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Speech of the representative of the INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION (IFOR), Maria Antonietta Malleo

Merci, Madame la Presidente.

Madame Directrice générale, Excellences, Distingués Délégués,

Avant tout nous souhaitons remercier Madame Irina Bokova, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO, pour avoir relancé de manière significative la promotion de culture de la paix dans tous les domaines, et l'égalité de genre comme son élément essentiel, dans le cadre d'un "nouvel humanisme", considéré comme "développement pérenne de l'humanité" et animé par un esprit de "mise en commun" et par "la force de la dynamique de l'union", selon sa belle expression¹.

Nous la remercions aussi pour l'importance donnée à la coopération avec la société civile et voulons réserver un accueil chaleureux à Madame Audrey Azoulay, en le souhaitant un'action également efficace et satisfaisant.

Since 1914 IFOR works for conflict resolution and reconciliation through active nonviolence.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (July 2017) and the last Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) are the most recent important events that show the humanity a direction in its evolution. A direction that is pushing towards a liberation from its systems of structural violence, where relations among nations, based on fear and suspicion, causes increasing investments on weapons.

To this end, besides a progressive action of disarmament, it is ever more crucial to invest in the several forms of the "peacebuilding".

In 1886 Leo Tolstoy answered the always live question *What Is To Be Done?*, hoping for a moral and spiritual rebirth of the West as well of the East through the path of nonviolence.

In 1909 Gandhi will develop this vision with the "constructive project", 11 principles that include nonviolence education for children, voluntary simplicity, gender equality, economic equality. A vision that at UNESCO we recognize (opposed to the model of "development without progress" (Pasolini) still dominant under the flag of modernisation), that tell us of the future of Nonviolence, of Nonviolence as the future.

¹ Irina Bokova, *Un nouvel humanisme pour le XXIe siècle*, UNESCO 2010, p. 7.

We identify therefore some priorities:

1) To move towards **institutionalization of peace and human rights education**. Many organizations of civil society, including Peace Nobel Prize Laureates, believe that the time is ripe for an agreement among Member States for the introduction of peace, nonviolence, human rights and global citizenship education contents into all levels of national curricula, in accordance with UN and UNESCO resolutions. (I mention here the UNESCO “Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy” (1995), stating that "education must develop the ability of non-violent conflict-resolution" and “incorporation into curricula at all levels of education, formal and non-formal, of lessons on peace, human rights and democracy is of crucial importance”); and the UN resolution 53/25 of 1999, that “invites Member States to take the necessary steps so that practice of non-violence and peace can be learned at all levels of their societies, including educational institutions”.)

2) **To face the cultural aspects of contemporary violence**. In the so-called mass culture we are assisting to an increasing normalization, often to an aesthetic exploitation of violence, with a visual education to the conflict and the concept of “enemy”, that targets the global imaginery of youth and children. It is urgent to start a dialogue with the involved actors, the entertainment industries f.i., in order to promote awareness and a change in this process of barbarization, where not only violence on youngsters but also violence of youngsters is becoming a social emergency.

3) **To implement knowledge-sharing on theory and practice of nonviolent conflict resolution**, including nonviolent methods of defence, and the nexus between **arts and peace**, a pionieristic field of action applied successfully especially in conflict and post-conflict situations.

4) A final point. Today observers denounce a widening international trend to the **criminalization of humanitarian action**, to the point where, in the case of migrants and refugees rescues in the Mediterranean, it come even to talk of “humanitarian crime”.

Highlighting the value of the last Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize awarded by UNESCO to SOS Méditerranée and to the Mayor of Lampedusa, we stress the need to strenght a culture of cooperation between governmental actors and civil society and to dialogue with political decisionmakers in order to deal with the flow of migrants arriving by the sea through the **creation of humanitarian corridors** and networks of relocation and integration, like in the exemplary project “Mediterranean Hope” by Comunità di Sant’Egidio and the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy. Thank you.