



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Peace and solidarity only possible when there is cultural diversity, Ban stresses



21 May 2011 –

Cultural diversity brings vital spiritual, social and economic benefits, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said today, urging people to take steps in their own lives to strengthen the connections they have to each other.

“A world of peace and solidarity can only be accomplished by acknowledging and celebrating our diversity,” he said in a message marking World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, which is celebrated on 21 May each year.

The Secretary-General described the cause of global harmony as remaining “precariously poised. Global economic activity and advances in communications both illustrate humanity’s growing inter-connectedness, yet barriers, mistrust and animosity persist between people and cultures.

“Increasing contact has also generated fears – imagined and real – of the loss of cherished customs, languages and identities.”

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) have launched a Facebook campaign, with the support of the business community and other groups, to ask everyone to “Do ONE Thing” for cultural diversity and inclusion today.

“New technologies have fundamentally changed the way we communicate and get to know each other,” said Irina Bokova, the UNESCO Director-General. “But, at the same time, we still have to learn how to make the most of the diversity of our societies, by using all means at our

disposal, from education to the arts, and including new social tools and networks – especially for young people, driving change today,” she said.

According to Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for UNAOC, “greater personal engagement and responsibility for the future devolve power to the people. Take positive action to change the world for the better. Join us in celebrating the World Day for Cultural Diversity and turn it into everyday activism.”

The Secretary-General said “campaign calls on all people – from youth to policy-makers, from religious leaders to journalists, entrepreneurs and others who shape opinions and trends – to speak up for the spiritual, social and economic wealth we derive from cultural diversity.”

The campaign will work via a dedicated Facebook page, serving as a platform for people around the world to share their experiences through posts and videos.

“On this day, and throughout our lives, let us take steps – small and large, with families and friends, old and new – that will strengthen bonds, deepen our understanding of the value of cultural diversity and help us to live together better,” added Mr. Ban.

UNESCO is also hosting a series of artistic exhibitions at its headquarters in Paris that aim to spotlight the value of cultural diversity, while this week a classical music concert and poetry readings have also been staged.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN independent expert urges Austria to promote cultural diversity and rights](#)