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New UNESCO panel seeks to identify how to bolster tolerance worldwide



2010, International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

4 February 2010 – The head of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) has set up an expert group to find ways to increase tolerance around the world, as part of her commitment to promoting a “new humanism” to pursue a rapprochement of cultures.

The world, said Director-General Irina Bokova, is marked by a growing interdependence, but mistrust has also arisen in recent years.

"I am convinced that UNESCO has all the strengths needed to provide a humanist response to globalization and crisis," she said. "In response to the sense of vulnerability which permeates all levels, there is indeed a need to invent new forms of action to safeguard social cohesion and preserve peace."

The new panel will meet for the first time on 18 February in Paris. The gathering will also mark the launch of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, which will kick off with a round-table discussion on the theme, "The Dialogue of Cultures: New Avenues for Peace."

"The objective of this International Year is to help dissipate any confusion stemming from ignorance, prejudice and exclusion that create tension, insecurity, violence and conflict," Ms. Bokova emphasized.

The task, she said, will be to promote mutual knowledge and to generate respect for other cultures.

"Exchange and dialogue between cultures are the best tools for building peace," the UNESCO chief said.

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