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pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

**Address by the  
President of the General Conference  
Dr Davidson L. HEPBURN**

**on the occasion of the Special Session on  
"Arts Education and the Rapprochement of  
Cultures" at the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Conference on  
Arts Education**

*Seoul, 27 May 2010*

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Distinguished Participants,

Dear Friends,

As President of UNESCO's General Conference, it is a great pleasure for me to moderate this Special Session on "Arts Education and the 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures".

As you know, UNESCO was at the origin of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (Resolution 46 of the General Conference, 2007). A little while after, in 2008, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and designated UNESCO to play a leading role in the celebration of the Year, capitalizing on the Organization's invaluable experience of over 60 years in advancing 'the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples'.

The main goal of the International Year is to demonstrate the benefits of cultural diversity by acknowledging the importance of the transfers and exchanges between cultures and the ties forged between them since the dawn of humanity.

In addition, the following four goals have been defined:

- Promoting reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. Notably, the International Year can promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding through creativity and the arts.
- Building a framework for commonly shared values.
- In that regard, it is important to underscore the crucial role played by arts and creativity domains particularly in countries and regions torn apart by conflict, often between different communities
- Strengthening quality education and the building of intercultural competences.
- Fostering dialogue for sustainable development.

There is a need to multiply the platforms of exchange and to collect innovative practices that are conducive to cultural pluralism at local, national and regional levels. Raising awareness of cultural expressions of minorities, migrants, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged and excluded groups to foster respect and mutual understanding for social cohesion will thus be an important feature of the International Year.

In each case, it is clear that arts and learning are especially important. The convergence between the main goal and the sub-goal of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Culture and the goals for Arts Education in a large vision is evident.

My dear friends,

The purpose of this special session is to analyze more carefully the possible role of Arts Education in the context of the International Year.

Some eminent speakers have agreed to introduce the discussion.

I give the floor to them.