'Democratising Governance at Regional and Global level to achieve the Millennium Development Goals'

BY

Pastor Peters Osawaru OMORAGBON

***Executive President/CEO Nurses Across the Borders Humanitarian Initiative*-Nigeria**
At The
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TOPIC: 'BUILDING PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH DIVERSITY'

Humanity seems to be in a free fall towards disaster.

The ecological fabric of our existence is being torn apart, as the violence of corporate globalisation combines with the violence of war. Alternatives to war, non-sustainability and social and economic injustice are becoming a survival imperative! These alternatives need to combine our making **peace** with the planet and our making peace among people with *diverse* cultures. One is not possible without the other. The roots of terrorism, violence and war lie in environmental and economic exclusion and the insecurity it generates.

People's security doesn't lie in larger military budgets, bigger bombs and stronger police states. It lies in economic, cultural and political security. Rebuilding these multiple securities is the only way to create peace, justice and sustainability.

How can we, as members of the African Community and the Civil Society reinvent security to ensure the survival of all legitimate goals for the future of our diverse cultures?

How do we turn from the ruins of the culture of 'destruction', to the culture that sustains and celebrates life?

Perhaps the breaking free of the mental prison of separation and exclusion and seeing the world in its interconnectedness and non-separability, allowing new alternatives to emerge might be what humanity needs. Scarcity transforms into abundance and insecurity in to security. We need once more to feel at home and with EACH OTHER. Do we need a new

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paradigm that allows us to move from the persuasive culture of violence, to a culture of non-violence, creativity and peace? That is the democracy paradigm.

The *democracy* is based on creating living economies that protect life and provide basic needs and economic security to all. It is based on *living* democracy, which is inclusive. The democracy is commitment to go beyond the crisis of economic injustice and inequality, non-sustainability, the decay of democracy and the rise of terrorism.

This is what Diversity Management is all about!

'*Building peace through diversity'* is a *topic* of an utmost importance that combines three words of honour: '**Peace, Harmony and Diversity**'. *Peace*, according to Johan Galtung[1] *is another word for equality, equal rights, equity, dignity, symmetry, reciprocity /harmony, is creative cooperation beyond absence of violence /diversity WHICH celebrates our manifold within peace and harmony.*

The Millennium question is how to obtain all three when all over there is the opposite:

Direct, Structural and Cultural violence? Africa today is a good example of these three combined!

Two discourses about coping with violence compete for our attention; the security discourse and the peace discourse through harmonised diversity. They address the same concern, but are almost diametrically opposed.

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There is a legitimate goal in every party, however, violent and repulsive. The way of identifying valid goals is by mutual inquiry; in other words dialogue and then, using that as a basis for togetherness. Thus, '*security*' is located to the right politically and '*peace*' to the left. Thus, democracy and Human Rights are already great equalizers. The only reciprocity is the norm.

Does the peace justify the security?

The peace argument against the security approach is strong; it serves like a bandage over a festering wound that will reproduce the fever and other symptoms. The untransformed conflict will reproduce violence, sooner or later. Not going to the roots, solving the issues, leads to a spiral of violence and counter-violence.[2]

The security argument against the peace approach is also strong; not all parties are driven by legitimate grievances, some are driven by illegitimate greed. The day after the peaceful conflict 'transformation' the greedy will get at everybody's throat.[3]

At the basis of relationship, Democracy transforms our minds and our actions and liberates us from patters of thought and paradigms that have pushed us to our contemporary predicament. It helps address the common roots of problems that are defined separately as economic, cultural, political and societal. In situation like this we embody the principles that enable us to transcend the polarisation, divisions and exclusions that are putting the diversity against development, culture and fear. We as humans, need to re-contextualize as members

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[2]
[3]

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of the Human family, and thus, accepting the idea that we all belong to the diverse cultures in the mosaic of cultural diversity. We should create an obligation to take the well –being into account.

Democracy vs. Diversity

Diversity as a source of mutual enrichment presupposes curiosity, respect dialogue for mutual exploration and learning. Reciprocity and symmetry have to be extended to any other party within the limits of reasonable legitimacy as defined by legality, human rights and basic human needs.

Diversity with inequality is mutual impoverishment, and so is equality with uniformity. Each democratic society should be privileged to unite diversity in nature and in form as well as in function. Therefore, if our value of every life form were recognised, then our cultural diversity would flourish. Monocultures result from exclusion and dominance of species: one variety, one race one religion, and one world-view. Monocultures are an indication of coercion and loss of freedom. **Freedom implies diversity-Diversity signifies freedom.**

The *democracy* **nourishes diversity by going beyond the logic of exclusion, of apartheid of 'us' and 'them' of 'either' or, it implies multi-functionality, the logic of 'and' of inclusion. It transcends the false polarisation of *wild* vs. c*ultivated, nature* vs. *culture* or even the false clash of cultures. We should recognize that diversity can be preserved and can also meet human needs.**

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Through diversity replacing, monocultures and multi-dimensionality, replacing one dimensional system, the negative economics of scarcity creation can be replaced by positive economics of mutually shared abundance and guaranteed provisions of basic needs and access to vital resources. Diversity and creativity flourish in multicultural system.

I shall endeavour to elaborate the above precept as we go along in this discourse.

Diversity is based on those who pay the price for having a say, and those who carry responsibility for having the rights. This creates direct or basic democracy. On the one hand this implies decisions moving downwards, from global institutions and centralised governments to local communities. On the other hand it implies a shift in our interpretation of sovereignty. Therefore, Diversity moves the constellation of power from corporations to the people, and in so doing, rebalances the role and functions of the state itself.

This powerful tool is about life. It is about natural rights to the conditions of staying alive. It is everyday life and decisions and freedoms related to everyday living - the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the water we drink. It is not just about elections and casting votes. It is a permanently vibrant democracy. It combines economic democracy with political democracy and ecological democracy. It creates positive economies, positive politics, positive identities. It creates security, and hence the conditions of peace.

It offers a potential for changing the way governments, intergovernmental organisations and corporations operate. It creates a new paradigm for global governance while empowering

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local communities. It creates the possibility of strengthening ecological security while improving economic security. And on the foundations of economic and political security it makes societies immune to the virus of hatred and fear. **It offers a new way of seeing in which everything is not at war with everything else, but through which we can cooperate to create peace, sustainability and justice.**

UN and Diversity

If globalization is a fact of life, so is human diversity. The management of national, cultural and religious diversity is a high priority for the United Nations and national policy makers in the twenty-first century. As more and more people are brought together; voluntarily and involuntarily, by the integration of markets in the wake of globalization and the continual advances in telecommunications and transportation, many individuals encountered confusion and conflict in adjusting to a multicultural experience that for them is new. Whether people are enriched or disoriented by their contacts with the "multiculturalism of globalization" depends to a considerable extent on how their fears are addressed, what is done to make them feel less vulnerable to forces over which they have little or no control. Inspired by the UN Charter--or perhaps the inspiration behind it--human rights are of significance in helping the international community deal with the dilemmas arising from a real or imagined clash of cultures and protecting ***"the dignity and worth of the human person".***

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In practice, this means the crafting of policies that will help individuals face the radical economic and social changes that at times seem to threaten their very identity. Most problems cannot be solved entirely at the national, regional or global level; the age of globalization is simultaneously an age of interdependence. No "political command" can ensure that decisions at any level will be implemented by administrative fiat. Leaders must motivate ordinary people to participate in plans "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite ... to maintain international peace and security". This is a major challenge to international policy makers. A concomitant challenge is how to give individuals a sense of involvement in shaping and controlling the course of events that affect their lives, through democratic--or good--governance, by promoting the rule of law, an independent judiciary, free and fair periodic elections, political and intellectual pluralism, and respect for human and minority rights. States are a long-term fixture, and human rights are about protecting the individuals who make up States.

Democracy cannot guarantee human rights, but human rights cannot be protected without it. The UN Commission on Human Rights affirms "the indissoluble links" between the principles underlying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and "the foundation of any democratic society".

Democracy and human rights are about individuals-every individual is unique-and in one sense about the expression of that uniqueness. It follows that individual or national identities cannot be replaced by a monolithic "global" identity. But they can coexist with one another.

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Cosmopolitanism literally means "of being of many cultures". The challenge for the United Nations and national policy makers is to create institutions through which cultural, intellectual and political diversity is best articulated, tolerated and reconciled.

The protection of the human person is a top priority of the United Nations; human rights are interwoven into all aspects of its work and cover a broad spectrum of issues--political, economic, social, cultural and individual. They are universal rights and represent the consensus of the international community. They do not exclude any culture or region and are flexible enough to be relevant to diverse cultures. The Vienna Declaration of 1993 was clear, that the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind. The challenge for the international community is to help national authorities, where necessary, to enforce human rights in their own countries. It is probably for national leaders to decide whether human rights issues will widen or narrow the gap between leaders and ordinary people. As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan observes: "It was never the people who complained of the universality of human rights, nor did the people consider human rights as a Western imposition. It was often their leaders who did so."

Human rights enhance respect for cultural and social diversity. Even a cursory look at some international human rights instruments brings this out, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief.

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The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families assumes importance in the age of globalization, as greater freedom of movement underlines the need for changes in citizenship laws and immigration policies in some countries. It also draws attention to the effects of immigration in cities and the provision of welfare for immigrants.

Multi-culturalism-Strenght through Diversity

What sets Africa apart from most other countries is how differences within the population have not only been accepted, but are today not recognized as a source of strength. Africa's ethno cultural diversity should generate a rich and productive mix of different ideas and perspectives that promotes creativity, innovation and "global thinking." The many different ethnic origins mean that, as a continent, we have invaluable ties to all parts of the world. But, primarily we should build up, upon a peaceful, harmonious society where diversity will play its most dynamic role. It challenges us to adapt and relate to one another *despite* our differences, which encourages understanding, flexibility and compromise. This will make us resilient - able to accommodate different points of view and see different ways to solve problems. **It will be one reason why Africa should become a successful mediator in the promotion of <u>Diversity</u> as a tool for peace and human security.**

Policy Recommendations

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Policy Objective # 1

The government should shape and reaffirm an African model or framework for diversity anchored in bilingualism and multiculturalism. Thr major national legislation should include the *Official Languages Act,* the *Human Rights Act,* the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* and the *Employment Equity Act.* These laws suppose to form the foundation of a diversity framework that would help out and make Africa a continent with more open ,more peaceful and more transparent cohesive policy.

Policy Objective # 2

Promotion of a *Multiculturalism Act* into law. It should contain policy objectives for the full and equitable participation in society of individuals *and* communities of all origins; the elimination of discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion; increased cross-cultural understanding; the promotion of multiculturalism, and the preservation of Africa's multicultural heritage. The Act should oblige *all* Governments in Africa to take a leadership role in the promotion of multiculturalism, taking account of the multicultural character of Africa in their policies and practices and making their programs and services accessible and better suited to *all* Africans. To ensure accountability, the Act should require that the Government provide an annual report to Parliament on progress achieved.

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Policy Objective # 3

Making equality of opportunity meaningful in a diverse society requires more than constitutional measures and legislation. The *Multiculturalism Act* should recognize that initiatives are needed that strengthen communities, encourage dialogue and help people overcome barriers to their participation in society. The Act should specifically call for efforts to connect Africans and their communities in order to "promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins." Specific support for these objectives should be provided to individuals, groups and organizations through the Government's Multiculturalism Program

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Policy Objective # 4

Fundamentally, Africa does not stand as a society that is both diverse *and* cohesive, nor together by a set of shared values that include respect for individual dignity and the rule of law, freedom, compassion, fairness and *equality.* As we work together, we come to learn more about what we need to do to ensure that all Africans would have equal opportunities to participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the country.

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Policy Objective # 5

Racism, discrimination and intolerance are all barriers that make it much more difficult for individuals to succeed in life. As such, they are impediments to Africa's continued development and prosperity in the global, knowledge-based economy. Hate crimes, the most extreme manifestation of racism and intolerance, are of particular threat to building safe and cohesive communities, and governments have a particular leadership role to address them.

Policy Objective # 6

The African Governments should work with provincial governments, community groups, non-profit organizations, businesses and individual Africans to help strengthen our institutions, build safer and more supportive communities and reinforce shared values. For example, our government should work to make the public service more representative of the diverse population it serves. It is enhancing its multi-culturalism programming, expanding its anti-racism activities and strengthening its support for other minority groups such as persons with disabilities to help more individual Africans overcome barriers to their full participation in society. Many of the new initiatives should involve working with institutions, community groups and ethno cultural organizations on innovative ways to bring down barriers to participation in society and help more individuals overcome them. Others should involve raising awareness of the importance of diversity issues in

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social policy, and conducting research to better understand the barriers that specific groups of Africans face.

Conclusion:

In many respects, Africa has been multicultural. The diversity framework that Africa FAILED to adopt should HAVE greatly enhanced the ability of Africans to articulate their grievances, raise awareness of equality and diversity issues and press for change. This should have a significant impact on the development of our collective identity - our sense of who we are as Africans. Disagreement and debate often mark this process. But even as we argue what is never in doubt is our collective belief in the virtues of an "inclusive" society - one where all members should have the right to contribute to the best of their ability.

Therefore, as we look to the future, the African vision of a diverse, cohesive and inclusive society where all members can participate equally in all facets of life should be more important than ever. The emerging global economy is placing an increasing emphasis on knowledge and skills to support productivity, wealth and the maintenance of our standard of living. Every member of society matters-the better we become at ensuring that every African has the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve excellence, the better off we will all be.

As our diversity expands, so do the opportunities it brings. Our connections to the world are strengthened through the social, economic and cultural ties that millions of Africans

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maintain with their countries of origin. Different perspectives and new ways of understanding issues fuel creativity and innovation, which we need to compete in the global economy. Our capacity should strengthen our international influence and makes us a strong advocate for international peace and security.

However, we cannot be complacent. As African society continues to change, a great deal more work must still be done to adequately address the needs and aspirations of African people. Racism remains a problem in many cities and communities in Africa, in some cases exacerbated by conflicts elsewhere in the world. As the Internet becomes an increasingly dominant force in our economy and society, new barriers to participation including access to technology, technological literacy, income and language must be addressed. Finally, increased mobility and instantaneous global communications may be weakening the ties that some Africans feel for their country.

To remain strong and united, it is more important than ever that we create the kind of society that all our peoples will *want* to live in and make a commitment to. We must ensure that Africa will have to offer all its citizens an unparalleled quality of life .

Africa's framework for diversity should reflect the belief that the common good is best served when people are treated with respect. It should recognize that respect for cultural distinctiveness is intrinsic to an individual's sense of self worth, and that this encourages achievement, participation and ultimately, attachment to country. Through this framework and future Africa's multiculturalism policy, a wide range of initiatives should be undertaken

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that, by helping individuals reach their full potential, are building a better quality of life for all Africans.

Appendix-International instruments for promotion of Diversity

Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its thirty-first session on 2 November 2001

The General Conference,

Committed to the full implementation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other universally recognized legal instruments, such as the two International Covenants of 1966 relating respectively to civil and political rights and to economic, social and cultural rights,

Recalling that the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO affirms, "that the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern",

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Further recalling Article 1 of the Constitution, which assigns to UNESCO among other purposes that of recommending "such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image",

Referring to the provisions relating to cultural diversity and the exercise of cultural rights in the international instruments enacted by UNESCO,

Reaffirming 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, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs,

Noting that culture is at the heart of contemporary debates about identity, social cohesion, and the development of a knowledge-based economy,

Affirming that 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,

Aspiring 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,

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Considering that the process of globalisation, facilitated by the rapid development of new information and communication technologies, though representing a challenge for cultural diversity, creates the conditions for renewed dialogue among cultures and civilizations,

Aware of the specific mandate, which has been entrusted to UNESCO, within the United Nations system, to ensure the preservation and promotion of the fruitful diversity of cultures,

Proclaims the following principles and adopts the present Declaration:

Identity, diversity and pluralism

Article 1 - Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Article 2 - From cultural diversity to cultural pluralism

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In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.

Article 3 - Cultural diversity as a factor in development

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

Cultural diversity and human rights

Article 4 - Human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity

The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

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Article 5 - Cultural rights as an enabling environment for cultural diversity

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent. The flourishing of creative diversity requires the full implementation of cultural rights as defined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and cultural Rights. All persons should therefore be able to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons should be entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 6 - Towards access for all to cultural diversity

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image, care should be exercised so that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.

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Cultural diversity and creativity

Article 7 - Cultural heritage as the wellspring of creativity

Creation draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures. For this reason, heritage in all its forms must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures.

Article 8 - Cultural goods and services: commodities of a unique kind

In the face of present-day economic and technological change, opening up vast prospects for creation and innovation, particular attention must be paid to the diversity of the supply of creative work, to due recognition of the rights of authors and artists and to the specificity of cultural goods and services which, as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods.

Article 9 - Cultural policies as catalysts of creativity

While ensuring the free circulation of ideas and works, cultural policies must create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries that have the means to assert themselves at the local and global level. It is for each State, with due regard to its international obligations, to define its

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cultural policy and to implement it through the means it considers fit, whether by operational support or appropriate regulations.

Cultural diversity and international solidarity

Article 10 - Strengthening capacities for creation and dissemination worldwide

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.

Article 11 - Building partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society

Market forces alone cannot guarantee the preservation and promotion of cultural diversity, which is the key to sustainable human development. From this perspective, the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed.

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Article 12 - The role of UNESCO

UNESCO, by virtue of its mandate and functions, has the responsibility to:

(a) Promote the incorporation of the principles set out in the present Declaration into the development strategies drawn up within the various intergovernmental bodies;

(b) Serve as a reference point and a forum where States, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector may join together in elaborating concepts, objectives and policies in favour of cultural diversity;

(c) Pursue its activities in standard-setting, awareness-raising and capacity-building in the areas related to the present Declaration within its fields of competence;

(d) Facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan, the main lines of which are appended to the present Declaration.

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Other important instruments:

1.orence Agreement of 1950 and its Nairobi Protocol of 1976,

2.The Universal Copyright Convention of 1952;

3.The Declaration of Principles on International Cultural Co-operation of 1966;

4. The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970);

5. The Convention for the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972;

6. The UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice of 1978;

6. The Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist of 1980, and

7.The Recommendation on Safeguarding Traditional and Popular Culture of 1989.

 This definition is in line with the conclusions of the World Conference on Cultural Policies (MONDIACULT, Mexico City, 1982), of the World Commission on Culture and Development (Our Creative Diversity , 1995), and of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998).

Panel Paper-*Peace and Security*

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