

UNESCO

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To : Director, CPP

From : David Adams, CPP

CC: The Director-General; DDG/DRG; General Conference President A. Sayyad; D-G Advisor A.B. Oulde Deida; CPP Advisor M. Sahnoun; P. Weiss DIR/SHS/HRS; P. Higginson Chief/ED/RER.

Subject : **Mission Report from Symposium on the Culture of Peace in Somalia held in Sana'a, Yemen, 17-20 April 1995**

A. SUMMARY

1. CPP was represented at the Symposium by CPP advisor M. Sahnoun and myself. The Symposium was organized in the name of UNESCO by advisor A.B. Oulde Deida, General Conference President A. Sayyad, and the Yemeni National Commission for UNESCO. The Director-General was represented by DDG/DRG A. Badran. Logistics were arranged by P. Weiss from SHS/HRS. The PEER Programme was represented by M. Devadoss (Mogadishu) and K. Holland (Djibouti), as G. Retamal, director of PEER was ill and could not attend.

2. Many speakers appreciated the support of UNESCO at a time when much of the international community and UN seems to have abandoned Somalia. In particular, participants from all perspectives appreciated the prominent role played by M. Sahnoun who was moderator for the first theme of the meeting, since they had come to trust him during the period when he was the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia.

3. Intellectuals from a wide range of perspectives attended and participated. The debate was orderly and constructive. The final appeal, report and recommendations were accepted by acclamation, and there were many fruitful encounters outside of the formal proceedings. They said that this was the most hopeful meeting of its type since the disintegration of their government, and expressed the hope that unlike previous meetings, the process would not end with the conclusion of the meeting but that there would be an effective followup.

4. The results of the Symposium were covered by local and international press, including Le Monde, RFI and Jeune Afrique.

5. The meeting was divided into three sessions with the following three themes: Rebuild Somali society; Rehabilitate the Somali state; and Reintegrate Somalia in its

international environment.

6. The following report is divided into three sections corresponding roughly to the themes of the conference and to the aspects of the current problems in Somalia: political (state-building); humanitarian (related to international community); and peace-building/culture of peace (rebuilding Somali society). Although these three aspects need to be addressed simultaneously, and all three are necessary to progress in the country, the demands and problems for each are so different that they need to be considered separately. Finally, recommendations will be given for UNESCO's followup in the domain of peace-building (culture of peace).

B. POLITICAL NEEDS

7. Most participants addressed the need to work towards formation of a new government. In fact the second theme of the symposium, "to rehabilitate the Somali state" produced a rich debate which is summarized in paragraphs 25 to 30 of the report (ANNEX I).

8. The rehabilitation of the Somali state must be seen as a long-term process which requires considerable patience. This is evident from the insistence of the participants that it be based on a solid foundation of local and regional peace, reconciliation and institutional development. The representative of the European Commission, in introducing the third theme, "to reintegrate Somali society into the international community" emphasized that it would not be enough for part of the country to declare itself as a new government. No government will be recognized by the international community unless it has legitimacy (represents all parts of the society) and authority (effectively governs the entire country).

9. The quiet diplomacy which led to the Symposium by Counsellor A.B. Oulde Deida and General Conference President A. Sayyad was greatly appreciated by the participants.

10. The active participants of the following international agencies in the symposium could continue to play an important political role and will want to be kept engaged in any follow-up activities: the Arab League, the Islamic Conference Organization, the European Commission, UNDP, and UNHCR among others. Also the OAU and IGADD were briefed on the meeting although they were unable to send representatives. In addition to the extensive support of the Yemeni government, the ambassador to UNESCO of Somali participated actively and the government of Ethiopia was briefed on the Symposium.

11. Although the CPP unit does not concern itself with this domain, the advice of CPP advisor M. Sahnoun should be solicited by the Director-General in view of his rich experience and diplomatic contacts which were evident at the meeting.

12. Several of the recommendations of the symposium are relevant to the question of rebuilding the Somali state, especially those for strengthening regional and local administration and strengthening democratic governance. They will not be considered in this report. Instead, following a discussion with Pierre Weiss at the meeting, it was agreed that he will deal with the follow-up on these recommendations

since they are within the mandate of the Democracy Unit of SHS/HRS.

C. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

13. Because there is no government, and no prospect of one for what may be a long period, the international community (e.g. the European Commission and UNDP) have established a series of partnerships which are strictly non-partisan in nature in order to implement programmes of humanitarian aid. This is unprecedented in the history of international agencies, as was pointed out by Sigurd Illing of the European Commission in his remarks opening the final session of the symposium which was devoted to relations of Somalia with the international community.

14. UNESCO has a prominent place in these humanitarian aid programmes with its Programme for Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction (PEER). This Programme was effectively presented, both by a display of materials and by brief oral and written presentations on the opening day.

15. It was evident from the remarks of participants and from discussions with other international agencies that the PEER Programme is appreciated as addressing a critical need in humanitarian aid in Somalia. I was not able to evaluate the effectiveness of its curricula, teaching materials and teacher-training approach. However, if the results of such an evaluation prove positive, I think that the programme should be reinforced and expanded if possible.

D. CULTURE OF PEACE

16. The concept of the Culture of Peace (CPP) was greeted warmly and sustained by all of the participants in their presentations during the symposium. The approach and history of CPP had been presented in detail at the opening of the first session of the symposium which was devoted to the theme, "to rebuild the Somali society."

17. Speaker after speaker emphasized that there can be no progress toward the establishment of democratic governance or sustainable development unless it is accompanied by a parallel process of reconciliation and cultivation of a culture of peace among the people as a whole.

18. Most of the recommendations proposed and adopted by the Symposium (see report in ANNEX I), concern a culture of peace. In particular, the potential active involvement of women, artists, teachers and intellectuals was emphasized. Also, it will be crucial to involve the elders and Islamic religious leaders.

19. Many of these recommendations are already under development by the European Commission, UNDP, the UNESCO PEER Programme and other agencies. In particular:

1. Demobilization programmes of vocational training are now under development by UNDP and its partners.

2. Peace education is being included to a limited extent in the UNESCO PEER Programme and a project is being submitted by that Programme to potential donors which would include substantial peace education components. Since Somali tradition is an oral one, the role of poets and singers is crucial. This is an untapped resource as there are many singers and poets who could promote a culture of peace but who are unable to perform because they are in exile or living in extreme poverty.

3. Media programmes for peace are now under development by UNDP and its partners.

20. Other recommendations are not yet under development:

1. Women's NGOs are very active and the European Commission and UNDP are in touch with them. However, they are not yet receiving the support that they should be given. Women are a strong force for a Culture of Peace and unlike men, they are able to move easily between and among the various clans which are organized on a patrilineal basis.

2. NGOs, including those of women, could play a critical role in cultivating a culture of peace. However, one must pick and choose among them. We were warned that there has been a great increase in the number of organizations calling themselves NGOs, many of which are political "fronts" and only certain NGOs have actually played important roles in humanitarian aid and peace-building.

3. Members of the various professions contribute to a culture of peace if they were organized and mobilized. For example, we were told that merchants from all parts of Mogadishu (from zones controlled by at least three different clans) had told the clan leaders to step aside and allow them to form a unified commission in order to reopen the port facilities to commerce.

4. Intellectuals, such as those who came to the Symposium are ready and willing to make a major contribution to a culture of peace. One very specific recommendation was the preparation and dissemination of a directory of Somali intellectuals and organizations.

21. In addition to the specific recommendations made by the participants at the Symposium for a culture of peace, a comprehensive culture of peace programme would also entail an important training component, so that the women, teachers, intellectuals, artists and other actors in the Programme would become "peace promoters" in the full sense of the term.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

22. The three domains of action (political, humanitarian, and culture of peace) should be kept distinct and separate in operational terms. Although they are mutually reinforcing and all three are necessary to the peace process in Somalia, they require distinctly different approaches and actors. As pointed out above, Somalia is a unique situation for international agencies. Whereas in other national programmes, we work explicitly within a political context (in El Salvador between government and opposition NGOs, in Mozambique between FRELIMO and RENAMO, in Burundi with all of the political parties), in Somalia programmes must be kept strictly non-partisan, as is being done by other international agencies. In particular, the development of a culture of peace in Somalia would require working with local Somali actors (women, artists, teachers, intellectuals) in a way that is kept free from political agendas.

23. Of course, UNESCO has already, with the Sana'a symposium, begun to play a political role in Somalia's future.

24. Therefore, it is recommended any actions for a culture of peace in Somalia should be kept distinct from those of a political nature. This means that logistical decisions, including all decisions concerning staff, placement of operations, and priorities for action, should be placed with the Culture of Peace Unit.

25. Funding, including the hiring of professional and local staff, would need to be secured for at least one year of operation before making any commitments for such a programme.

26. Despite the fact that the human and financial resources of the Culture of Peace Unit are severely stretched by existing commitments, given the importance of the challenge in Somalia, it is prepared to undertake a Programme within the framework suggested above.