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PUBLIC AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

OF THE SCIENCES & HUMANITIES – TECHNOLOGY & GLOBAL BIOETHICS

Preparing Youth for the 21st Century - Linking New Ideas and Knowledge for New Skills and Careers

4 November 2009

Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP - France

**Ref.: Project Progress - International Youth Network for the Advancement of
the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics (IYNet)**

Dear Mr. Matsuura,

On behalf of the many young women and men who benefit from the transdisciplinary IYNet Project to invest in their future and the well-being of humanity, and on behalf of all who help advance the project objectives, we wish to express our sincere appreciation for the accomplishments UNESCO has achieved under your guidance. We would also like to convey our best wishes to you for your imminent retirement.

We shall continue to urge young people to place the universal values and principles of UNESCO at the core of their mission in life by advancing a humanistic understanding of science for an interdependent world. August 6, 2009, marks our thirtieth year of providing free, transdisciplinary educational community programs, working with and for youth, locally, nationally and internationally.

As an NGO Member of Forum UNESCO and UNEP, and International PEN, we are committed to your urgent request of 5 April 2006 for international solidarity and mobilization against the destruction of Iraq's historical, intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage. We shared and shall continue to advance your appeal with our national and international contacts.

In our letter to you of 6 August 2006 we outlined the core issues in need of being addressed and announced the establishment of the International Youth Network for the Advancement of the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics. We were honoured and privileged to have received the acknowledgement of Dr. Hans d'Orville.

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We have addressed the critical issues and advanced our objectives as indicated in the attached *IYNet Project Activities: An Overview – 2006 to 2009*. Conscientious focus is given to UNESCO's role in advancing a culture of peace and the vitally important opening words of its Constitution.

The key objective of the transdisciplinary IYNet Project is to advance youth as a value-creating resource, building on scholarship, inter-generational dialogue and a commitment to global ethics. The project is a meeting of minds, science and human experience. It incorporates the John Dewey/Tsunesaburo Makiguchi concept of knowledge-building and sharing, *shiso no kagaku*. Of paramount importance for the project is to link the individual firmly to the universal values and principles of UNESCO.

The IYNet Project development core issues, key considerations and observations include the crucial lessons to be learned from the 2003 pre-emptive, largely faith-based, racially motivated war of aggression against Iraq by an international alliance of 49 nations for the geopolitical control of natural resources, and for corporate and private gain. A war, which is in serious violation of international law. The accompanying media misinformation and disinformation about the world of Islam has set a terrifying and unwise example for hundreds of millions of youths worldwide.

The war against Iraq has degraded an 8000-year-old World Heritage site and its environment. It has destroyed millions of families; terrorized and laid waste an entire civilization, and caused erosion of confidence and trust. The detrimental effects on international youth development, global mental health, and the advancement of the sciences, knowledge-building and global ethics for our shared humanity, are immeasurable.

The terror, fear, trauma, suffering and grief, caused by this international atrocity against the people of Iraq, surpasses the much publicized toll of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The destruction of Iraq is an echo of the minds of those who planned and committed it; and a reflection of the educational, cultural and political environment that is steeped in an arms trade and war economy. The long-term consequences and intergenerational reverberations we are all facing, affecting the advancement of universal values and human rights, are incalculable. The assault on Iraq is an assault on all of us, on our dignity, our intelligence, our education, on science and our future. It has changed the contours of civilization.

The core issues, key considerations and observations are summary reflections of a continuous survey and ongoing dialogue with international youth, educators and educational institutions concerned with the future of humanity, working for science and reason against the forces of superstition and fundamentalism.

To this end, we have been working with the Barack Obama for America Campaign since February 2007 to increase the understanding of the sciences, humanities and global bioethics internationally, particularly among youth in the United States. We concentrated our efforts on four vitally important issues: *Science for sustainability – from the cult of war and violence to a sustainable culture of peace; climate change; the war against Iraq; restoring science to its rightful place.*

We were honoured that on 22 January 2009, President Barack Obama officially acknowledged PAEP/ IYNet and its contributors' work, and has encouraged us to continue with this vital initiative.

The IYNet Project aims and objectives, and the adjunct Canadian International Youth Letters have proved to be valued as a reliable resource for open, transparent and constructive dialogue and serve as a catalyst, as well as a curriculum aid for students and teachers.

The IYNet Project is communicated and advanced through IYNet Dialogue Centres, developing ideas into constructive local IYNet initiatives through the development of regional International Youth Forums. Under the theme, *Exploring New Ways of Knowing the Sciences & Humanities - Values & Society*, topics focus on education for a sustainable future.

Regional IYNet Dialogue Centres for open, transparent and constructive dialogue are being established and advanced in collaboration with our national and international contacts, in 211 countries. Our financial target for the first framework is to raise \$5 million.

We will approach the representative Chairs of UNESCO and the Rector of the United Nations University, Professor Konrad Osterwalder, for administrative assistance in adjudicating the funds, in order to avoid misappropriations. Intent is also to give special attention to the Iraqi academia whose indigenous knowledge base has been devastated by the organized, contracted assassinations of Iraqi academics and intellectuals after the 2003 US-led occupation. It has deprived youth and future generations of their rightful tangible and intangible heritage. (Please see appended overview)

Since 2003, we have distributed your Tokyo Address, ***Globalization With a Human Face – Benefiting All***, in the format of the Canadian International Youth Letter (CIYL) to students, educators, institutions and the wider public. It is accompanied by the CIYL entitled ***Science and Civilization in Islam***, by Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who offers a timely presentation of the core spiritual and social values of authentic Islam and its enduring values for humanity: peace, compassion, social justice, and respect for the other.

The biggest challenge now facing humanity and future generations is to ensure that the direction of globalization and the advancement of science, knowledge-building and ethics becomes an insightful action: a humanistic force that can equitably provision the world's people with the ecological goods and services they need to build and maintain their societies.

Of vital importance in this process is preparing youth for the intellectual, ethical and social responsibilities needed for a deeper understanding of interconnectedness – to foster greater mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity, and safeguard indigenous biodiversity-related knowledge for achieving equitable sustainability that can ensure the quality of life and dignity of future generations.

Those of us who have experienced war and are cognizant of its devastation and consequences find ourselves deeply aggrieved and involved. We recognize that we are responsible not only for what we do but also for what we could have prevented. We have devoted our resources to this task.

With all best wishes and continued health to you and family, colleagues and friends.

Sincerely,



Hans F. Schweinsberg
President