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DÉBAT FINAL ET RECOMMANDATIONS FINAL DEBATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Par Jean Maurice Djossou**

Chairman's Call For Recommendations

Before the general debate, Mr Asbjorn Eide, Chair of the United Nations Working Group on Minorities pointed to the requirements placed on states as regards multicultural and intercultural education, namely article 4 of *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities*¹. He also reminded the audience of the discussions that took place during the Seminar, which he qualified as a valuable one. To conclude, he asked the participants to write down one to four points dealing with what is positive and what is unresolved taking into account Canadian experience.

I. Trois constats dans la conférence de clôture

Après avoir rappelé les trois autres grands débats qui ont lieu au niveau international : la question de *L'éducation au XXI^e Siècle, Rapport Delors*², les enjeux définis par le Rapport *Culture et Développement : Notre diversité créatrice, Rapport*

* Docteur en droit. Chargé de cours à l'Institut québécois des hautes études internationales (Université Laval) et à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Le contenu du résumé du débat relève de la seule responsabilité des directeurs de la publication.

¹ GA Res. 47/135, UN GAOR, UN Doc. 47/135 (1992). Article 4 of the *Declaration* reads as follows:

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the Law.
2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national Law and contrary to international standards.
3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.
4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the History, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory.
Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.
5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

² UNESCO, *L'Éducation : un trésor est caché dedans*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1996.

Xavier Perez de Cuellar³, et le concept en évolution de *culture de la paix*⁴, M. Jacques Proulx, professeur de psychologie à l'Université de Sherbrooke et président de la Commission sectorielle de l'éducation à la Commission canadienne de l'UNESCO a axé sa conférence de clôture du séminaire sur trois importantes observations.

A. Interaction du cadre juridique et du cadre de l'éducation

Le premier constat qu'il fait est que «si le cadre juridique vient à la rescousse de l'éducation, le cadre de l'éducation doit également venir à la rescousse du cadre juridique». Il précise que le cadre juridique est à la fois «un point d'arrivée et un point de départ» :

En garantissant les droits des minorités, les cadres juridiques servent de point d'arrivée permettant de sortir des deux modes élémentaires de rapport à autrui visant à constater les différences pour considérer les autres comme un pâle reflet de soi, donc inférieurs à soi ou à les penser comme soi et à ne pas respecter leurs particularités. Toutefois, étant entendu que les changements ne s'opèrent pas du seul fait de l'existence d'un cadre juridique, l'éducation vient à la rescousse des droits humains en mettant l'accent sur les valeurs sous-jacentes à ces droits.

B. La diversité comme mélange de ressemblance et de dissemblance

Le deuxième constat est

qu'il n'y a pas de consensus sur l'éducation interculturelle et multiculturelle, pour qui et comment, les tendances, les éléments de base ou les perspectives. S'il n'y a pas de consensus à ce niveau, il y a cependant une tendance vers la diversité; non pas en terme de différence mais en terme de mélange de ressemblance et de dissemblance. La diversité n'est pas une diversité «à propos de» mais davantage une diversité comme résultante de la dynamique qui s'installe. La diversité est alors perçue comme étant un atout pour relever les défis que sont le rapport à l'environnement, les rapports entre nous et les rapports au temps.

³ Commission mondiale de la culture et du développement, *Notre diversité créatrice*, Paris, UNESCO, 1995.

⁴ La *Déclaration sur une culture de la paix*, Doc. off. UNESCO, 53^e sess., Doc. NU A/53/243 (1999) définit à l'article 1 la culture de la paix comme «l'ensemble des valeurs, des attitudes, des traditions, des comportements et des modes de vie fondés [entre autres] sur a) le respect de la vie, le rejet de la violence et la promotion et la pratique de la non-violence par l'éducation, le dialogue et la coopération...». La *Résolution 52/15* de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, du 20 novembre 1999, proclame l'année 2000 «Année internationale de la culture de la paix» et la *Résolution 53/25* proclame la période 2001-2010 «Décennie internationale de la promotion d'une culture de la paix au profit des enfants du monde». Sur les différents projets en cours, voir UNESCO, *Manifeste 2000 pour une culture de la paix et de la non-violence*, en ligne: UNESCO <http://www2.unesco.org/manifesto2000/fr/6_points.htm> (date d'accès: 1^{er} mai 2000).

C. Négociation et renégociation du contrat social

La dernière observation porte sur «la nécessité d'un dialogue dans la négociation et la renégociation du contrat social sur la base d'un supplément d'intelligence qui tienne compte des nuances et d'un supplément de cœur pour comprendre qu'il faut déstructurer les représentations qu'on a des autres et accepter de partager le pouvoir».

Après la Conférence de M. Jacques Proulx, le débat final fut lancé, présidé par M. Mustapha Mehedi, membre du Groupe de travail des Nations Unies sur les minorités.

II. De nombreux échanges de vues

A. The Missing Dimension of Intercultural and Multicultural Education

Professor Mathew Zachariah detected two levels of presentation at the seminar and called for a third one. The first level is related to the discussion of international standards and norms and the production of materials that could make a difference in changing values, attitudes and behaviours. The second level, said Professor Zachariah, is quite rightly the Canadian legal framework, courts cases, the issues, intentions and policies at administrative level both at federal and provincial levels.

For Professor Zachariah, there is a third level which is entirely missing. There have been the worse kinds of atrocity in various parts of the world but there have also been some places like South Africa where something like a miracle happened. Why did all of this happen?

Asking these questions and trying to answer them may be useful to the promotion of multicultural and intercultural education, he added. In this respect, Professor Zachariah called the attention on two areas : first, the world Great Faiths have contributed to the idea of repentance, trust building and reconciliation and we may learn from them without reducing their intrinsic value of religion. Secondly, there is much about what social psychology can teach us on the fact that it is a universal tendency to make clear distinctions about things that are close to us and to make very abstract generalizations about behaviors that are far from us. Stereotypes, prejudgments and other related things arise from those generalizations. To reduce the gaps, we have to pay more attention to those matters while we try to move forward in promoting better dialogue between people of different cultures, he concluded.

B. Promotion d'un nouvel ordre de valeurs

Mme Mirie Rushani, Ministre de la Recherche scientifique et coordonnatrice des réformes éducatives de la République de Macédoine, a souligné la nécessité d'inclure l'interculturalité et la multiculturalité dans le règlement des problèmes

économiques et politiques du monde. En communiquant à travers Internet, sans distinction de race, d'origine ethnique ou nationale, les jeunes participent à la promotion d'un nouvel ordre de valeurs qui consiste à puiser dans sa culture ce qu'il y a de meilleur à offrir au monde, a-t-elle affirmé. Dans cet esprit, chaque communauté institutionnalisée doit avoir son propre espace culturel et y inviter les autres sur une base égalitaire.

C. The Need of Different Models and the Necessity of a New Methodology

It has also been said that we need to develop different models so that everybody fits in. We also need to change the methodology of education in order to include children and parents and to give equal opportunities to all.

III. Mr Eide's Report on the Suggestions and Recommendations

The Montreal Seminar came about various issues which have been discussed in the Working Group on Minorities. Some of the points were made during the seminar held in Geneva in 1997. This seminar reminded everybody that the right to education is a universal Human Right and the educational rights of minorities have been established in a number of international human rights instruments. It was also pointed out that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contribute to the political and social stability in the state in which they live. On the other hand, not enough has been done and there are many places where minorities and majority do not coexist harmoniously.

In that context, the Working Group suggested that states should submit reports outlining the positive measures that they have taken or plan to take to promote inter-groups relations and measures of multicultural and intercultural education and the acceptance of mutual diversity and social harmony within that state. A number of suggestions were made in that connection that could provide example of good practice of where people and communities build multicultural schools, are learning their own and one another's languages and sharing their cultures. It was also suggested that measures should be taken so that school curricula and learning materials and textbooks are relevant to all children. All of this should avoid focusing exclusively on the dominant or majority groups.

This multicultural and intercultural approach should be integrated through the curriculum and relevant to all students. The formation and development of transnational networks, cooperation and intercultural projects should be undertaken so that states may benefit from the experiences of other states.

The current Seminar, in the light of the recommendations, provides a lot of information about the context of Canada and Canadian experience as a laboratory of intercultural and multicultural relations which has number of positive things.

Things are changing and they are changing simultaneously in several countries like Professor Eide mentioned and at international level, bringing new

approaches to the interrelationship between international debates and domestic developments. For instance, the whole question of indigenous population or people, has changed dramatically in many countries over the years.

After these concluding remarks, Professor Eide pointed out the main ideas and recommendations that came out of the Seminar.

RECOMMANDATIONS

PREAMBLE

1. Aware of the fact that modern international order emerged in the context of colonialism and that this still impacts on the way of thinking, states should draw conclusions in terms of the reorientation that is required.
2. Having in view the multilateral and universal education instruments based on the principle that all human beings are equal and assuming that equality does not mean equal access to the dominant culture, states should recognize the existence of minorities and the variations between them, for instance aboriginal and other minorities coming voluntarily or involuntarily to the states territories.
3. In the educational context, not only equal treatment but also different needs have to be addressed.
4. The reformulation and reinterpretation of key concepts should take into account the relationship between individual rights and collective rights.

RECOMMANDATIONS FOCUSED ON THE ISSUES OF THE SEMINAR

PERFORMANCE BENEFITS AND SYSTEMATIC PRACTICES

5. Simply including minority courses available to all has raised the performance of minority students because it gives them more self-esteem and also increases their performance educationally. This is an asset for intercultural and multicultural education. States should encourage such practices.
6. The structures and procedures of educational institutions should be recognized in the sense that there are inequitable outcomes which are fostered and predetermined by facially neutral institutions and /or systematic practices.

TEACHING OF HISTORY

7. Efforts must be taken to support the creation of new non-hegemonic interpretation of History.

8. Since all people have contributed to the development of the modern world, States should reconsider the subject of History and the way it is taught in the educational institutions so that it equitably reflects the History of different peoples and respect the principle of equality.

LINGUISTIC RIGHTS

9. Linguistic rights of linguistic minorities need to be developed and fixed in accord with the *Oslo Recommendation regarding Linguistic Rights of National Minorities*.
10. Languages being simultaneously side of liberation and side of oppression, states must encourage educational institutions to foster home languages development.

INSTITUTIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MECHANISMS

11. Mechanisms to foster communication and collaboration for concerted actions with aboriginal and minority groups of peoples should be established.
12. The missing dimension, which is the experience of creating reconciliation processes using education in the broad sense of the word, should be added to intercultural and multicultural education.

GOVERNMENTS WORKING GROUPS

13. Government working groups should be established to develop federal and provincial policies regarding education and the membership of this working groups should be reflexive of the cultural reality of the state.
14. Various groups should be represented in the bodies that influence decision making, overall policies and the curriculum development.

UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUPS

15. The UN working groups should encourage governments to open meaningful reciprocal dialogue with the different groups which are in the process of developing their own autonomous institutions and practices.
16. The issues of resources, money and trained teachers should have due consideration when dealing with the educational rights of minorities.

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

17. Issues of multicultural education that are relevant to national minorities, especially the most disadvantaged sections, must be seen as different, separate issues of

intercultural education. Thus intercultural Education will bring about greater levels of equality of outcomes of education in society.

18. Intercultural education as a separate area of concern of the state, has major relevance for public policies in Education, to develop social cohesion and inclusiveness. It therefore needs to be integrated within the mainstream programme of initial and continuous education of teachers.
19. While good policies are important, good intercultural practices at institutional level are of great importance. This includes tackling racism and xenophobia. The Canadian attempts, while slow, do have the advantage of being a continuing attempt to develop a framework and practices on basis of consensus.
20. New standards are needed to deal with the situation which arises when a group becomes a minority due to a political change. This situation can create a dramatic new environment for persons living in the countries subjects to that political change. If traditional international standards are applied in this case, it may impact, for these persons, the opportunities of being themselves and meet the demands of the markets.

* * *

Professor Eide concluded his report by saying that the publication of the Proceedings will be of great value internationally.