towards a comprehensive language policy was made possible when the policy voices of immigrant and indigenous groups were combined with those of professional academic and teacher communities and business and political elites (Clyne, 2005; Lo Bianco, 1987).

Similar creative solutions in favour of multilingualism exist in many countries where national educational objectives have made unity, citizenship and intra-national communication (including the support of language minorities and multilingualism) the first priority of public investment in education (García, Skutnabb-Kagas and Torres Guzmán, 2006). Papua New Guinea, a small, developing society with a high degree of multilingualism, is a case in point. With the world's highest Linguistic Diversity Index (LDI), representing about 820 living indigenous languages, the country has set up an integrated educational system based on local languages (in the earliest years of schooling) linked to regional creole languages of wider communication, and the national language, English, which has global reach. While critics and opponents of multilingualism often stress the administrative and economic inefficiency of multilingual provision, the case of Papua New Guinea highlights the importance of locally based language planning and policy, its administrative feasibility and educational effectiveness, notably increased attendance and participation rates, including among girls (for additional case studies, see Lo Bianco, 2007; and UNESCO, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007a–b).

Because languages are highly complex and flexible sets of practices that interact with all aspects of people's social and personal lives, they are problematic objects of policy-making. Yet language policies that support

multilingualism, language learning and endangered languages are indispensable to the long-term sustainability of cultural diversity. Such policies moreover have the potential to bring to the learner's attention the culturally specific ways in which knowledge is organized and appreciated in distinct traditions, in terms of thought, belief, values and as unique histories of human experience. This in turn promotes understanding, insight, perspective and appreciation, enabling cultural gaps to be bridged through processes of translation, encounter, imagination, narration, art, faith and dialogue.

Yet the growth and patterns of multilingualism still do not receive the attention they should, nor has multilingualism been duly recognized as an intellectual and a cultural asset, as well as a resource for participatory citizenship and the effective exercise of human rights (see Ruiz, 1984).

To ensure the continued viability of the world's languages, we must find ways both to safeguard linguistic diversity by protecting and revitalizing languages and to promote multilingualism by developing policies at the national level that foster the functional use of all languages within a given society. These two objectives are intertwined, since the promotion of a multilingualism that includes mother-tongue-based education also constitutes a means of safeguarding indigenous and endangered

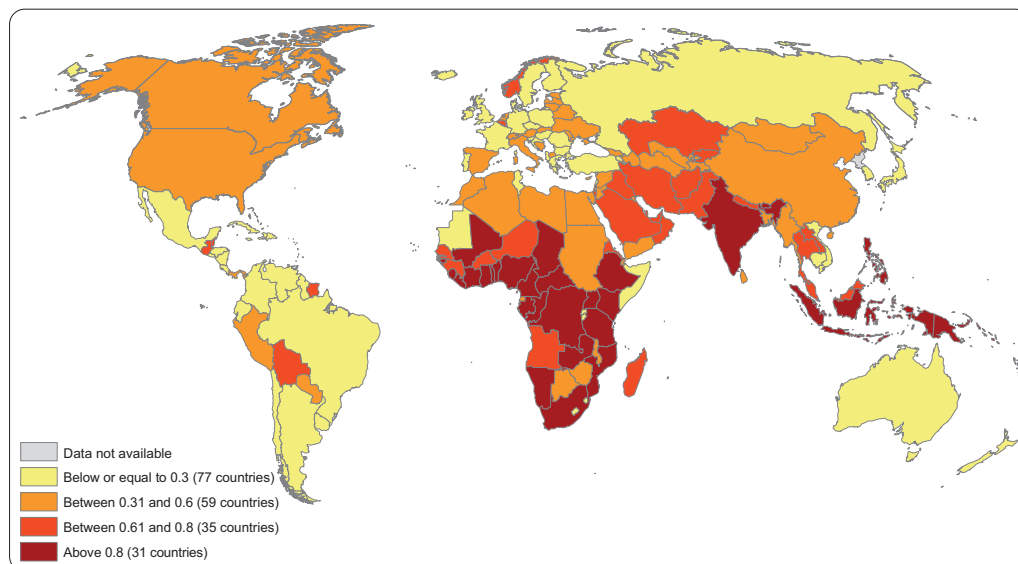
languages. At the international level, this translates into a two-pronged approach: 1) to preserve and enrich global linguistic diversity as a prerequisite for cultural diversity and 2) to promote multilingualism and translation (including in administration, education, the media and cyberspace) in order to foster intercultural dialogue.

### **Translation as a tool for dialogue**

The study of contemporary translation flows highlights a number of issues concerning the status of languages in the world. These flows reflect a global asymmetry in the representation of cultures, peoples, ethnic groups and languages, and the unequal circulation of cultural goods. At the institutional and symbolic levels, translation can potentially help to redress such asymmetry and is slowly regaining importance in the new communication networks of contemporary society.

A census based on data compiled between 1979 and 2007, undertaken by the *Index Translationum*, confirms the dominant position of English as a reference language: 55 percent of book translations are from English as the source language as compared to only 6.5 percent into English. In addition, 96 percent of all translations are limited to about 20 source languages, of which 16 are European (constituting 93 percent of the total), the four other languages most translated

**Map 3.2 Linguistic Diversity Index**



The Linguistic Diversity Index (LDI) represents the probability that in a given country any two people selected at random would have different mother tongues. The LDI ranges from 0 (least diversity) to 1 (greatest diversity). The computation of the index is based on the population of each language as a proportion of the total population (Ethnologue, 2005). Countries with the highest LDI include Papua New Guinea, India, Nigeria and Indonesia (see Table 7 in the Statistical Annex).

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, based on Ethnologue data (SIL International), 2005.

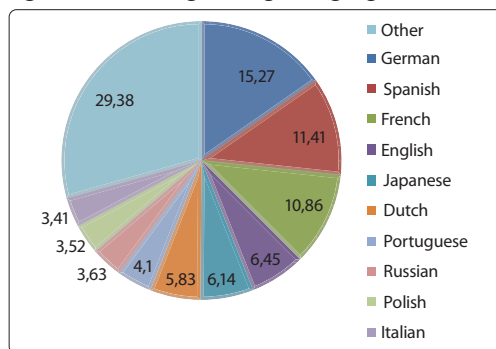


*Given that translation plays an important role in the promotion of cultural diversity, there is a case for the development of a translation policy on a global scale, with an emphasis where possible on reciprocity*

being Japanese (0.67 percent), Arabic (0.54 percent), Hebrew (0.46 percent) and Chinese (0.4 percent). Seventy-five percent of all published books are translated from only three languages: English, French and German.

As for target-language translations, some 20 languages account for 90 percent of all registered translations. The breakdown is as follows: German (15.27 percent), Spanish (11.41 percent) and French (10.86 percent) lead the way, followed by English (6.45 percent), Japanese (6.14 percent), Dutch (5.83 percent), Portuguese (4.10 percent), Russian (3.63 percent), Polish (3.52 percent) and Italian (3.41 percent), with the next 10 languages somewhere between 1 and 3 percent:

**Figure 3.1 Percentage of target-language translations**



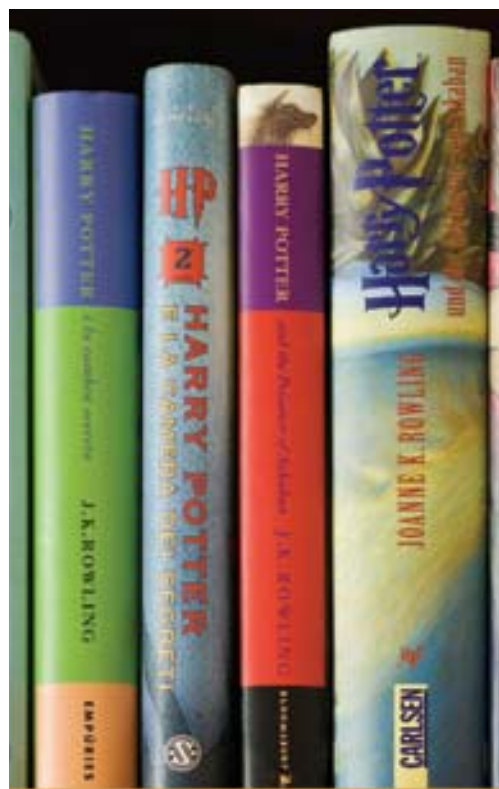
Source: Brisset, 2007.

Again, most are European languages. The hierarchy between majority and minority languages determines translation flows; translations into or from indigenous populations hardly exist.

Economic integration worldwide has spurred the development of technical and audiovisual translations linked to product development and services for multilingual markets, especially in the fields of software development, multimedia, the Internet, film and video games. While there is a decline in the less profitable enterprise of literary translation, technical translation in the most industrialized countries is estimated to be increasing at a rate of 25–30 percent per annum. The fields in greatest demand include aerospace science, biotechnology and pharmaceutical products, energy

(petrol, natural gas, hydroelectricity, nuclear power and renewable energies), transport and ICTs. The banking and finance sector and the commercial services sector (marketing, advertising and Internet sites) are also large consumers of translation. Since 80 percent of localization activities concern software produced in the United States, English is the predominant language source of multimedia translations. The target languages are mainly Asian, with 40 percent of US software being sold in the Asia-Pacific region, where Japanese is the main target translation language together with Chinese and Korean (Gamas and Knowlden, 1999).

The global expansion of the audiovisual industry, with increasingly diversified products and marketing strategies, has entailed the application of new translation parameters. Screen translation methods differ widely from country to country: subtitling reigns in Scandinavian and Dutch-speaking countries, as well as in most Western European speech communities with less than 25 million speakers. This is not the case, however, in Spain, Italy and German-speaking regions, where subtitling tends to be less used. Given that many subtitling tracks are commercialized together on the same DVD and can be accessed by anyone anywhere, the tendency is to use the same conventions in all languages, even though in some cases they might be at odds with domestic



practice. This relatively new development raises questions about the balance among languages and cultures in the audiovisual world, since not only are the vast majority of programmes and films produced in English, but their translations are also being done and decided in the country of origin (see chapter 5). Generally speaking, anglophone media products carry about the same weight as national products in nearly all countries, in terms of both penetration and prestige, and English continues to be regarded as the lingua franca of the media world.

With the progress in computer technology, automatic translation systems (involving little or no human intervention) and computer-assisted translation (employing various forms of integrated or non-integrated software for different operations, such as terminological management, documentary research or pre-translation) are becoming increasingly sophisticated and widespread. Wholly or partially automated procedures make it possible to increase the volume of texts translated and, above all, to translate a larger number of languages at lower cost. Automatic translations have an identifying function, and enable administrators to grasp content immediately, particularly useful in the case of internal documents with a very limited effective lifespan.<sup>7</sup> Mostly developed for use by large public or private corporations, these systems enable hundreds of thousands of pages to be translated into several dozen languages simultaneously. This is the case in particular with the European Commission where automatic

translation, introduced in 1970, enables documents to be translated into 28 language pairs, to which will eventually be added 11 other languages corresponding to the new Member Countries. In 2005, the volume of translations produced automatically in EU bodies amounted to over 860,000 pages.

However, languages for which automatic translation systems have been developed remain very few in number. They typically correspond to the languages that are most translated or those into which most translation takes place (English, French, German, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish). Japanese and Korean also boast powerful systems for translation from or into English, but this is not yet the case for Chinese. Other systems also exist for the combinations Laotian-French, Thai-English/German and French/English-Vietnamese. In India, research on automatic translation is very active. Systems exist for translating between the country's main languages and from these languages into English and vice versa. One of these systems is used to translate official documents automatically from Hindi into English. Apart from one or two systems, African languages remain relatively ignored. Automatic translation systems for some Amerindian languages (Aymara, Huaio, Inpiac, Mapudungun, Quetchua, Siona) have been developed under Carnegie Mellon University's AVENUE project or financed by the Organization of American States (OAS). The dearth of automatic translation systems for minority languages reflects the difficulty of devising

#### Box 3.4 Minority indigenous languages in translation in South America

A case study conducted from 1979 to 2001 on international translations between Spanish/Portuguese and the indigenous languages of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala and Peru showed that these were — in most cases — almost non-existent: Argentina registered 4 internal translations, Chile registered 3, and Brazil 11. Judging from the available data, neither the creation of MERCOSUR in 1991 nor that of the Community of Andean Nations (CAN) in 1989 seem to have had

an impact on translation flows from or to indigenous languages in these countries.

Things were quite different in the cases of Peru and Guatemala, however. Peru registered a total of 77 internal translations from and into aboriginal languages, almost all published after 1993 when the Peruvian Constitution officially recognized indigenous languages — primarily Quechua and Aymara, the most widely spoken.

In Guatemala, even with Spanish as the only official language and despite a total number of 28 intranlations in the Index, 22 internal translations were conducted for indigenous languages. In proportion with the number of intranlations, the number of internal translations is quite significant, and most probably related to the fact that 43 percent of Guatemala's population is Mayan.

Source: Brisset, 2007.

7. Directorate General for Translation (DGC): [http://www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index_en.htm); Commission européenne (EC): [http://www.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm). See the study undertaken by Drugan (2008) on the

use of automatic translation tools in the framework of an expanded European Union in 2004. For their application in private enterprise, see Austermühl (2001).

systems that are effective for pairs of languages with very different structures. Automatic translation between two languages requires, first of all, that they be codified and that a sufficient volume of texts exists in the two languages. Among the innovative organizations that are making strides towards reducing the divide in assisted translation, noteworthy is Translation.org.za, an NGO

Advertisement in the streets of Hangzhou, China



created to develop hardware and software able to process South Africa's 11 official languages.

Alongside automatic translation where human intervention is non-existent or limited, computer tools have been developed to enable translators to translate more quickly and reliably. They include pre-translation systems, such as the *MultiTrans* system employed at UNESCO, which exploit language pairings among large corpora of translated texts, and a wide variety of terminology data banks, such as UNTERM and UNESCOTERM within the United Nations system, IATE in the European Union, and Canadian Translation Bureau's *Termium*. The development of linguistically inclusive automatic translation services — as is pursued, for example, by UNESCO's Initiative B@bel programme — has become particularly important for the purpose of reducing the disparities between languages and narrowing the information and knowledge divides (and not simply the digital divide) between human groups.

As migration flows have intensified with globalization, they have significantly modified the ethno-linguistic makeup of a number of countries and have created new linguistic and translation needs, especially in administrative, legal and medical circuits worldwide. In the United States, for example, the translation profession has skyrocketed with the demographic evolution of the country, where, at the end of the 1990s, one citizen in ten was of foreign origin and 14 percent of residents spoke a language other than English. In 2000, the US Congress passed *An Act Requiring Competent Interpreter Services in the Delivery of Certain Acute Health Care Services* to ensure that American clinics and hospitals act in a legally responsible manner towards non-English-speaking patients, an act based on the 1964 civil-rights law that prohibits any discrimination based on race or country of origin (of which language is a defining trait according to recent jurisprudence). Thus, public medical or hospital services are required to ensure competent interpretation services, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, in any given language (by phone or teleconference if needed), including sign languages, under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* of 1990.

The importance of translation, including its socio-economic repercussions, is often neglected.