

DG/98/24  
Original: French

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Address by  
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Director-General  
of the United Nations Educational,  
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(UNESCO)

on the occasion of the meeting on  
'Africa and globalization:  
the challenges of democracy and governance'  
(DEMOS AFRICA)

Maputo (Mozambique), 2 July 1998

Mr President of the Republic,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr Joaquim Alberto Chissano, President of the Republic of Mozambique, who has never, at any moment, been sparing of his support for the holding of this meeting and who honours us with his presence today.

I should also like to thank those distinguished Mozambicans who have contributed to the preparation of this meeting and all those who have come, from all regions of the continent, to take part in our work.

In the present situation in the world and in Africa, it is impossible to emphasize enough the significance of this meeting, both in terms of the calibre of the participants and in terms of the importance of the theme.

Concerning current and desirable developments in Africa, UNESCO has already conducted a collective consultation, the highlights of which were Audience Africa, which met in Paris in 1993, and the International Conference on the Culture of Peace and Good Governance, held here in Maputo in 1997.

During Audience Africa it was acknowledged that the democratization process initiated on the continent had undeniably met with resounding successes. Indeed, the process has allowed people who until recently lived in silence, resignation and submission to make themselves heard and express their wishes. Nevertheless, it quite often takes place in an extremely volatile context, particularly because of the strength of imported models (in which democratic principles are embodied in specific forms and procedures), the vehemence of ethnic antagonisms, economic and educational disparities, the exploitation of the country's natural resources by foreign companies, the slowness of judicial processes, the weakness of the new parliaments, the persistence of extremism and violence, and so on. Audience Africa explored new approaches which could enable Africans themselves to shape their own democracy and establish a culture of peace in Africa.

In 1993, UNESCO initiated in Latin America a debate on the relations between democratic development, economic modernization and social exclusion. The meeting held that year in Antigua (Guatemala) clearly showed the support that the countries in the region expect from the Organization in their efforts to examine in depth and to elucidate the problems of political management, confronted as they are by the challenges of the twenty-first century. It was in this context that the DEMOS project emerged, the first meeting of which took place in Contadora (Panama) in 1995. As I listened to the discussions of the group of intellectuals and politicians from the region, I became convinced that UNESCO had a duty to support this activity. This was how, between 1995 and 1996, we came to organize five 'laboratories' for political and social analysis.

The Regional summit for political development and respect for democratic principles (Brasilia, 1997) marked the end point of this creative mobilization of political activists and leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean. The *Brasilia Consensus* bears witness to the

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will of the Latin American nations to accept together the challenges of democratic governance in the world. Based on the universal principles of justice, liberty, equality and solidarity, the *Brasilia Consensus* is a call from modern humanism, which is anxious to reassert the place of men and women in world society through the development of their abilities.

In 1997, in this very place, the International Conference on the Culture of Peace and Good Governance adopted the Maputo Declaration. It recommends, *inter alia*, that there should be a debate about governance and democratic principles on the basis of the DEMOS project which already exists in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is now up to you - politicians, academics and intellectuals - to debate independently and with imagination the issues which democratic governance is raising in Africa today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While the current globalization process offers new opportunities, it is also creating such serious imbalances and inequalities that their continuation would threaten harmony and peace in the world, or even the very survival of the human species. This is a partial globalization in which - whether in communications or commercial networks - the 'globalized' are much more numerous than the 'globalizers' and the excluded are even more numerous than both combined.

Africa finds itself in a particularly weak state in this context. This rich, vast continent seems to be marginalized economically and financially. At the same time, the blind prolonging of injustice, the persistence and evening the worsening of poverty, the constant brain drain, and the failure to meet the fundamental needs of the majority are creating tensions and fuelling conflicts which are compromising social and economic development and the establishment of true democracy. The increasing burden of indebtedness which results from the vicious circle of borrowing and reimbursement carried out on rigid and frequently inappropriate conditions is exposing countries to the demands and the injunctions of international investors who care little about the long-term interests of the peoples of Africa. Africa is thus locked into systems which at best condemn it to sterile imitation.

In spite of the downfall and rejection of despotic regimes all over the continent, much remains to be done for processes to emerge and become consolidated that will guarantee effective participation by people in the management of public affairs, and that will guarantee a dependable civil service and sound public services, political regimes enjoying unquestionable legitimacy and effective legal systems accepted by everyone. In this respect, freedom of expression, essential under Article I of UNESCO's Constitution to the construction of peace, is a vital precondition.

Africa is thus today facing the need for change on two fronts - economic and political. Under pressure from the many demands made by its peoples, and under pressure from providers of funds and private investors, Africa is trying to make the difficult transition from a colonial economy based on raw materials to a market economy that is well-controlled, productive and capable of change, and at the same time is trying to establish democracy.

With the expansion of the neo-liberal system, we can see two competing reactions at present taking shape in the world:

- the nationalist reaction of turning inward, withdrawal and isolation, which may take place on national and also ethnic, local, and even religious bases;

- the reaction of world solidarity, which is in keeping with the universal tradition of human rights; putting solidarity into effect requires the growth of a worldwide awareness of the inadequacies of globalization.

In this world context, which is in the full flood of change, what is Africa's place? It seems to me that the time has come for Africa to leave the paths imposed on it from outside which increase its dependence. It is more and more obvious that its salvation rests on its will finally to take responsibility for its own fortunes. But to do that, it is essential for its peoples to be able to decide, knowingly and in complete freedom, on the objectives of development and on the ways in which this development is to be conducted. Only free men and women, resolute and together, knowing where they are going and why, can change the course of their history. In this march forward, it is not only successes which count but also the lessons that can be learned from failures.

This is how Africa can make its full intellectual contribution to the elucidation and solution of the problems created by the global development of humanity. Africa has for a long time been isolated from the great centres of thought and the broad debate that have been considering the common future of humanity, but it must now be included in them in a way that is in keeping with the commitment of its leaders and the high standard of the work of its researchers. Indeed, giving thought to the general problems of the development of humanity cannot be separated from the thinking which must be devoted to Africa, its situation and its future and to the action that must be taken there.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout our century, African peoples have fought for their emancipation with the ambition of building nation-states. This movement has constantly come up against the persistence, the resurgence, and even the birth of particularisms of all kinds - ethnic, tribal, clan, regional, local, religious, and so on. It is also faced with the many different cross-border phenomena that are implicit in globalization. What future do Africans wish to attribute to the nation-state? This difficult question is all the more pressing inasmuch as in various parts of the world, states are grouping together more and more in order to organize their socio-economic development and root out the causes of conflict. In actual fact, it is possible to see in Africa itself that subregional groupings seem to be starting up again on new bases.

One of the tragedies in Africa today is the increase in the number of conflicts, both inside and between states. It is always the peoples who pay the highest price. Economic development is lastingly compromised by this as is also civil peace, since hatred and resentment persist. What part do Africans play in the triggering off and perpetuation of these conflicts? What effective means can Africans find to resolve these conflicts in a lasting way?

One thing is certain: although the democratic idea is governed everywhere by the same principles it can be embodied in different ways. Although it is one in its values, democracy is multiple in the mechanisms which allow it to exist within a given society or a given culture.

The African peoples are quite justifiably demanding a reappraisal of their cultures, of which each day reveals the potential, the creative force and the capacity for renewal. No culture ever stands still. Everywhere cultures are constantly coming into being, declining, growing in substance and renewing themselves. No view of things can develop in a lasting way in a society if it does not fit into the specific culture of that society. Nevertheless, the defence of cultural identity cannot be invoked to justify anti-democratic practices.

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Democracy is a value in which are contained the unquenchable thirst and the inalienable responsibility of people to take their development in charge, both individually and collectively. It is a driving force which goes beyond the mere adjustment of social and political relationships and which, far from being restricted to a form of political organization, also encompasses the economic, social and cultural fields.

A democratic society must be governed in such a way that people who hold differing or even opposite opinions nevertheless live in harmony. When a society cannot tolerate its members making free use of their right to express their opinion, it demonstrates its weakness and tends to become weaker still. It inevitably encourages dissimulation and flattery. The hiatus between intimate convictions and expressed opinions becomes constant and a part of daily life. This leads to the corruption of all social relations. The more a society restrains freedom of speech, the more it is forced to govern by violence. The more citizens are distrustful of their leaders, judges and civil servants, the more the exercise of freedom seems to threaten the cohesion of society. By a pernicious reversal of logic, civic sense becomes a threat to the social fabric since it represents a living denunciation of an order which can remain in place only by flattering greed and fomenting division. Such a society is condemned to strife, intolerance, hatred and, in the end, to dissolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In political literature as in popular usage, democracy and governance maintain a logical semantic relationship.

Governance is strongly impregnated with democracy. The principles which underlie and sustain it attest to this clearly. Let us mention as an example the principle of responsibility (or the obligation to be accountable); the principle of participation (the power to formulate, to structure and to control, that citizens are acknowledged to have); the principle of transparency - which leads to competitive procedures, an open public domain, reliable information - and the principle of efficiency (or the obligation to produce results).

Applying these principles has practical implications, in particular a redefinition of the roles of the state and the sharing of roles between state and civil society, as well as the broadening of public participation, guaranteeing people real power over the management of their affairs.

Acknowledging that people have such roles and prerogatives requires guarantees: it therefore implies a state governed by the rule of law, which is at the centre of governance. It may be considered as the cornerstone of governance because the political and institutional reforms established by governance all aimed at establishing a system for a state governed by the rule of law, having as its keystone an independent and competent judiciary and a strong civil society.

The democratic state based on the rule of law is without doubt the best way of stabilizing the economic and financial situation of African countries and of ensuring sustained and sustainable socio-economic development. The slogan 'Africa for the Africans' does not signify that other people should be excluded. It means that Africans want to govern themselves, and themselves define their path to development.

On the political level, this implies a refusal to mechanically copy the ideas, the thoughts, the acts and the models of others. On an economic level, it calls for a complete re-examination of the nature of African economies and the ways in which they function. Indeed, who are the

owners of the resources of Africa that are being more and more widely exploited? This question is central in any consideration of globalization, democracy and governance. For indeed, if economically Africa does not belong to Africans, how could they, freely, in a sovereign manner and in accord with their own genius, decide on their own forms of democratic government and their own ways of development?

Mr President of the Republic,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Africa of the new generations is listening to us. It is the Africa that refuses that the continent should be nothing but a source of raw materials and a reservoir of cheap labour. It is the Africa that refuses to see its best talents going abroad.

The Africa of the new generations desires governance and democracy but refuses to have them imposed upon it. It wants to promote the rule of law by a creative amalgam of its own experience and the experience of others, of its own values and universal principles.

The Africa of the new generations wants to be in full control of its culture. It is not looking nostalgically to the past: it wants to fly with its own wings towards a future of happiness. The happiness of sharing. The happiness of being included and of being taken into account.

The Africa of the new generations wants Africa for the Africans. It expects from you, the political and moral leaders, men and women of experience, intellectuals and members of associations meeting in Maputo to launch DEMOS AFRICA, that you should point out as clearly as possible what is at stake for Africa in globalization and the most imaginative solutions for tomorrow. How does one move from submission and imitation to autonomy? From force and constraint to dialogue and understanding? From a culture of violence and war to a culture of comprehension and peace? These questions prompt us to dream. They also represent our commitment.