General Assembly

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Agenda item 14
Culture of peace

Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

   The present report provides an overview of the activities that have been carried out by the main United Nations entities working in the areas of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace since the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolutions 70/19 and 70/20.

I. Introduction

1.   The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 70/19 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace and 70/20 on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

2.   During the reporting period, from June 2015 to June 2016, an array of United Nations entities worked actively, often in close cooperation with one another, to design and implement policies, programmes, projects and initiatives in the areas of work covered by the two resolutions. The resolutions have special resonance for the ongoing International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), an ambitious multilateral initiative led by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which followed on from the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). The resolutions also relate closely to and derive renewed impetus from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, most notably its call to build "peaceful, just and inclusive societies" and the objectives contained in Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (see General Assembly resolution 70/1). As stated in the Agenda, "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development".

3.   The promotion of a culture of peace, intercultural and interreligious dialogue is also at the heart of the Organization's renewed focus on conflict prevention and mediation. In order to counter the messages of religious, cultural and social intolerance that are being spread with such devastating consequences by violent extremist groups, in January 2016, the Secretary-General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (see A/70/764 and A/70/675). The initiative was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/254. The Secretary-General called for an "All-of-United Nations" approach, both at Headquarters and in the field, to support all efforts to combat violent extremism.

4.   Underscoring the strong commitment of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and affiliated non-governmental organizations to the United Nations system's promotion of intercultural dialogue, in a recent consultation on the programme and budget of UNESCO for 2018-2021, 97 per cent of respondents expressed the view that this area of work should have a high or medium priority for the entity in implementing the 2030 Agenda, ranking it second only to education in importance.

5.   The present report was prepared primarily by UNESCO, in close collaboration with the Secretariat and a broad range of United Nations system entities, reflecting the shared responsibility involved in promoting a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. As well as pursuing and refining ongoing initiatives, the participating entities have explored innovative ways to work more effectively together and in partnership with national governments and other stakeholders.

6.   The information is presented thematically according to the major areas of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which was adopted by the 194th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO and welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/140. Rather than provide an

exhaustive list of the initiatives relating to resolutions 70/19 and 70/20, the report gives an overview and highlights some examples of best practice that could be replicated in other settings and that reflect recent trends.

II. Promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge of cultural, ethnic and linguistic and religious diversity

7.   Conflicts may have a cultural dimension, as do the phenomena of violent extremism and rising xenophobia that are further undermining peace and security in so many parts of the world. In addition to the effects of globalization in its various forms, the continued movement of refugees and migrants increase the points of interaction and friction among groups that can give rise to identity-related tensions. This is particularly the case in societies whose citizens have previously had little or no experience of living in close proximity to people from other cultural backgrounds.

8.   Nevertheless, culture can be very effectively harnessed to unite different groups. The global outcry over the destruction of World Heritage sites in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in recent times bears witness to the unique status that cultural and natural heritage have in being both specific to a culture, reflecting the life of a community, its history and identity, and also belonging to all of humanity. Protecting and restoring cultural heritage rekindles hope and offers fragile, conflict- and poverty-ravaged communities a constructive alternative to the violent extremist's nihilistic agenda. In Mali, which has endured repeated violence since 2012, UNESCO has enhanced the national peace and reconciliation process that followed the signature of a peace agreement in 2015 by helping to rebuild 14 historic mausoleums in the World Heritage city of Timbuktu. The centuries-old mausoleums, sacred places for the local population, were destroyed by radical Islamists in deliberate acts that the Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has described as "cultural cleansing". The city formally received the keys to the mausoleums, which were rebuilt by local stonemasons, at the Djingareyber Mosque in February 2016, in a traditional consecration ceremony that last took place at the site in the eleventh century. The strong involvement of local communities and religious leaders in the reconstruction project demonstrates the power of culture to unite and restore the confidence of a fragmented community. International cooperation to salvage the archaeological heritage of the Syrian Arab Republic is also in place. A rapid assessment mission was sent to the country in April 2016, an initiative that was followed by an international conference, held in Berlin in June 2016, in partnership with the Government of Germany. Some 230 international and Syrian experts discussed priority measures and how and when work on the ground should begin. The Unite for Heritage online media campaign continues to keep the activities in the public eye. Other actions to put culture and heritage at the centre of peacebuilding and humanitarian emergency operations, most notably the signature of a recent agreement between UNESCO and the International Committee of the Red Cross to integrate culture into humanitarian operations, pave the way for further opportunities to cooperate and build peace through culture.

Religious leaders combat hate speech, promote respect for religious diversity

Those with influence in a community can play a significant role in promoting mutual understanding. In response to an alarming spike in online and offline hate speech in recent years, the Office of the Special Advisers on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect has been working with religious leaders worldwide to develop a pioneering plan of action for the prevention of incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. An initial meeting of faith leaders, known as the "Forum on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes", held in Fez, Morocco, in April 2015, led to a declaration and a plan of action that calls on faith leaders to engage in dialogue with those who express radical views, to counter hate speech through unequivocal messages and to support interfaith dialogue, respect for religious and cultural diversity and human rights (see also para. 46). Subsequent regional meetings in the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa have produced regional strategies. A fifth meeting in the Asia-Pacific region was to be held at the end of September 2016. A review of the declaration and plan of action are currently ongoing, ahead of a global meeting of religious leaders to be held before the end of 2016. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are working together on the implementation of the Fez Declaration and Plan of Action and related regional strategies for more effective action on the ground.

9. History and memory are also vectors for promoting mutual understanding and reciprocal knowledge between cultures. Several UNESCO projects, including its "General History" series, its Silk Road and Slave Route projects tackle prejudice by retelling the history of the world's cultures in a way that is free from cultural and other forms of bias. In the reporting period, the "Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*", in phase II of the programme, saw the development of curriculum outlines and pedagogical content for African primary and secondary schools, while a meeting of the Scientific Committee was held in Luanda, in February 2016, to receive and consider contributions to the upcoming Volume IX of the *General History of Africa*.

10. The *General History of Africa* and Slave Route projects are of special relevance in the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), a major initiative being led by OHCHR. The aim of the decade is to strengthen actions and measures to eradicate injustice and promote the rights and the equal participation in society of people of African descent. In this regard, "An agenda for ten years", produced in the framework of the Decade, is to be published in English, French and Spanish in cooperation with OHCHR and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In October 2015, OHCHR held its fifth fellowship programme for people of African descent, a three-week training event that was attended by 11 fellows from Europe and North and South America.

11.   Education about the history of the Holocaust and other genocides is also a starting point for the promotion of mutual understanding, providing a safe environment to address local traumatic issues. During the reporting period, major activities were organized in the framework of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, including exhibitions and the publication of material online. International cooperation was reinforced in the field and the capacity of stakeholders in education was developed through the creation of a UNESCO Latin American Network for Education on the Holocaust and Other Genocides, covering nine countries of the region. Seminars also took place involving nearly 30 countries representing all regions, while discussions were enhanced between countries of the former Yugoslavia for the creation of a permanent exhibition in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

12.   The promotion of linguistic diversity also helps to foster mutual understanding. The focus of International Mother Language Day in February 2016 was the importance of the appropriate language of instruction in the early years of schooling to facilitate access to education and promote fairness for groups that speak minority and indigenous languages, in line with the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In July 2016, UNESCO and a Chinese educational information and communications technology company, Talkmate, also unveiled a four-year project to develop an online interactive World Atlas of Languages, based on the existing Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger maintained by UNESCO, to help safeguard the world's linguistic diversity and promote multilingualism in cyberspace. The promotion of languages is also being advanced at the national level. In Turkmenistan, OHCHR and the United Nations country team advocated a national human rights action plan, adopted in January 2016, that pledges to enable ethnic minorities to learn their mother tongue and culture and fosters their participation in decision-making.

III.   Supporting reconciliation and peace efforts through dialogue

13.   The number of major violent conflicts in the world has almost tripled since 2008 (see A/70/357-S/2015/682). Acts of violent extremism are also on the rise, and grave international concern about terrorism has given rise to several Security Council resolutions, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. With the aim of reversing the rising tide of violence, the Secretary-General has called for a more holistic, system-wide approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, with a stronger focus on prevention and mediation.

14.   In a Presidential Statement issued on 11 May 2016, the Security Council requested that its Counter-Terrorism Committee present a proposal by 30 April 2017 for a "comprehensive international framework" on the response to terrorism, noting that terrorist groups crafted distorted narratives that are based on the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religion to justify violence (see S/PRST/2016/6). The Security Council also emphasized that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization and it underscored the importance of promoting tolerance and interreligious dialogue.

15. United Nations system entities have also provided logistical support for peacemaking during the reporting period. The United Nations Office at Geneva provided the setting for four mediation processes and high-level talks led by the United Nations, in 2015 and 2016, namely on the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya, Yemen and the Geneva international discussions, in cooperation with host country Switzerland. Further moves have been made to strengthen Geneva's role as a mediation hub with the deployment of a senior mediation officer to the Office at Geneva in 2015.

16. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been developing initiatives to counter radicalization in prisons and supporting Member States in the establishment of effective legal and administrative measures to counter terrorist narratives and to criminalize incitement to commit terrorism and terrorist propaganda, including on the Internet. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, while countering terrorism is crucial for building social cohesion. UNODC work with Member States to support their implementation of legal instruments related to terrorism contributes to this purpose. It has initiated assistance for the Sahel countries on criminal justice, with regard to children allegedly involved with Boko Haram, and has also developed a new initiative on capacity-building on the justice and security challenges concerning children associated with violent extremist groups.

Countering violent extremism on the ground

At the cutting edge of the effort to counter violent extremism, during the reporting period the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, part of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, along with UNESCO, implemented a year-long anti-terrorism project to promote a culture of peace, conflict management, citizenship, democracy and good governance in Burkina Faso. The programme, which ran up to September 2015 in the capital, Ouagadougou, and in the Northern Sahel Region, also provided training and awareness-raising on terrorism, targeting 50,000 young people and women in areas where there may be terrorist sleeper cells owing to the influx of refugees from Mali. The teaching tool was a reference manual on a culture of peace developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in coordination with the Dakar office of UNESCO. Some 3,000 copies were printed in six local languages for the purpose of the Burkina Faso project, which was funded by the Department of Political Affairs and implemented and monitored in collaboration with the Burkinabe National Commission for UNESCO, the Government of Burkina Faso, United nations entities, national and local non-governmental organizations and civil society.

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17. In a significant move to establish peace as a right, at its thirty-second session, the Human Rights Council adopted the "Declaration on the Right to Peace", which recalls "the need for strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs" (see Human Rights Council resolution 32/28). The Declaration will be considered by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session.

18. Changing perspectives on peace and how the United Nations system has contributed to the promotion of peace over the past 70 years are issues to be explored in a major inter-agency research project being conducted by UNESCO jointly with the Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona, Spain. Some 28 United Nations entities attended a consultative meeting, held in Geneva on 21 June 2016, and other United Nations system agencies and entities will be consulted at a follow-up meeting to be held in New York. A publication reporting the findings of the research will be launched on 21 September 2017, the International Day of Peace.

19. Africa is a special focus of work to support reconciliation and peace through dialogue. The need for such engagement is great in a continent where 9 of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions are based, where humanitarian crises frequently exacerbate the suffering caused by poverty and conflict. In the wake of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation signed in 2015 by the Government of Mali, the Platform Coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad coalition, UNESCO collaborated with United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali on the organization of a workshop in Bamako, in January 2016, to raise awareness among Malian youth about cultural heritage and the values of tolerance and peace that guarantee its preservation. The objective is to support the translation of the peace agreement into an actionable national programme to achieve lasting peace in Mali. A national forum for the launch of the programme is planned for 2016. The endeavours resonate with Security Council resolution 2295 (2016) on the situation in Mali.

20. Over the past decade, the involvement of young people in violence and extremist groups has led some to stigmatize youth as the perpetrators of violence. More than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected areas and most have little or no opportunity to have their voices heard. Bringing about stronger youth participation in peacebuilding was the theme of the first ever Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security, held in Amman, in August 2015, an event convened by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UNFPA, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP. Some 200 young peacebuilders from 80 countries gathered with representatives of Member States, United Nations agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations and academia to define a new global agenda on youth, peace and security. The Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security, adopted at the end of the forum called for a strengthened policy framework to support youth in transforming conflict and promoting peace. The Security Council subsequently adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, which also calls for the participation and views of youth to be taken into account during the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, and for the institution of mechanisms involving youth to promote a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

21. The Youth Solidarity Fund of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations provides support to youth-led organizations in Africa, Asia and the Middle East with the implementation of projects that advance its mandate of promoting long-term constructive relationships among people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. For example, with Youth Solidarity Fund backing, the Organization for Community Development in Pakistan has created 10 community protection groups, made up of 60 youths each, to reduce religious and cultural tension and

promote moderation and tolerance. "See things as your neighbour does", another Youth Solidarity Fund initiative, will bring together groups of young people from either side of the tension-ridden border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan at a 14-day intercultural summer camp, half of which will be held in Tajikistan and the other half in Kyrgyzstan. During the camp, participants will be trained to act as intercultural dialogue ambassadors in their respective communities.

22. As with youth, the international community has recognized for some time that women's participation is vital to achieving and sustaining peace, as exemplified by Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

Placing women at the centre of peace initiatives

In a project in Burundi, where a decade of civil war claimed 300,000 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is supporting a network of 534 women mediators, who have been at the forefront of continuing post-conflict reconciliation and of efforts to prevent violence in the wake of elections, renewed human rights violations and the exodus of around 230,000 people last year. In this tense context, the Women Network for Peace and Dialogue has, by its own means, addressed more than 5,000 conflicts at the local level and initiated dialogues in 17 provinces with political actors, security forces and civil society. The mediators promote non-violence and dialogue and provide verifiable information to stop panic about rumours, such as rumours concerning the mass distribution of arms or orchestrated plans to kill civilians.

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23. In keeping with the Organization's strategic focus on prevention, United Nations system entities working to support reconciliation and peace efforts through dialogue have also been facilitating the peaceful resolution of local disputes that could escalate into more serious conflict if left unchecked. In 2015 and 2016, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) facilitated political engagement at the local level to build capacity to locally manage intercommunal conflict, which is often resource-based and located in areas where there is competition for land between sedentary agriculture and livestock grazing. UNMISS also maps conflict areas and shares the information with other system entities.

24. In the Philippines' Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has helped to alleviate protracted armed conflict between Muslim and Buddhist communities through the implementation of a six-year strategic framework to promote inclusive growth and sustainable peace. FAO investment in connective infrastructure, human and social capital for smallholder farmers, training in agribusiness skills, fishing methods and seaweed farming and the provision of equipment and technology, have enabled populations to transition out of subsistence farming into more sustainable livelihoods. In that project and in others, FAO work has been grounded in community-based needs assessments and the identification of beneficiaries. Activities are targeted on the basis of capacity, cultural habits and vulnerability.

25. In Colombia, in October 2015, OHCHR brought together indigenous people from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and settlers with whom they are in conflict over land. Around 150 people attended a first meeting, which also involved the Government of Colombia and the Office of the High Presidential Adviser for Human Rights. In January 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution (2016) 2261 to establish a one-year political mission of unarmed international observers to monitor and verify the ceasefire between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army to end a civil war that has raged for half a century, the longest in Latin America. The ceasefire agreement was signed in Havana, in June 2016, in the framework of a tripartite mechanism set in place by the Secretary-General.

IV. Building a framework for commonly-shared values to foster social cohesion

26. Conflict, humanitarian crises and extreme poverty have damaged or destroyed the fabric of societies in many parts of the developing world, while nations everywhere are struggling to keep pace with fast-evolving social, technological and environmental change. All of those factors undermine social cohesion, the shared sense of belonging to a society that is also predicated upon trust of one's neighbours and of the government and its institutions.

27. Respect for human rights is fundamental to establishing and maintaining this trust. United Nations system entities involved in the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue have increasingly mainstreamed the principles of human rights in their work, since the Organization introduced its human rights-based approach to programming in 2003. Those efforts often focus on marginalized groups, particularly women and youth.

28. Underscoring how prominent this theme is across the whole of the United Nations system, the high-level political Forum on sustainable development, the central platform of the United Nations for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda, was convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, in New York, from 11 to 20 July 2016, and was devoted to the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind". The discussion focused on how to draw groups that are typically marginalized and left behind into decision-making processes.

29. "Living together in inclusive societies: a challenge and a goal" was the theme of the seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Baku from 25 to 27 April 2016. The event was organized in conjunction with UNESCO. Representatives of governments and international organizations as well as civil society actors shared ideas on how to achieve "inclusive living" in today's increasingly diverse societies.

> **Strengthening negotiation and mediation capacities**
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> The New York office of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research organized a two-day workshop, entitled "Multilateral negotiations: social cohesion and peaceful and inclusive societies", in June 2016. More than 40 delegates from Member States attended, as well as representatives of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations. The first part of the workshop focused on negotiation techniques while the second part focused on the components of social cohesion and peaceful and inclusive societies. Discussions focused on the need to carry out governance reforms through inclusive dialogues in order to prevent political exclusion and to address today's challenges and ways of addressing the breakdown of trust in society, and on the need for effective counter-narrative strategies to prevent the spread of violent extremism while at the same time, promoting a sense of belonging at the local level to sustain peace.

30. Over the past two years, the Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (2014-2017), which was initiated by UNESCO and is funded by the European Union, has been empowering and building capacities of young people in the Middle East and North Africa, a part of the world where, in many countries, instability and economic crisis followed the fleeting optimism of the predominantly youth-led Arab Spring. The region has the world's highest rate of youth unemployment, at around 30 per cent. Levels of youth participation in civic and political life also remain low in the aftermath of the toppling of decades-old political regimes. Seven national networks of youth organizations have been established through that initiative, in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, State of Palestine and Tunisia, which have reached out to around 2,000 youths through key training and skills to become the change-makers, policy planners and leaders of the future. Participants have been taught policy analysis, strategic planning, results-based management and human rights and they have been using the newly-acquired skills to support governments in the development and revision of youth policies in their countries.

31. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has engaged at-risk youth in marginalized communities through sport and life development skills, as part of a new global initiative that the agency is leading to promote crime prevention. Pilot activities are scheduled to begin in Brazil later in 2016. In another human rights-based initiative that fosters social cohesion, UNODC works closely with religious leaders to raise awareness of and respond to human trafficking through its membership of the Santa Marta Group, a global alliance with the Catholic Church, international police chiefs and civil society. The aim is to improve victim support and foster better relations between law enforcement and civil society. The agency is also collaborating with faith-based organizations in the delivery of technical assistance, training national actors in Gambia in 2015 in conjunction with the Islamic Council and the Christian Council. Principles from the Koran have been used to support the non-punishment of victims of human trafficking and other good practices.

32. In an effort to influence attitudes towards shared values, UN-Women has increased its engagement with faith-based organizations in its work towards Goal 5

of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is noteworthy that the Commission on the Status of Women, in the agreed conclusions adopted at its sixtieth session, invited faith-based organizations to take action for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Numerous initiatives and activities have been launched with such organizations at regional and country levels, including the promotion of behavioural change in men, youth, clergy and communities to end domestic violence, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in Albania, Barbados, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, South Africa, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste. Women's political participation and leadership were promoted in Côte d'Ivoire, Myanmar and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Entity also engaged religious scholars to increase knowledge, understanding and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In Asia, through a three-year programme on implementing the Convention through gender-equitable interpretations and expressions of culture in India, Singapore and beyond, advocacy and capacity-building have also increased knowledge about the Convention among religious scholars, the media and grass-roots leaders. In the Philippines, female Muslim religious leaders and male religious scholars took part in activities led by UN-Women on the Regional Human Rights Commission, creating a space for dialogue around sensitive topics over which religious belief is sometimes perceived to be in conflict with international norms on women's rights and for the formulation of strategies for changing norms and cultures that discriminate against women.

33. Discrimination is very often targeted against migrants, whose numbers are greater today than ever before in history. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported, in June 2016, that the number of displaced people had reached the record figure of 65 million in 2015. A catalogue of tragic events in recent times has brought into sharp relief the terrible plight large numbers of them face. Many suffer human rights abuses in their country of origin, in transit and then again at their destination. The United Nations has appealed for the protection of the human rights of all migrants and called on governments to embrace migration as essential for inclusive and sustainable social and economic development. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly at its high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016, is an important step in the development of concerted action at the global level (see General Assembly resolution 71/1).

34. Municipal authorities can do much to promote mutual understanding and respect between populations that suddenly find themselves in close proximity to one another. The lead cities of all seven regions in the mobilization of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (formerly the International Coalition of Cities Against Racism), met for the first time to discuss action at the city level, in Bologna, Italy, on 17 and 18 April 2016. UNESCO and the International Coalition, in collaboration with the Foundation of Marianna V. Vardinoyannis, who is a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, are currently mapping how 19 cities around the world are dealing with influxes of migrants and refugees and compiling relevant "promising practices". A report, to be published shortly, will provide valuable insight into a phenomenon that presents challenges and opportunities to cities and towns all over the world.

> **Making worlds meet in Germany**
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> In Berlin, negative attitudes towards migrants are being addressed by "Give Something Back to Berlin", a project that contributes to social cohesion and cultural dialogue by facilitating neighbourhood volunteer work for members of Berlin's rapidly-growing non-German speaking population. Migrants of around 50 nationalities are involved in the scheme, which won first prize among a total of 10 recipients of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization-led "BMW Group Award for Cultural Innovation" in 2016. Among the activities designed to bring the new arrivals into contact with Berliners, migrants take walks with local senior citizens, providing the latter with company while the former get to practice their German. The founder of the project, Annamaria Olsson, says: "Our dream is to continue making worlds meet all over the city and beyond".

V. Disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural and interreligious dialogue through quality education and the media

35. Education and the media play key roles in ensuring that individuals and communities have the knowledge and tools needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other cultural or religious backgrounds. Quality education at all stages of life, in all settings and for all groups in society can stimulate critical thinking and foster values, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the development of more open and tolerant societies and create the conditions for dialogue. Outside the classroom or lecture hall, traditional media and, increasingly, the Internet and social media have become major, and often the main, sources of information about other cultures and religions. As well as having a profound influence on perceptions about other groups and communities, reinforcing or countering stereotypes, media can also serve to raise awareness and inform citizens of their rights.

36. United Nations system entities involved in education and media remain at the forefront of efforts to devise and hone policies and programmes that take into account the multiple contexts in which learning takes place and ideas are shaped, inside and outside the classroom, through the media and in the community. The ongoing strategic initiatives on education for sustainable development and on global citizenship education represent a paradigm shift in the approach to education, with their focus on the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes conducive to participation in peaceful and sustainable societies.

37. To ensure that global citizenship education reaches populations in need, ECOWAS and UNESCO have produced a reference manual (see also sect. III) on the teaching of peace education, human rights, citizenship and democracy, that has been translated into 27 local West African languages. The manual was distributed under the ongoing peace and development project of ECOWAS, which is focusing on six in crisis or post-conflict countries in the region, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo. The project was funded by the African Development Bank.

Preventing violent extremism in the classroom

A key focus area of global citizenship education is the prevention of violent extremism. In April 2016, UNESCO published "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism", the first tool of its kind, which has been field tested at UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network in countries including Jordan and Kazakhstan and is now available online and in print. The guide provides advice on managing classroom discussions on violent extremism and how to help learners resist extremist narratives and acquire the social and emotional skills to engage constructively in society. Initiatives to help young people resist the call of terrorism were discussed at the first International Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education, held in New Delhi, on 19 and 20 September 2016.

38. Global citizenship education is also concerned with fostering intercultural dialogue. UNESCO has been working with universities in the Arab region to promote intercultural dialogue through the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue, which places a particular emphasis on youth participation, especially in countries affected by conflict. The programme continues to support 10 projects involving the revision and development of university and school curricula that counter stereotypes and promote understanding among people of different cultures.

39. In Lebanon, a consortium of universities has started offering accredited courses in the promotion of intercultural competence, the skills needed to adeptly navigate today's often culturally complex environments, as part of their social science degree programmes. A massive open online course is also currently under development and is scheduled to be launched in 2016.

40. To follow up on and assess the impact of such initiatives, in March 2016, the Statistical Commission approved a survey of all 195 member States of UNESCO, which will measure their implementation of education for sustainable development and on global citizenship education in order to produce a global indicator for Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 4.7. Questionnaires were sent out in June and the data will be analysed and reported to the Executive Board of UNESCO in 2017.

41. Information and communications technologies also have great potential to strengthen education for peace and sustainable development because they open up classrooms to the world, facilitate dialogue and provide access to multiple sources of information that can increase knowledge and understanding about other cultures, provided that increased connectivity is associated with the relevant skills and media literacy competence and draws on relevant local and multilingual content. To measure the extent to which such technologies are deployed to promote mutual understanding, UNESCO is currently mapping existing intercultural dialogue e-learning resources in the five regions of the world and exploring trends and challenges for more concrete focus in this domain. The mapping is part of an ambitious project funded by the Government of Azerbaijan to enhance the promotion of intercultural competence and cultural literacy in a globalized and

increasingly interconnected multicultural international landscape. Africa, where the technologies have enormous potential to promote intercultural dialogue, is a particular focus of the mapping exercise. The project is a contribution to the "Baku Process" and the related World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, the fourth edition of which will be held in 2017.

42. In today's digital age, the media and information literacy strategic initiative is helping to equip citizens with the ability to engage with media and develop their critical thinking while bolstering cultural literacy. In 2015, 500 young people all over the world successfully completed a four-month massive open online course on media and information literacy and intercultural dialogue. The topics explored included the ethical use of media, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, global citizenship, online hate content, freedom of expression and access to information, privacy and gender equality. To ensure such education reaches those who most urgently need it, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable to radicalization, the past year has seen the engagement in media and information literacy of local imams and grass-roots non-governmental organizations in several countries, including Nigeria, where the African Centre for Media and Information Literacy in Abuja has helped the initiative reach 30 youth organizations all over the country. A toolkit for media and information literacy that includes a curriculum for teachers, a global assessment framework and policy and strategy guidelines, is also being used to build capacities among policymakers and educators. UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations also initiated the University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue programme to promote teaching and research in media and information literacy.

43. To address the role of media in disseminating the principles and tools of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations launched the "SpreadNoHate" initiative, with a symposium held at Headquarters in New York, in December 2015. Participants explored the phenomenon of "hate speech" and its use in the treatment of migrants.

44. Ideosync and UNESCO partnered to develop a training manual to support community radio personnel's capacity to produce and broadcast migrant-sensitive programmes in source, transit and destination areas. A publication, "Internal migration: a manual for community radio stations", which was launched in 2015 on World Radio Day, is currently being distributed to community radio stations in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

45. Training and capacity-building for journalists in media literacy is also vital. The continued use of the "Model curricula for journalism education: a compendium of new syllabi", which has been translated into Chinese, French and Mongolian, is helping to develop journalistic knowledge and skills on peacebuilding, while media and information literacy and policy guidelines for journalism educators and newsrooms have also been widely circulated.

46. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information raised the visibility of United Nations work on intercultural and interreligious dialogue via its multilingual news platforms, its global network of United Nations information centres and outreach partners, celebrating international days through special activities and covering events such as the "Forum on the role of religious leaders in

preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes", held in Morocco in 2015, and the Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Azerbaijan in April 2016.

VI. Fostering dialogue for sustainable development and its ethical, religious, social and cultural dimensions

47. The pursuit of sustainable development has significant potential to both contribute to and be enhanced by the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Climate change and related environmental issues, in particular, have emerged as a major unifying principle and purpose across societies, cultures and religions, as reflected recently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 2015 International Islamic Climate Change Symposium, and the meeting on "Faith in the Future", held in Bristol, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in September 2015. Demonstrating the power of environmental issues to unite leaders from different cultural and religious groups, 2015 also saw the publication of the Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change, the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, the encyclical letter of Pope Francis of June 2015, "*Laudato Si*: On Care for Our Common Home", the Hindu Declaration on Climate Change and the "Indigenous Elders and Medicine Peoples Council Statement".

48. Dialogue for sustainable development is being fostered through work on the establishment of cooperative mechanisms for the joint management of transboundary water systems by countries in post-conflict areas. The creation of new sovereign States after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia affected the way the Dinaric Karst Aquifers in the Balkan region were used for power-generation, agriculture and domestic consumption. Since the signature of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (since replaced by the Regional Cooperation Council) in 1999, bilateral agreements have been established to manage transboundary surface waters and hydropower developments and the Global Environment Facility-funded Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System project was implemented by UNESCO in 2010. A significant milestone was reached in 2015 with the formulation of a strategic action programme under which Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed to strengthen their cooperation through the establishment of a Consultation and Information Exchange Body as well as awareness-raising activities to make local populations take greater responsibility for sustainable management. This continued regional dialogue and cooperation are both an end in themselves and a means to achieve lasting sustainability of the shared water resources.

49. The promotion of intercultural dialogue for sustainable development was also enhanced by UNESCO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with the joint organization of a seminar on environment, religion and culture, promoting intercultural dialogue for sustainable development, held in April 2016, 15 years after a seminar on the same theme was held in Tehran, in 2001. At the event, representatives and specialists of different cultures and religions discussed how culture and religion contributed to sustainable development and they explored the nexus between the three concepts. A document was published urging religious

leaders and faith-based organizations to actively promote a culture of peace in their work to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It called upon Member States to put culture at the heart of their efforts to find durable solutions for environmental challenges in a spirit of dialogue, understanding and respect for diversity.

50.   In keeping with the need to "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts" as called for in Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO is also fostering international dialogue to explore the ethical implications of global climate change for biological diversity, cultural diversity, global justice, international solidarity, resilience and durability through the work of its World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology, since 2005. Based on the extensive work that has been completed so far, during the thirty-eighth session of the General Conference, Member States requested UNESCO to prepare a preliminary text for a non-binding declaration on ethical principles in relation to climate change for the next General Conference, to be held in 2017. Such action is meant to complement the important work being carried out on climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNESCO will launch a broad and inclusive dialogue between member States, experts and stakeholders to this end.

World Bank develops faith initiative

Sustainable development is also being addressed in the economic arena, to combat poverty and build a future in which "no one is left behind" in the developed and developing worlds. The World Bank Group recognizes the importance of interreligious and interfaith dialogue as a critical vehicle for ending extreme poverty, boosting shared prosperity and promoting peace. The World Bank's Faith Initiative advances three interrelated goals, to strengthen dialogue and engagement with faith-based organizations, to foster greater operational collaboration and partnerships and to strengthen the evidence base on faith-based organizations' role and impact on the ground, including in projects funded by the World Bank. In July 2015, the World Bank hosted a conference in Washington, D.C., on "Religions and Sustainable Development: Building Effective Partnerships to End Extreme Poverty" organized jointly with German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Cooperation, the United States Agency for International Development and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, in partnership with the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities and other faith-based organizations. In September 2015, the World Bank co-sponsored a high-level event before the opening of the seventieth session of the General Assembly with the inter-agency Task Force on Religion and Development, led by UNFPA, on the theme of "Meeting the moral imperative to end extreme poverty and realize the Sustainable Development Goals". Prior to the event, faith-based organizations and religious leaders launched a faith-based action framework to end extreme poverty and realize the Sustainable Development Goals", a tool to shape strategies for global, national and local faith-based organizations.

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51.   The goals of the 2030 Agenda, which have galvanized broad-based support, also provide an array of powerful incentives around which to build intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

52.   The United Nations Population Fund is fostering dialogue and innovative partnerships with faith-based organizations, national multireligious mechanisms and religious traditional and indigenous leaders to build institutional capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda. At the global level, the Fund convenes a Task Force on Religion and Development, which acts as a consultative mechanism within the United Nations to host policy dialogues and convene faith-based partners around shared development and humanitarian challenges. Some 250 faith-based actors took part in a special session on religious engagement at the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016. In an outcome document, faith-based actors called upon the international community to recognize and affirm their significant and often unique holistic contribution to humanitarian work, to consider them as equal partners in such work and to scale up efforts to support their contribution (see also A/71/353). They committed to serve people in the most vulnerable humanitarian settings, expand their response and counter attempts to link religion with violence, terrorism or exclusion. UNFPA also promoted intercultural and interreligious dialogue on women's and girls' rights and the sexual and reproductive rights of men and women in a wide array of partnerships with religious leaders, at both the regional and national levels, in all continents.

53.   In an initiative that fosters dialogue for sustainable development while cutting across the entire spectrum of human rights, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is improving the effectiveness of the global fight against AIDS by engaging with civil society, including religious and cultural leaders, faith-based organizations and communities to overcome discrimination towards people with HIV. The initiative aims to improve access to health care for children, women, young people, sex workers and other marginalized groups with HIV. Dialogue for sustainable development has also been pursued by OHCHR through its support for the Government of Serbia's new Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma (2016-2025) and a draft law on housing, to secure ethnic diversity and inclusion. The Office also supported work on the development of a new United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Serbia that will uniquely include cultural development. In parallel, in May 2015, OHCHR worked with staff at the multi-ethnic media outlet Dostuk Radio, in Bishkek, the only outlet broadcasting in minority languages, to raise awareness of human and minority rights and in June 2015 it co-organized training for government officials on international human rights obligations in the context of combating radical religious extremism. Stakeholders from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attended a regional expert meeting on freedom of religion or belief, held in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, in July 2015, and drew up recommendations for their governments and international organizations on enhancing freedom of religion or belief.

54.   There is also growing realization that sport as means to explore dialogue with other cultures can have an impact on development. The revision of the International Charter for Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015, for the first time acknowledges that

sport can play an important role in the realization of development, peace and post-conflict and post-disaster objectives.

VII. Conclusion

55. **United Nations system entities have implemented General Assembly resolutions 70/19 and 70/20 during the period under review against the backdrop of a shift in the Organization's approach to peace that has placed the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue at the very heart of the Organization's founding mission.**

56. **Acknowledging a "collective call for urgent change in how we conceive of our peace and security instruments, how we apply them and how we work together to maximize impact", the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the future of United Nations peace operations, issued in September 2015, stated that "we cannot respond to the number and intensity of today's crises by focusing only on conflict management. Prevention and mediation must return to the fore" (see A/70/357-S/2015/682).**

57. **Galvanized by this reframing of the Organization's response to peace and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both of which underscore the importance of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue and give fresh impetus to the ongoing International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), the United Nations agencies and entities involved in implementing General Assembly resolutions 70/19 and 70/20 have redoubled their efforts to work together to deliver more effective outcomes. As an example, an ongoing research project of UNESCO on the progress and challenges of the United Nations peace agenda over the past 70 years is the first major inter-agency consultation on such an essential topic. Research of this nature can and should make the work of the United Nations for peace more effective and efficient and it provides a means to bring the different components of the system closer together.**

58. **The project is part of a broader effort to scale up research activities during the Decade to produce global indicators that can ensure the delivery of more precisely targeted actions and, in a rapidly changing world, take account of both present and future needs and priorities. The focus on research ties in with the call for improved data to make informed decisions and ensure accountability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. United Nations system entities are also committed to tracking global progress on intercultural and interreligious dialogue and gauging nuances in regional, national and local perspectives in order to inform policy and better orient programming.**

59. **There is also a growing emphasis across the United Nations system on the need for the inclusive participation of a broad range of stakeholders in building and sustaining peace, as reflected in target 16.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for "responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making". Indeed, inclusion is mentioned in no fewer than 5 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Many of the**

programmes and projects cited in the present report closely involved governments, religious and civil society groups in both their design and implementation. Time and again, it has been the experience of the agencies involved that such inclusivity, in keeping with the system-wide focus, improves effectiveness and confers local ownership to ensure the sustainability of outcomes. In the culturally-sensitive domains of promoting a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in particular, there is no single pathway or model that will deliver results. Efforts must be built on cultural needs and on the local context and aspirations. As well as illustrating the extent to which youth and women are now included in the promotion of a culture of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the present report shows a marked trend among contributing United Nations agencies and entities towards initiatives at all levels that involve religious leaders, whose influence is very often decisive in shaping opinion.

60. The United Nations as a whole has made significant progress in constructing stronger global and regional partnerships to promote a culture of peace, instituting cooperation frameworks with the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States, as well as with other regional and international partners.

61. Partnerships with national governments remain a key priority, as governments have the primary responsibility to protect the human rights that underpin pluralistic, inclusive societies and to find the political solutions to prevent or resolve conflict. It is the role of United Nations agencies and entities to help build national capacity to that end.

62. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a solid framework to approach interlinked challenges in a holistic way, taking issues out of isolation and addressing the structural determinants that contribute to them. However, as parties scale up action to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, enhanced cooperation, capacity-building and access to financial and technical support will be needed to help many countries realize their targeted objectives.