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## **NEWSMAKER: UN messenger Paulo Coelho rejects idea of clash of civilizations**



UN peace messenger Paulo Coelho

22 December 2010 – United Nations Messenger of Peace Paulo Coelho gives short shrift to those who claim there is a clash of civilizations.

“I don’t believe in it. It’s something some political leaders tried to use, and that the media tried and are still trying to sell us, in order to simplify the world and their work,” the renowned Brazilian author told the UN News Centre in an [interview](#).

“When they talk about a ‘clash of civilizations,’ it’s just a way to separate things but the reality, and what I see, is that we are much closer than we think. I was in China recently. I spoke to normal people and heard the same stories I would hear in Brazil. So where is the clash of civilisations? There is none.”

For Mr. Coelho, who is also a Special Counsellor for Intercultural Dialogues and Spiritual Convergences at the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) and a member of the UN “Network of Men Leaders” bringing together political, religious and cultural leaders to combat the pandemic of violence against women, everybody should be focussing on what unites, not on what separates.

“We live the same life, but we can have misunderstanding or non-understanding, and that’s what we have to work on,” he said. “Instead of talking about our differences, we should talk much

more about the things we have in common. This may sound a little bit idealistic, but when I go to my blog, my Facebook page, my Twitter account, I talk to different people from all over the world and you see how it's easy to establish a dialogue.”

For the author of “The Alchemist” and “The Pilgrimage” the Internet, which he uses a great deal, is both a bridge and a minefield. “We are at a turning point, but for better or worse?” he said.

“You see a lot of possibility, the bright side, but also the dark possibility of mind control. It is the same tools, with two different directions and uses. If people start to be brainwashed, then we're in trouble. So I really do not know what to think about this tool.”

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