

EDUCATION AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

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Abstract

By virtue of its mandate and functions, UNESCO brings an important contribution to the recognition of the right to education and of cultural rights as fundamental human rights which are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Its recommendations, declarations and international legal instruments have a great impact on the very substance of continuous efforts of States in promoting education for all. In UNESCO's view the respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding, are

among the best guarantees of international peace and security. A basic requirement for education nowadays is to be humanistic. In that regard, during the irreversible process of globalization, education is called upon to promote, to reflect and develop the universal values on which international relations of the current century should be founded. Global solidarity is one of those values which are vitally necessary for a globalization with a human face. The present article attempts to illustrate how UNESCO has managed to lead to a general consensus about the specific role of education and cultural diversity in creating a fertile environment for the recognition of the

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duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of globalization. Academic institutions and first of all universities have a functional responsibility for putting into effect the immense potential of education in humanizing globalization by their activities and programs dedicated to the establishment of a culture of global solidarity in harmony with the unity of humankind.

1. A Top Priority

Education and solidarity entered firmly into the current vocabulary of political science and diplomacy. According to the great philosopher Georg Hegel “Education is the art of making man ethical”, while the famous statesman Nelson Mandela believes that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” There is also a consensus to recognize that there can be no genuine progress towards the complete development of the human personality without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity which is unity or communion of interests and responsibilities among nations or mankind as a whole.

The World Conference On Education for All, assembled under the auspices of UNESCO in Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March, 1990, after recalling that education is a fundamental right for all people,

women and men, of all ages, throughout our world, proclaimed, inter alia, that meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities.

On 18 February 2000, in the capital city of the Kingdom of Thailand, UNCTAD X adopted by consensus **The Bangkok Declaration: Global Dialogue and Dynamic Engagement**. The Declaration emphasized that “**Solidarity** and a strong sense of moral responsibility must be the guiding light of national and international policy. They are not only ethical imperatives, but also prerequisites for a prosperous, peaceful and secure world based on true partnership. Such partnership requires more inclusive, transparent and participatory institutional arrangements for international economic decision-making so as to ensure that the benefits of globalization are accessible to all on an equitable basis. In addition, the success of international development efforts depends on account being taken of all stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and **academia**”.¹ (emphasis added) Indeed, the academic community, sharing a long-standing tradition and practice that transcend the conventional borders of nations, religions or ethnicity, is called upon to promote the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, which is the basis of a functional culture of peace.

Academia are motivated by a spirit of strong solidarity to ensure respect for human dignity and fundamental human rights and to pursue policies of sustainable development that benefit all persons and enhance the universal progress of peoples.

Before and after the two declarations adopted in Thailand there was a long chapter of permanent efforts **demonstrating** both the achievements of academia and universities and their unfulfilled aspiration in promoting solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of globalization. Education in general and development education in particular wish to enable people from the North and South to enter into a relationship based on solidarity, dialogue and partnership where each is willing to listen, to receive and give in an appropriate way. Solidarity is one of the key terms of this study, not only because it is an important culturally held fundamental value, but also because it has so many different but equally significant meanings (e.g. human, interpersonal, regional, international solidarity, solidarity between and among organizations, solidarity with the community, global/universal solidarity).

From the intellectual point of view the most notable international documents dealing with inter-relationship between higher education and solidarity, - which is the major theme of the present article, - are the World Declaration on Higher Education

for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, adopted by UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education on 9 October 1998, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2 November 2001, which is a comprehensive standard-setting instrument, elevating cultural diversity to the rank of common heritage of humanity.²

We will first recall the context in which these documents have been adopted before presenting their relevant provisions dedicated to the promotion of solidarity. In convening the World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO's objective was to lay down the fundamental principles for the in-depth reform of higher education systems throughout the world and thus contribute to transforming higher education, in its material and virtual manifestations, into an environment for lifelong learning, for cultural debate, for the affirmation and safeguarding of diversity, and for forging and confirming the values and principles laid down in the Constitution of UNESCO for "**the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind**". In our complex and rapidly changing global society, higher education must contribute to the building of peace founded on a process of development and predicated on equity, justice, solidarity and liberty.

The statements made by ministers and heads of delegations during the proceedings and the actions taken all

over the world by governments to include the principles of the Declaration in their national policy concerning higher education show that the Conference gave the international community a powerful instrument to facilitate the reform of higher education. What was the specific contribution of the Conference to promoting the recognition of education as a major instrument in globalizing solidarity?

The World Conference proclaimed that education was a fundamental pillar of human rights, democracy, sustainable development and peace, and shall therefore become accessible to all throughout life and that measures were required to ensure coordination and cooperation across and between the various sectors, particularly between general, technical and professional secondary and post-secondary education, as well as between universities, colleges and technical institutions. In this context, the solution of the problems will be determined by the vision of the future society and by the role that is assigned to education in general and to higher education in particular. It is the duty of higher education to ensure that the values and ideals of a culture of peace prevail and that the intellectual community should be mobilized to that end.

In the vision of the World Conference, a substantial change and development of higher education, the enhancement of its quality and

relevance, and the solution to the major challenges it faces, require the strong involvement not only of governments and of higher education institutions, but also of all stakeholders, including students and their families, teachers, business and industry, the public and private sectors of the economy, parliaments, the media, the community, professional associations and society as well as a greater responsibility of higher education institutions towards society and accountability in the use of public and private, national or international resources. Higher education systems should enhance their capacity to live with uncertainty, to change and bring about change, and to address social needs and to promote solidarity and equity.

While re-affirming the belief that international cooperation and exchange are major avenues for advancing higher education throughout the world, the Conference acknowledged that the principle of solidarity and true partnership amongst higher education institutions worldwide is crucial for education and training in all fields that encourage an understanding of global issues, the role of democratic governance and skilled human resources in their resolution, and the need for living together with different cultures and values. The practice of multilingualism, faculty and student exchange programs and institutional linkages to promote intellectual and scientific co-operation should be an integral part of all higher education

systems.

At the same time, the principles of international cooperation based on solidarity, recognition and mutual support, true partnership that equitably serves the interests of the partners and the value of sharing knowledge and know-how across borders should govern relationships among higher education institutions in both developed and developing countries and should benefit the least developed countries in particular. Consideration should be given to the need for safeguarding higher education institutional capacities in regions suffering from conflict or natural disasters. Consequently, an international dimension should permeate the curriculum, and the teaching and learning processes.

The Conference considered that **cooperation should be conceived of as an integral part of the institutional missions of higher education institutions and systems.** Intergovernmental organizations, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations should extend their action in order to develop inter-university co-operation projects in particular through twinning institutions, based on solidarity and partnership, as a means of bridging the gap between rich and poor countries in the vital areas of knowledge production and application. Each institution of higher education should envisage the creation of an appropriate structure and/or mechanism for promoting and

managing international cooperation.

UNESCO, and other inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations active in higher education, the states through their bilateral and multilateral cooperation programs, the academic community and all concerned partners in society were called upon to further promote international academic mobility as a means to advance knowledge and knowledge-sharing in order to bring about and promote solidarity as a main element of the global knowledge society of tomorrow.

2. A fundamental value

In this regard, Rev. Brother Prathip Martin Komolmas, President of Assumption University, very cogently pointed out that “Educators believe, despite the uncertainty of the future, that the fundamental function of a university is to embrace a humanistic education. (...) Humanism is an attitude of mind which attaches prime importance to human beings and human values”.³ Solidarity belongs to that category of values.

While adopting on 2 November 2001 the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the General Conference of this specialized agency of the United Nations family reaffirmed in a humanistic spirit that culture should be regarded as the set of

distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. The Declaration expresses in a universal approach the aspiration to greater solidarity on the basis of recognition of cultural diversity, of awareness of the unity of humankind, and of the development of intercultural exchanges. In that generous perspective the Declaration contains a special section entitled **Cultural diversity and international solidarity** which deserves to be summarized for its obvious relevance for the theme under consideration. First of all, the Declaration states that in the face of current imbalances in flows and exchanges of cultural goods and services at the global level, it is necessary to reinforce international cooperation and solidarity aimed at enabling all countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition to establish cultural industries that are viable and competitive at national and international level. Solidarity is treated in a functional manner as being directed to a specific objective. It is a principle and a value which should be reinforced. The role of UNESCO in that regard is clearly reaffirmed. By virtue of its mandate and functions, UNESCO has the responsibility to promote the incorporation of the principles set out in the Declaration into the development strategies drawn up within the various

intergovernmental bodies.

UNESCO is not alone in developing such topical ideas. There is a consensus at the level of the United Nations system that a new world can be built, in which economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development can be realized through solidarity and cooperation within and between countries and through effective partnerships at all levels. The Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (1996) adopted the Habitat Agenda whose first paragraph states: "International cooperation and universal solidarity, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and in a spirit of partnership, are crucial in order to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world".⁴

What was the reaction of academics to these generous expectations qualifying for a top priority?

Some philosophers, lawmakers, social thinkers have been streamlining a new-and-improved ethics of co-existence to replace the older morality based on repression, absolute power and authority. Societies are changing fast and for the better. We are on the fast-track toward liberty and hypercomplexity. Our mode of human solidarity is shifting from matters of likeness to matters of interdependence.

While recalling Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity, it was emphasized that the latter, based on interdependence, allows sympathy across human variety, force for persuasion, communication and democracy.

Suggestions have been formulated to make the present century the century of solidarity. If the developed and powerful countries are extending their power through globalized markets and communications, the response from those who hope to advance the cause of humanity can only be to globalize solidarity. If the initiatives of the developing countries are not to be crushed by the macro-obstacles they face, that will depend, decisively, on a critical mass of people in the rich North capable of assuming the cause of the poor as their own, and, indeed, as the cause of humanity, and responding effectively. However, it is recognized that in spite of the fact that important strides have been made in this direction, we are still a long way from the solidarity movement we need to do battle for life in the 21st century.

Therefore, universities are called upon to play a significant role in the formation of a new generation of international solidarity--not just people for others, but specifically people *for* the crucified majorities in the poor countries of the world. Objections may be expressed that there are plenty of poor and suffering people in developed countries themselves and that charity

begins at home. But a good principle should not be exaggerated. Suffering should be treated with utmost seriousness. The rich countries need to become reconciled with the poor majorities of the world. There is a special responsibility toward those poor majorities. The developed world is expected to help remove the crucified peoples from their crosses. Certainly, there is a political dimension to this responsibility.

These days more people recognize the importance of promoting solidarity in universities. The situation in Afghanistan, Kosovo, East Timor and the misery of Africa are topics for study in the classroom. Debates over affirmative solidarity action may take place in the student cafeteria and the faculty lounge. The agenda of forming enlightened and committed students is not an easy task, because of limited experience, the requirements of the job market, personal prejudice and institutional inertia. But it is not utopian to expect a stronger awareness. A truly humanistic education demands more. Students should be helped to understand the real world, and not just the literature of their major fields. If they are convinced of the value of human solidarity, they may feel to be morally prepared to contribute to changing the world when they leave the university. This requires more than bare intellectual training. It also requires ethical conversion, the development of moral sensitivity to and awareness of human suffering and its causes.⁵

Rev. Mr. Keith Fournier, American theologian and lawyer, asserts that the foundation of our freedom is our understanding of a concept called the “Common Good”. Perhaps one of the oldest references to this concept is found in the “Epistle of Barnabus”, an early Christian Church document dating back to 130 A.D. Enshrined in Christian social teaching, the concept of “the Common Good” is also one of the foundation stones of the political philosophy and heritage of Western civilization. “Common Good” is defined as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” In the Christian tradition the concept usually embraces several aspects of “fulfillment” as it relates to the human person and his/her rights to full participation in the social order; a respect for the human person, the social well-being and development of the entire society, and “peace” which is more than the absence of war, it is the stability and security of a just order.

Contrary to the individualism, the individual is not the measure of all things. Freedom is not found in solitude. Nor is it found in retreating into our little enclaves and fighting to protect “us” against “them”. We cannot be fully human without living together in family and community. We are social by nature and design. We are also bound to one another **by an obligation of solidarity** (we simply are our “brothers keeper”) and we have a duty

to one another, and most especially to the poor. We have a duty to participate in the social order and find a way to build a just society with equal men and women, even those who are different from us or with whom we do not agree.

The values we proclaim, including solidarity, are good for all men and women. They are not “religious” in the sense that they are to be held only by those who hold to a distinct religious denomination or tradition. They are a part of our common human vocation. They are the glue of civilization. However, we have to be realistic. The American author asks the legitimate question: Whatever happened to the “Common Good?” The answer is not encouraging. Though still discussed in academia and referred to in some political discourse, it has become all too uncommon, being replaced with a model of isolated selfishness which pits group against group. Therefore, the author believes that what is needed today is a new public philosophy that re-discovers and re-presents the Common Good as the hinge and the hope of our future freedom and our experience of authentic peace. This philosophy must inform a movement committed to true social justice, human rights, authentic human freedom and solidarity.⁶

Under such circumstances, after this short presentation of the philosophy of UNESCO on the functional relationship between education and solidarity a closer look to the history of

the concept of solidarity may help us to understand better what specific contribution may be expected from higher education and cultural diversity in the process of globalizing solidarity in harmony with the requirements of the current century and of the lessons of the past.

3. Origins

The dialectic relationship between education and solidarity has been recognized in a convincing way in the 19th century. The word *solidarite/solidarity* was used for the first time with the present multiple meanings by French professor Pierre Leroux in his famous book **De l'humanite** published in 1839. Education was successful in the crystallization of the doctrine of *solidarisme* which had an important role in the political, social, educational and diplomatic life of Europe until the First World War.

The most representative author of the school of *solidarisme* was the famous French statesman Leon Bourgeois, one of the architects of the League of Nations. His book “**La Solidarite**”, published in 1897, is considered by *solidaristes* as the most important and influential. Leon Bourgeois, who was also a lawyer and philosopher, received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1920. In Leon Bourgeois opinion the link of solidarity “unit l'homme au reste du monde a chaque

moment de son existence. Ce lien ne reunit seulement toutes les parties de ce qui est aujourd'hui et ce qui etait hier, mais tout le present et tout le passe, comme il reunira tout le present et tout l'avenir....Ainsi les hommes sont, entre eux, places et retenus dans des liens de dependance reciproque, comme le sont tous les etres et tous les corps, sur tous les points de l'espace et du temps. **La loi de la solidarite est universelle.**” (emphasis added)⁷. The aspiration to universality and permanence is highly visible in this short quotation reproduced in its original form and language.

This is in brief the essence of the dialectics of solidarity, as seen by the founder of *solidarisme* which represented one of the most interesting attempts to organize more efficiently cooperation at national and world levels. Reflecting on the long experience of promoting solidarity in the 20th century, French professor Philippe Moreau Defarges stated that: “Une societe mondiale ne peut exister sans solidarite....Le developpement d'une solidarite mondiale requiert d'abord l'integration de l'ensemble des hommes dans le systeme planetaire d'echanges.....la solidarite ne resulte pas d'un decret descendu du ciel, elle est le produit de donnees materielles.”⁸

It should be stressed from the outset that after a period of ambivalence educators treated solidarity as a humanistic value, without any ideological umbrella attached to it.

Charles Gide asserted in this regard: “La *solidarite* n’est pas comme la *liberte*, l’*egalite* ou meme la *fraternite*, un MOT sonore ou, si l’on veut, un pur *ideal*; elle est un *fait* ; un des faits les mieux etablis par la science et par l’histoire. La demonstration de la solidarite par la division du travail.... est la decouverte la plus considerable de notre temps”. (All italics belong to the original text.)⁹ It was a novel and, in the long run, a highly moralizing concept.

In a similar spirit, A. Croiset in a preface to the classical work of Leon Bourgeois, **La Solidarite**, found it necessary to specify that “La solidarite n’a rien de metaphysique, ni de confessionnel. Elle part de ce fait positif que les hommes, sur cette terre, sont obliges par la nature de vivre dans une etroite association, et elle se preoccupe de rendre cette association aussi heureuse que possible par tous les moyens que l’intelligence et le coeur peuvent fournir. Toutes les croyances, toutes les opinions philosophiques peuvent s’accomoder de l’idee de solidarite”.¹⁰ Yet, it should not lead to any utopia, as emphasized by French professor and philosopher Raymond Aron for whom “L’ideal d’une humanite, consciente de sa solidarite, ne contredit pas le fait d’une humanite, divisee en nations conscientes de leur particularites et de la valeur de ces particularites.”¹¹

The Holy See has in this respect a real doctrine. Its documents mention

and define solidarity in a very precise way. We will recall just a few examples. Pope John Paul II has written: “Sacred Scripture continually speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all of humanity. This duty is not limited to one’s own family, nation or state, but extends progressively to all. . . so no one can consider himself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family” (*Centesimus Annus* [CA], no. 51). In the same context, it should be emphasized that the duties of solidarity and the sacrifices they entail fall not just on individuals, but on groups and nations as well (CA, no. 51; *Populorum Progressio*, no. 48). According to Pope John Paul II, solidarity with the human family consists in “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38). In his plea for global solidarity, Pope John Paul II calls for a world-wide effort to promote development, an effort that involves sacrificing the positions of income and of power enjoyed by the more developed economies in the interest of “an overall human enrichment to the family of nations” (CA, no. 52).

The doctrine of the Holy See manages to demonstrate that solidarity is first of all action on behalf of one human family, and a strong appeal to help overcome the divisions in the present globalizing world. Solidarity

binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free people zealous for the cause of the oppressed people. It requests the comfortable and secure groups to take risks for the victims of tyranny, war and international terrorism. It calls the strong and developed countries to care for those who are underdeveloped, weak and vulnerable. It opens homes and hearts to refugee children, to migrant workers, to victims of natural disasters and violence in all its manifestations.

In accordance with this doctrine, all people are encouraged to sharply challenge the growing gaps between rich and poor nations and between rich and poor within nations. It does not deny the important values of market economy, but demands that they be guided by the care for the poor and the principle of the global common good. Human life and human rights should be fully protected. At global level nations should halt the arms trade, ban landmines, promote sustainable development, and relieve the burden of international debt for the least developed countries. The call to global responsibility is the core of an agenda on which the commitment to solidarity has a visible priority.

4. Topicality

The reason for reproducing the above old quotations in their original language and the basic elements of the

Holy See's doctrine is of a pragmatic nature. The quotations are a clear evidence that solidarity has been considered from immemorial times as a **universal value**. But this simple truth was not understood or recognized by the decision-making factors at national and international levels and by way of consequence it was frequently ignored. No sophisticated explanation could justify it.

The tragedies of two world wars and the failure of the League of Nations in its attempts to lead humanity to lasting universal peace contributed in a cardinal manner to a strange neglect of solidarity. In vain a strong promoter of solidarity, Romanian diplomat Nicolae Titulescu, twice president of the League's General Assembly, addressed these prophetic words to all member States: "It is necessary to take immediate action in order that the League may cease to be a moral academy, a brotherhood of technicians, and may become capable of fulfilling its chief mission as a political institution: the prevention of war."¹²

History teaches us that nobody could prevent war. Time is a great story teller. No international institution managed to save humanity from the scourge of war, which twice in one century had brought untold sorrow to all nations. However, the lessons of the World War II were instructive enough for real internationalists, to such an extent that they decided to include solidarity in the main documents meant

to institutionalize international cooperation in various fields after 1945. Regrettably, solidarity was not stipulated in the United Nations Charter. This was a big lacuna which was gradually solved by numerous specific references to solidarity in the immense corpus of resolutions adopted, often by consensus, under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.

As to the field of education, the founding fathers of UNESCO had the merit of clearly reflecting the general feelings about solidarity after the World War II in the constitutive act of the organization. The preamble of UNESCO Constitution adopted on November 16, 1945 emphasizes: "That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, **upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind**" (emphasis added).¹³

Among the purposes and functions of UNESCO it is easy to identify concrete elements giving tangibility to the close relationship between education and the promotion of solidarity. We can enumerate:

- promoting collaboration among the nations through education;
- advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples;

- giving fresh impulse to popular education and to the spread of culture.

All UNESCO General Conferences and other meetings offered an impressive number of examples showing the total commitment of this specialized agency to promoting solidarity through the instrumentalities of education, including in all instances higher education.

UNESCO World Congress of Youth (Barcelona, 8-15 July, 1985) made an appeal for "developing activities aimed at promoting the education of young people for peace, mutual respect, solidarity, tolerance and understanding". The last sentence of the Barcelona Statement says "...The Barcelona Congress calls on the young of all countries to join forces in a movement of solidarity".¹⁴

From 21 to 27 October 1999, 350 young people representing 175 countries joined together in Paris to attend the World Parliament for Children. At the assembly they defined their expectations regarding the defence of peace, **solidarity, education** and culture, economic and human development and environmental protection, by adopting a Youth Manifesto for the 21st Century. The Manifesto was presented to UNESCO's General Conference on 26 October 1999 for dissemination to all the Heads of State or Government and Speakers of Parliaments. The United Nations was formally presented with

the Manifesto in 2000.

Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy, a declaration adopted by the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System on 10 August 2001, in Dakar, contains cogent developments for the understanding of relationship of education and solidarity, as seen by the representatives of the younger generation. This is a very significant fact, as the Forum was dedicated to identifying and advocating for initiatives that may empower young people to have greater control over their individual and collective destinies, and their ability to effectively contribute to the advancement of the global community.

In a spirit of global solidarity, the Dakar Youth Empowerment Strategy requested access to quality education, fostering responsible citizenship and access to human rights education. It should be recalled that there is a recognition of the third “generation” of human rights, namely the rights of solidarity, including first of all the right to peace and development.

In that respect, the Declaration reminds that peace is not just an absence of war, but also a state of mind, individual or collective, a social, cultural, political and economic harmony. Peace is also described as a way of being, a way of living. Hence, to build a true culture of peace we need to develop justice, respect of human rights, to combat poverty. Intercultural

dialogue should be favored; it should be among civilizations and help fight marginalization and exclusion.¹⁵

There is a remarkable affinity of ideas between World Youth Forum in Dakar and the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance (Durban, 31 August-8 September 2001). In its Final Declaration, the Durban Conference re-affirmed the great importance and attention which should be paid to the values of solidarity, respect, tolerance and multiculturalism, “which constitute the moral ground and inspiration for our worldwide struggle...”¹⁶

The Conference recognized that quality education, the elimination of illiteracy and access to free primary education for all can contribute to more inclusive societies, equity, stable and harmonious relations and friendship among nations, peoples, groups and individuals, and a culture of peace fostering mutual understanding, solidarity, social justice and respect for all human rights for all. By its very nature, the Declaration contains an articulate body of guidelines for promoting global solidarity through specific modalities offered by quality higher education. This should be envisaged as a continuous process.

The practice in the area of Asia and the Pacific is quite instructive in this regard. Emphasis is normally put on the necessity to combat dangerous

nationalism which spreads and provokes conflicts and violence all over the world as a counteraction to globalization. Asian countries share the view that they need to examine history in an objective way, to bring education back to people and to promote education for peace. The aim is to work together towards creating an Asia of peace and human rights for all on the basis of trust and reconciliation. This objective is more topical than ever now, during a period of crisis and war against international terrorism. It should be mentioned that the Chinese term for *crisis* is appropriately designated by two Chinese characters meaning *danger* and *opportunity*. The existence of a real danger is obvious. The opportunity is to forge a strong commitment based on global solidarity to eradicate the scourge of terrorism.

Following the initiative of the present author, the Seminar on Capacity Building for Asian NGOs on Implementing the Dakar Framework for Action (Bangkok, 9-11 July 2001) recorded in its final report the following:

The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All(1990) stipulates in article 10 that “Meeting learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility. It requires international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress the existing economic disparities.” Ten years later the UN Millennium

Summit included solidarity among fundamental values considered to be essential to international relations in 21st century. Indeed, “global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.”

The Bangkok Seminar on Capacity Building concluded that the key challenges facing NGOs were identified as follows:

- Strengthening collaboration with the governments ;
- Forging solidarity and sustainable partnership with other civil society organizations.¹⁷

There is a general feeling that the key to success can be found in the citizens’ awareness and human solidarity. Partnership by definition implies solidarity: standing shoulder to shoulder and helping those less equipped to cope with a more competitive reality in the economic, political, social and institutional fields.

Asian countries had an important contribution to the formulation and adoption by consensus of such topical and action-oriented conclusions. In a broader context, it is generally recognized that an urgent objective on the Asian continent is strengthening solidarity by deeds. Asian countries

continue to play a constructive role at the United Nations and actively participate in APEC and ASEM and take part in other multilateral diplomatic activities of a global, international, inter-regional and regional nature. ASEAN constitutive act (Bangkok Declaration of 8 August 1967) stipulates that its members are “Mindful of the existence of mutual interests and common problems among countries of South-East Asia and convinced of the need to strengthen further the existing bonds of **regional solidarity** and cooperation”. (emphasis added).

It is useful to mention that the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia (Bali, 24 February 1976) stipulates in Article 1 that “The purpose of this Treaty is to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation among peoples which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.”¹⁸ We should note that *perpetual* has a ring of eternity about it.

The above ideas and commitments should be seriously considered while analyzing the challenges and strategies for improving quality higher education for all in the Asia-Pacific area. Education can contribute to forging a culture of global solidarity. It should be recognized that forging global solidarity and sustainable partnerships with civil society organizations is one of the most pressing challenges for universities and academia. Education and formation are

key arenas for teaching global solidarity, in particular nowadays when we witness a strong phenomenon of massification of higher education. Communication is the nervous system of human solidarity. Its role is increasing at the age of globalization. Competent regional structures have important responsibilities in that regard.

5. Perspectives

At the age of global politics there is a dramatic risk for the community of nations to be fractured between those included and those excluded from the fruits of globalization. A multilateral approach to the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of the irreversible process of globalization will be very useful and would help its eventual codification and progressive development. Negotiating a culture of global solidarity was an endeavor of great significance during the United Nations Year of Volunteers (2001). Some international years have a fascinating history. We will mention one example. During the preparation and celebration of the UN International Youth Year, Participation, Development, Peace (1985), initiated by Romania and fully supported by European and Asian countries, the author of the present paper managed to convince governmental representatives to include solidarity in all major resolutions dedicated to that event. In Geneva in 1977, during the session

of the Commission for Social Development, under this author's presidency, a relevant resolution was adopted by consensus entitled **'Youth in the Contemporary World'**. The relationship between education and the promotion of human solidarity was seriously considered during the elaboration of the resolution, as well as in the official and informal proceedings. It culminated with the adequate reflection of that close relationship in all UN and UNESCO documents dedicated to youth and education during 1985-2000 period.

Permanent efforts/ negotiations are needed in order to give more substance and vitality to universal values requested by the emerging global order. Solidarity is, without doubt, such a value and the UN Millennium Summit of September 2000 was right to proclaim in clear terms solidarity as a fundamental value essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. An Asian head of state said that international solidarity has become an imperative; in its absence we might not survive this millennium.¹⁹ In Davos World Forum in 2001, Jean Francois Rischard, vice president for Europe of the World Bank, asserted inter alia: "(...) the solidarity concept that is at the heart of European identity is precisely the concept that can inspire new approaches in global problem-solving".²⁰ The devastating earthquakes in many countries on various continents and the reactions to those natural disasters, including those

coming from Europe and Asia, as well as the world-wide reactions to the tragic events on 11 September 2001 in the USA are pathetic reminders of the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of globalization.

The 56th session of the UN General Assembly has managed to bring a great contribution to the strengthening of the value of global solidarity in fighting international terrorism. That expectation was realistic and legitimate. Indeed, the whole world was galvanised and requested resolute action under the auspices of the United Nations, because the barbaric acts of September 11 2001 against the United States of America were by their nature heinous crimes against universally accepted principles and norms that value human life, being contrary to the very *raison d'être* of the United Nations itself.

It should be recalled that under the auspices of the United Nations, 189 Member States have strongly condemned on 12 September 2001, by a consensus resolution, the terrorist acts of 11 September. It is remarkable that the UN General Assembly expressed not only its condolences, but also its "solidarity with the people and government of the United States in these sad and tragic circumstances".²¹

6. Assessment

That UN resolution of solidarity with the United States has a high

educational significance. The reference to universal solidarity was formulated by the most legitimate and representative organization of the contemporary world “in the autumn of our times”. In this context, during the irreversible process of globalization, solidarity, as a universal value should be considered and treated as an imperative prerequisite for ensuring the success of collective efforts of all nations to eradicate terrorism in all its forms of manifestation. Irreversible means unavoidable. “What you cannot avoid, welcome”, says a wise Chinese proverb. Education has a crucial role in making this prerequisite welcome, understood and comprehensible for all. It is expected to further elaborate on its content. In fact, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together as proposed by UNESCO is a pathetic appeal for global solidarity. Learning to live together epitomizes a cardinal objective and a formidable challenge. This is a real pillar absolutely necessary for building cohesion thresholds meant to give viability to human communities and facilitate multilateral development. Educators are requested to develop prototype curricula and relevant interesting educational materials focusing on:

- creating an adequate approach of training and education for peace and solidarity;
- fundamental values as identified in the UN Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000.

In this context, it is cogent to mention that the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John D. Negroponte, in his address to the UN General Assembly’s Plenary Session on October 1, 2001 said: “This General Assembly, as you all know, was meant to implement the Millennium Declaration, issued one year ago this month. In it we declared certain fundamental values to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century - freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility”. Martin Belinga-Eboutu, President of ECOSOC, found it necessary to emphasize that the international community had to assume a responsible approach based on solidarity, rather than simply falling back and withdrawing from development activities. It is vital to give priority to the objectives set in the Millennium Declaration. Among specific things which can be envisaged to give tangibility to education for global solidarity the following may be enumerated:

- joint signature campaigns;
- linkages between sister cities and friendship cities;
- simultaneous cyber-campaigns targeting ministries of education, culture, sports, science, technology;
- creation of thematic web pages dedicated to various concrete components of solidarity;
- strengthening communications via e-mail;
- cultivating a systematic dialogue with UN, UNESCO, ILO and

other UN specialized agencies;

- improving communications with global NGOs network.

In this respect The Bangkok - 2001 International Conference of University Presidents brought a valuable contribution. Within the Eurasian Dialogue (July 29 - August 1, 2001) an interesting project was announced, namely **Highergate, The gateway to higher education and research worldwide**. It consists in a specialized Internet portal. Its author is Swiss professor Luc E. Weber, Vice President, International Association of Universities, Member of the Board, European Universities Association. Without entering into details of a project still under consideration, we may anticipate that once finalized and operational it will certainly become an efficient instrument of global solidarity in the field of education. At this stage the project offers a unique opportunity to all potential sponsors to demonstrate their commitment to developing a society based on solidarity and capable to take advantage of improved learning facilities at global level. Solidarity will offer a vision of hope whose availability is crucial today when humankind is facing unprecedented challenges and conflicts.

7. Dialogue

Schools/universities may be dynamic and catalytic factors in promoting solidarity as a universal

value, as demonstrated during the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001). An important and highly significant part of the process of celebration of this event was the general debate dedicated to it in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly in November 2001. From the many ideas and considerations expressed on that occasion we will focus our attention on those dealing specifically with the close correlation between dialogue and solidarity.

While inaugurating the debate, Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, stated that the idea of a dialogue among civilizations had engendered wide interest in academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and wherever people had sought to find common ground. Such a dialogue was based not on the premise that we as humanity were all the same, or always in agreement, but rather on appreciation of the fact that we represented a diversity of cultures, and that our beliefs reflected that diversity.

It should be recognized that the Dialogue among Civilizations had a purpose and promise beyond the challenges faced today. Throughout history that dialogue had fostered understanding and compromise, and could do so even more in a world that was ever smaller and more closely linked. It could support and sustain every effort at peace, and every attempt to resolve conflicts between and within

nations. The statements dedicated to the event fully illustrate that truth.

Some representatives underlined the need to think beyond traditional patterns of diplomacy. Faced with an enemy contemptuous of human values and misusing religion to justify the unjustifiable, it was important to think and act beyond the current efforts to bring the terrorists to justice. It was important to build upon those human values a world of tolerance and mutual respect which might bring about peace and security and a genuine human rights culture. In order to reach all segments of society, it was important to put the dialogue on a broader base. In particular, one had to aim for the children who represent the future. They needed to be taught **the merits of mutual respect and solidarity**. They must be able to grow up with a profound and respectable understanding of diversity. The efforts must go beyond diplomatic circles and expert meetings and reach out to the hearts and minds of people, particularly young people, all over the world. Using globalization to create a new awareness of togetherness and closeness among people is a real possibility.

One of the advantages of modern information technology is its extraordinary ability to bridge geographical divides. But it must also bridge the divides of mentality, culture and religion. The process could start with small but concrete steps, moving “bottom up” rather than “top down.”

One useful instrument proved to be cultural dialogue stimulated by the creation of intercultural networks for religious, economic and ecological exchanges. Another tool could be strengthening scientific discourse and organizing forums on perceptions of history. It is also important to compare schoolbooks on sensitive phases of history.

Renato Martino, Observer for the Holy See, said that a true dialogue between cultures required a respect for difference. Much too often, both in history and in the present times, ethnic and religious differences had been used as a justification for brutal conflict, genocide and persecution. There had also been problems where one religious group had sought to expel members of another religion from a country, often with threats and actual violence. Authentic culture could not be built upon the practice of religious persecution. Such a so-called culture stood diametrically opposed to the human person and would eventually lead to the disintegration of society.

Meaningful dialogue among civilizations could not take place in the absence of religious freedom, he added. The cultures of the world, with all of their rich diversity of gifts, had much to contribute to the building up of a civilization of love. What was required was a mutual respect for differences among cultures — a respect inspired by the desire to uphold the right of all individuals to see the truth in accord

with the dictates of their conscience and in continuity with their cultural heritage.

No authentic dialogue could take place if it failed to respect life. There could be no peace or dialogue among civilizations when that fundamental right was not protected. There had been many examples of generosity, dedication, even heroism in the service of life in recent times. Yet, the world was still plagued by a number of attacks on life. When the human dignity of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society was not duly recognized, respected and protected, all civilizations suffered. However, despite those terrible practices and the recent crises, mankind must not be discouraged. The very idea of dialogue presupposed the ability to reason and understand and especially to change and make anew.

A representative from Switzerland said that over the last decades, initiatives of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation had grown all over the world. In that dialogue the world's religions had rediscovered that their own fundamental ethical teachings supported and deepened those secular ethical values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the 1993 Parliament of World Religions at Chicago, more than 200 representatives of all world religions had expressed their consensus on a set of shared ethical values, standards and attitudes, as the basis for a global ethic. He called on every

person, institution and nation to take their responsibility for a culture of non-violence and reverence for all life; **for a culture of solidarity** and a just economic order; for a culture of tolerance and a life in truthfulness; and for a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women. It was a matter of urgency that the globalization of economy, technology and communication be supported by a globalization of ethics. Some political analysts had predicted a "clash of civilizations" for the twenty-first century. An alternative vision for the future was not an optimistic idea, but a realistic vision of hope: the religions and civilizations of the world in a coalition of all peoples of good will could help to avoid such a clash, provided they realized that there could be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions, no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions, no dialogue among religions without global ethical standards, no survival of our globe without peace and justice and without a new paradigm on international relations based on global ethics. Solidarity is certainly one of those global standards.

In the opinion of Switzerland coexistence between different cultures, religions and traditions did not happen on its own, but required constant effort and work. Now, when the world had become what was often called a global village, it was important to realize that what was true within borders was also true on the international level.

Standards, values, religions and traditions defined civilizations at the same time creating a collective identity and **a sense of belonging to a whole**. There was a clear link between the individual and society; hence dialogue among civilizations concerned every human being. However, identity and civilization were not static concepts nor “set in concrete”. Societies emerged, re-emerged and changed according to current visions of the world. There were more similarities than differences between various civilizations. One of the priorities to achieve a dialogue among civilizations must therefore be the highlighting of all that humanity and civilizations had in common. The concept of the dialogue was too important to remain a mere pious hope. It was vital to use the momentum and ensure that dialogue became a reality on the ground.

In the same context, Columbia stated that we must shoulder the responsibility of sowing the seeds of dialogue to harvest respect for human rights, and ensure that human endeavors are based on inclusion, not exclusion. We must overcome any exclusion and discord and intolerance so that we can move forward together towards a culture where harmony between nations, respect for diversity and solidarity will prevail.

From the Asian perspective, Philippines reminded that the United Nations continued to be the bedrock upon which the dialogue among

civilizations should take place. It had the potential to demonstrate how dialogue could bring together, rather than polarize communities. Some had noted that since the 11 September attacks the world faced a more uncertain future. That need not necessarily be true. The temptation for exclusionism and mistrust, however, remained strong. That temptation must be resisted, by working vigorously to heal real and perceived differences. The “us” versus “them” syndrome must be eschewed, as must the stereotyping of people and cultures. Drawing from a pool of different cultures and civilizations, the world community was bound together by the urgent need to address its shared burdens -- the deprivation and indignity of poverty, the vast pockets of underdevelopment, the degradation of the environment, the existence of terrorism and conflict and the silent cry of the victims of famine and disease. Now was not the time to falter in working constructively through dialogue. The various peoples of the world might hold different beliefs, and traditions, but they remained part of the same global village.

At the end of the general debate, the plenary forum of the United Nations adopted by consensus a resolution entitled **Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations**. The draft resolution was sponsored by 108 countries representing all continents. According to the text, dialogue among civilizations is a process between and within civilizations, founded on

inclusion, and a collective desire to learn, uncover and examine assumptions, unfold shared meaning and core values and integrate multiple perspectives through dialogue. It constitutes a process for attaining promotion of inclusion, equity, equality, justice and tolerance in human interactions; promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and enrichment of common understanding of human rights; development of a better understanding of common ethical standards and universal human values; and enhancement of respect for cultural diversity and cultural heritage. Such dialogue among civilizations provides important contributions to progress in promotion of confidence-building at local, national, regional and international levels; enhancing mutual understanding and knowledge among different social groups, cultures and civilizations; addressing threats to peace and security; promotion and protection of human rights; and elaboration of common ethical standards. Participation in the dialogue, according to the resolution, should be global in scope and open to all, including people from all civilizations -- intellectuals, writers, scientists, representatives of the arts, culture and the media and youth; and individuals from civil society and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) -- as instrumental partners in promoting dialogue among civilizations.

The resolution also contains a **programme of action** according to which States, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations and civil society are invited to consider the following as a means of promoting dialogue among civilizations in all domains: facilitating and encouraging interaction and exchange among all individuals from various societies and civilizations; promoting of mutual visits and meetings of experts in various fields from different civilizations; exchange of visits among representatives of the arts and culture and the organization of cultural festivals; sponsorship of conferences, symposiums and workshops to enhance mutual understanding, tolerance and dialogue among civilizations; planning sport competitions; and other activities.

States, funding institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector are invited to mobilize the necessary resources to promote dialogue among civilizations. The United Nations system, including the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are invited to encourage and facilitate dialogue among civilizations and formulate ways and means to promote such dialogue in the activities of the United Nations in various fields.

As a general conclusion we may assert that the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations proved to be a success. Its

follow-up should be conceived in the same generous humanistic framework. Indeed, in universal contextuality, as a crucial attempt to uphold mutual respect, global sympathetic understanding and tolerance, an authentic and permanent dialogue among civilizations is the only means to build a world of human dignity, genuine solidarity and hope.

For the future, a broad campaign could be envisaged involving educators, religious leaders, prominent members of civil society, aimed at rooting out the incitement to hatred and violence and promoting the promising value of solidarity. Conditions are favourable. In October 2001, many countries made an appeal in the UN General Assembly to pool wisdom together and strengthen international cooperation against terrorism. The Philippines stated: “We must take this opportunity to forge religious understanding, ecumenism and solidarity”²² The existing functioning cases are encouraging.

The World Health Organization presented in September 2001 a co-sponsored UNESCO-WHO project called “**UNI-SOL**”, an acronym for “**Universities in Solidarity for Health of the Disadvantaged**”. It comprises 12 field projects addressing issues such as:

- Mobilisation of higher education for social justice;
- Universities and social transformations;

- Social accountability and transparency;
- Partnerships for sustainable development;
- Co-ordinated action for justice, peace and development.

The aim is to better understand and promote multidisciplinary and inter-faculty approaches in favor of disadvantaged groups. The very origin of this project is instructive. On July 11-14, 1999, WHO, UNESCO and the University of Arizona co-convened a global conference in Tucson, Arizona, specifically to address the topic of the *Universities and the Health of the Disadvantaged*. Pursuant to the Declaration and Framework for Priority Action set by the World Conference on Higher Education at UNESCO in October 1998, the Agenda for Social Development adopted by the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995, and the resolution adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 1984, urging member states to mobilize universities in favor of strategies promoting Health for All, the participants in the Global Conference on Universities and the Health of the Disadvantaged asserted their intention to harmonize and implement the results produced by the aforementioned three documents and proposed a Charter on Universities and the Health of the Disadvantaged. The main ideas of the Charter are summarized as follows:

Universities have a unique potential to stimulate progress and construct better and more equitable societies. Their long-standing tradition of advocating humanism, social justice, peace and development bestow upon universities an obligation to commit themselves to maximize this potential, especially on behalf of the most disadvantaged populations. In the Charter, disadvantaged populations are defined as those groups with diminished capacity to take advantage of opportunities for better health and who are often denied those opportunities, whether due to internal or external factors.

Universities should take the initiative in developing and mediating multidimensional action plans for improving the health of the disadvantaged by playing a catalytic role in mobilizing the various resources needed. Properly motivated and supported, they can facilitate the convergence of disparate interests and create coalitions among key players in governments, health professions, and communities. Universities have a wide spectrum of responsibilities in education, research, and service delivery; a capacity to engage in multidisciplinary intervention; and an ability to develop alliances with other constituencies.

Universities must base their long-term orientation on societal aims and needs, reinforcing their role of service to society, especially with regard to

activities aimed at eliminating poverty, intolerance, violence, illiteracy, hunger, environmental degradation, and disease, and other factors responsible for the existence of disadvantaged populations. This will prepare citizens who are able to think clearly, analyze problems, make appropriate choices, act ethically, and assume social responsibilities.

To achieve these ends, the Charter affirms specifically that **collaboration based on solidarity**, partnership and advocacy should also be an integral part of the mission of universities. Successful, productive, and responsible education, service and research require collaboration within and among academic institutions and communities, governments and other key stakeholders.²³

Another example is offered by **A Campus for Peace**, which is a virtual city for peace, solidarity, humanitarian aid and sustainability. It was opened and promoted by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, in Spain. This open city serves people and organizations that are directly involved in the processes of peace, solidarity, human rights, humanitarian aid and sustainable development.

Intellectually, the concept of global solidarity demands action-oriented responses and imaginative initiatives. The pioneer role of universities in that endeavor would be highly appreciated on all continents and the example set by the above initiative may be followed

in the Asian and Pacific areas, as well as in Europe. Some relevant recommendations adopted by consensus by various international organizations in the field of higher education may offer the starting point, on both procedure and substance, for new projects meant to strengthen global solidarity during the most difficult and dramatic period of the history of 21st century. India was right in stating that “The welcome transformation that has come after September 11 is the sudden emergence of an international solidarity to meet an international threat.”²⁴

8. New Challenges

The existing and future recommendations and their adequate implementation should be founded on the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education on 9 October 1998. The Declaration specified that higher education institutions and their personnel and students should exercise their intellectual capacity and their moral prestige to defend and actively disseminate universally accepted values, including peace, justice, freedom, equality and solidarity.

Higher education has the permanent duty in the relevant fields to actively contribute to the creation of a new society - non-violent and non-exploitative - consisting of highly

cultivated, motivated and integrated individuals, inspired by love for humanity and guided by wisdom. That wisdom cannot be separated from the duty of solidarity.

If societal solidarity survives the social turmoils, there is no a priori reason why the society could not continue to redistribute a certain percentage of GDP through the social protection system - or in other words: continue to share the cake in an equitable way. It should be acknowledged that there is no generally accepted rule to determine the limits of solidarity (which according to historical experience is changing over time) in any given society and historic age. Such limits can only be tested politically, as they illustrate basic societal concepts and values rather than economic parameters. It should be noted that in Europe these limits seem to change. Financing burdens appear to become increasingly “unacceptable”. The reasons are profound and touch on such fundamental concepts as changing societal values which cannot be analyzed within the framework of the present study. Yet, it should be mentioned that in each society there are some pre-determined limits to the exercise of solidarity and hence, to the acceptable level of redistribution, or in more specific language limits to the acceptance of taxation and contribution rates. The rejection of additional financing burdens is often explained by political criticism about macro - and micro economic effects of social

protection, quoting unemployment as a great negative consequence, as well as the dangers of massive economic migration.

French professor Marcel Ruby asserted with vigor that “L’exigence de solidarite s’impose de plus en plus dans nos societes contemporaines.....Elle constitue une preoccupation permanente, incontournable. Elle conditionne largement l’ordre social et politique, national et international. Elle s’impose plus que jamais a l’heure ou la mondialisation modifie toutes les structures et toutes les perspectives, engendrant beaucoup d’espoirs mais aussi beaucoup d’inquietudes dans le monde.”²⁵ It is a fact that the substance, the method and the reach of international relations have radically changed. We face a maze of new complexities.

At this writing and in permanence, quality education is vital in preparing national societies to achieve such a noble and challenging objective, as the love for humanity. It has the capacity of shaping events. As estimated by French professor Raymond Cappuis, “Quelle que soit l’option, le probleme de la formation a la pratique de la solidarite reste le probleme fondamental auquel doivent se confronter tous les citoyens du monde...la solidarite peut devenir une facon d’etre coutumiere”.²⁶

In accordance with UNESCO’s philosophy the high education systems should enhance their capacity to

promote solidarity and equity, to preserve and exercise scientific rigor and originality in a spirit of impartiality for attaining and sustaining an indispensable level of quality. Students should enjoy the centrality of these concerns within a lifelong perspective, so as to allow their full integration into the global knowledge society. A United Nations Decade for Youth and Solidarity may be envisaged as a major initiative to be promoted under the motto **Opus Solidaritatis Pax** (Peace is the fruit of solidarity). The proclamation of such a decade is supposed to develop an organic linkage between the younger generation and the universal value of solidarity through specific national, regional and international/global programs of action. That would constitute a strong contribution to the development of a culture of solidarity, functional in its manifestations and universal by its capacity of attraction. An initiative of this nature would be in perfect harmony with the letter and spirit of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

The objectives stipulated in the Millennium Declaration and in other relevant documents relating to education and solidarity are well understood by professors. Summarizing some collective conclusions formulated earlier on the matter, Raymond Cappuis asserted: “C’est en famille et a l’ecole que peut se developper harmonieusement l’apprentissage de la solidarite. Hors de ces deux univers, l’environnement economique ne

favorise pas la mise en oeuvre des conditions psychologiques generatrices de progres social et humain". The same author believes that "la solidarite reste l'incomparable expression de la conscience humaine".²⁷

To what extent solidarity is already an expression of human conscience should be evaluated and demonstrated by real facts. The tragic events of 11 September 2001 opened a new decisive chapter in the history of solidarity. The success of the coalition for the elimination of terrorism in all its forms of manifestation depends on the existence of an authentic global solidarity. That may be a gradual process, but its tangibility should be situated beyond any doubt. That would be the practical test of solidarity at global level. From the legal point of view that would mean that "la solidarite internationale requiert sa superiorite hierarchique du droit qui la concretise sur le droit interne"²⁸

However, the law of solidarity is as far from its codification as the globalization with a human face is far from its actual implementation. Consequently, we may share the realistic assessment and legitimate interrogation of Rachid Sfar of Tunisia who wrote: "Le monde, globalise economiquement et fragmente politiquement, ne dispose pas encore d'institutions et de regles de procedure de gouvernance et de controle universellement admises et mises en pratique: ce qui existe dans ce domaine

est en fait au stade d'embryon! L'Humanite saura -t-elle gerer ces contradictions en erigeant, notamment, la solidarite internationale en vertu cardinale ?"²⁹

This is a challenging question to be considered and answered at all levels. At national level the year 2002 will provide the organizational framework for testing the strength of human solidarity in a different context, but closely related to education. The Second World Assembly on Ageing (April 2002, Madrid) is expected to offer an excellent opportunity to raise international awareness of various goals concerning the role of permanent education in promoting global solidarity, but also to define ways and means for forging a greater intergenerational solidarity. "Age is honorable and youth is noble", says an Irish proverb. Is it generally accepted? According to a Chinese proverb, "One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade". Solidarity is needed between old and young, the healthy and the sick, between rich and poor and above all between richer and poorer nations. New educational managers have to be trained, adequate curricular content and instructional materials will have to be redesigned in an innovative way. New policies will have to be formulated to support the implementation of measures to put into effect radical changes requested by a re-newed system of education commensurate with the exigencies of the 21st century in the capital field of

learning. “To teach is to learn”, says a wise Japanese proverb. Good education/learning will be instrumental in advancing those goals. Poor education would make those objectives difficult to achieve.

The United Nations system, including UNESCO, will continue to play a fundamental role in formulating the guidelines for promoting global solidarity in an international environment totally different by its nature and modified in its very substance, if compared with the prevailing situation during the 20th century. It is generally recognized that the United Nations system remains the most appropriate multilateral forum for revitalising and consolidating the coordinated efforts of the world community of nations to solve global problems. The first signs invite to moderate optimism.

The debates in the UN General Assembly about the measures to eliminate terrorism (1-5 October 2001) have been encouraging. The outcome of those debates will facilitate a better understanding of the urgency of collective endeavors to promote global solidarity. Expressions used by various delegations during that debates are most significant as verbal testimony of the existence of a visible trend to strengthening the value of global solidarity in fighting international terrorism. Instinctive solidarity, unlimited solidarity, solidarite sans faille, dans un elan de solidarite

remarquable, the most heart-felt sense of solidarity are not only political and diplomatic evidences of a new developing terminology, but also a proof that Member States really care about a universal value whose topicality is dramatized by current events and by the anguishing dilemmas of security on the whole planet.

Under the present difficult circumstances, the UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan formulated in a convincing way the emerging trend by stating: “The task now is to build on that wave of human solidarity - to ensure that the momentum is not lost, to develop a broad, comprehensive and above all sustained strategy to combat terrorism and eradicate it from our world.”³⁰

The United Nations should be in the avant-garde of that combat. It is the embodiment of institutionalized solidarity. It is the highest situated school of global solidarity. It is the most legitimate and representative forum of multilateralism. And as Thailand stated before the UN General Assembly, “In this globalized world, there is simply no better alternative than multilateralism”.³¹ Indeed, “la diplomatie multilaterale institutionalisee est une reponse aux besoins de cooperation tout en etant un instrument potentiel de changement de la societe internationale.”³²

Teaching multilateralism is not only a great diplomatic endeavor. It is

also an educational objective. It is generally acknowledged that education is pivotal to social, cultural and economic welfare of all societies. It is contributing to the development and modernization of national institutions, including those involved in promoting multilateral diplomacy. The increasing interdependence of all nations in a globalizing world brings new dimensions and gives a major significance to the process of cooperation in tertiary education. The topical and urgent challenge is to harmonize the considerable global heterogeneity with the imperative of quality higher education. On the global agenda exchanges of views and permanent dialogue about the substance of authentic global solidarity will crystallize in a creative way a **new modus vivendi** in the current century. Its success means lasting peace. Its failure would lead to catastrophe. As pointed out by Dr. Kim Hak-su, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, we must address contemporary problems “guided by the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of globalization, with all its good and bad components. We must consider it with all seriousness, from fresh angles and perspectives”.³³

Consequently, we should profoundly meditate on the thoughts of Martin Luther King, Jr. as quoted in the UN General Assembly: “We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.”³⁴ This is a vital lesson that quality higher education can

teach us all for the benefit of present and future generations. We have no choice but to interpret the others by our own lights.³⁵

There is now a consensus that education, in its fullest sense, represents the ultimate answer to the universal access to information and knowledge sharing. The knowledge - society depends on it. For this reason, all international organizations concerned and all national authorities are expected to deploy every effort to make it come true.

UNESCO will bring these concerns on the agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society that is being planned in 2003 by ITU in close cooperation with interested United Nations agencies with a “view to develop a common vision and understanding of the information society and to draw a strategic plan of action for its concerted development” and “to articulate a clear statement of political wil”.³⁶

Solidarity through education can be considered as an umbrella expression meant to reflect a topical objective in a changing world, in order to contribute, by adequate educational instruments, to the establishment of an agenda at the local, national, regional and international levels for the promotion of globalization with a human face. Facilitating dialogue among practitioners and relevant institutions involved in educational projects,

encouraging active participation in the analysis of global issues such as sustainable development and the respect of human rights, understanding these issues from the perspective of the irreversible process of globalization represent major tasks for universities.

Many countries seem to be prepared to give global education proper recognition during the current curricula reforms, while focusing on its interdisciplinary nature. Global education should not be imagined as an island within the curriculum, but rather as a comprehensive participatory component and as a source of motivation in the system of learning at the local, national, regional and global levels. It should be correlated with peace education as a promising method of teaching and learning about the values, attitudes and forms of behavior that reflect respect for the right to life, for human beings, their inherent dignity, and for all fundamental human rights, the rejection of violence in all its forms of manifestations and commitment to the principles of freedom, justice, solidarity, tolerance and understanding among peoples, between groups and in all societies.

Global education is expected to stress the principles of universality, plurality and diversity. It should adopt an appropriate understanding of interrelated systems: physical, biological, social, economic, political and informational. It should pay permanent attention to the variety of

cultures and civilizations. It should promote citizen' rights and duties and work to reinforce an authentic democracy by encouraging a sense of responsibility towards present political realities that are of vital concern to the national communities. In short, for a globalizing world it is necessary to develop an education and culture of global responsibility on the basis of universal values recognized and proclaimed by the United Nations.

NOTES

1. Doc.TD/387 of 18 February 2000, par.9. For a general presentation of UNCTAD see United Nations Handbook 2001, PrintLink, Wellington, 2001, pp.188-192.
2. The Declarations are quoted on the basis of the Internet versions available at www.unesco.org visited on March 4, 2002. The full text of The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity is also published as an *appendix* in the present issue of **ABAC Journal** on page 61.
3. See Assumption University, **Twenty-ninth Commencement Exercises**, January 26, 2002, p.80.
4. **The World Conferences**, United Nations, New York, 1997, pp.65-68. A general analysis of world conferences under the auspices of the United Nations may be consulted in A. LeRoy Bennett,

- International Organizations.** Principles and Issues, sixth edition, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1995, pp.432-443.
5. Dean Brackley S J., **High Standards for Higher Education: The Christian University and Solidarity**, consulted at www.creighton.edu. In April, 1998, the International Association of Universities proclaimed: "In the context of international cooperation, the exercise of Academic Freedom and University Autonomy by some should not lead to intellectual hegemony over others. It should, on the contrary, be a means of strengthening the principles of pluralism, tolerance and **academic solidarity** between institutions of higher learning and between individual scholars and students."
 6. Rev. Mr. Keith Fournier, **Solidarity or Decline: Higher Education Faces the New Millennium**, accessible at www.ilor.com
 7. Leon Bourgeois, **La solidarite**, troisieme edition, Armand Colin, Paris, 1902, pp.49-50.
 8. Philippe Moreau Desfarges, **La communaute internationale**, PUF, Paris, 2000, pp.118.
 9. *Apud* Eros Monti, **Alle fonte della solidarieta. La nozione di solidarieta nella dottrina sociale della chiesa**, Dissertatio, Series Romana-25, Milano, 1999, p.71.
 10. Eros Monti, *op.cit.* p.73.
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