

# INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



organized under the auspices of the

International Federation  
for Parent Education (IFPE)

by the



Société de recherche  
en orientation humaine (SROH)



## *Building our Common Future Together: A Unique Endeavour for a Plural Society*

in  
MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA  
October 27, 28 and 29, 2003

## *Special Thanks*

*to*

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Moncef Guitouni

*Steering committee*

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*and to our key sponsors*



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## *A word from the President of the IFPE*



It is with great pleasure that the International Federation for Parent Education (IFPE) has agreed that the Société de recherche en orientation humaine, holds its International Congress entitled ***Building our Common Future Together: A Unique Endeavour for A Plural Society*** under its auspices. The outcome of these fruitful discussions have been captured in the in the Proceedings of the Congress. As President of the IFPE, I am very proud to have participated and offered, in the name of our Federation, a number of recommendations, which we hope, will address some of the parents' interrogations.

We also wish to thank the SROH and its president, Mr. Luc Dupont, for the quality of the organization and the success of this event. For more than 40 years, the IFPE's mission has been to raise awareness and to provide parents with a sense of responsibility regarding their role so that they may build a better future for the children, the adults of tomorrow.

We are deeply convinced that education goes beyond instruction and that citizenship transcends mere social functions held by individuals. A true citizen is also a true human being. He is aware of his present and he profoundly believes in the future. He builds without relent to leave in heritage a unified future within which solidarity is important, whatever the ethnic, religious or cultural belonging(s), because we now live in a global village.

We hope that the Proceedings of this Congress will inspire you, like they have inspired us, in order to implement the proposed recommendations to improve and to build together a better future.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Moncef Guitouni'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'M' and 'G'.

**Moncef Guitouni**

President of the  
International Federation for Parent Education

## *A word from the President of the SROH*



In October 2003, the Société de recherche en orientation humaine (SROH) organized an important international congress under the auspices of the International Federation for Parent Education (IFPE) on the theme: *Building our Common Future Together: A Unique Endeavor for a Plural Society*.

This three-day event, which took place in Montreal, brought together distinguished speakers, parents and participants from Canada and from 26 countries. Against the background of the changing social fabric of our societies, which are increasingly becoming plural, six themes were discussed: Health, education, social services, administration of justice, media and citizenship education. These forums gave rise to very rich exchanges which underlined, the common interests of parents and the importance of their unique role as educators, models and supporters of youth. The parents need to be empowered to play a more active role in society and their voices must be heard.

To foster this achievement of this objective, parents need support. They must have means to overcome isolation. This is important so that they acquire the conviction that they have the means to fully assume their role as citizens and to take part in the necessary dialogue, which will contribute to the advancement of our society, enriched by the growing pluralism of our population.

Prevention, education and civic engagement are at the core of our mission, and it is with great pleasure that we present these Proceedings of the Congress, which consolidate the synthesis of the discussions and recommendations of the October 2003 event.

By publishing and disseminating these proceedings we hope to bring new impetus to this important cause of building a common future through the efforts of the SROH in Canada and those of the IFPE around the world.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "P. Luc Dupont". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**P. Luc Dupont**

President

Société de recherche en orientation humaine

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# *Problems Examined during Congress*

People around the globe have evolved through the process of migration. For UNESCO, the history of humanity evolves through interactions. There are no people, no ethnic group nor race that are 'pure'. All cultures emerge from dialogue. While the Decade against racism is coming to an end, the dream of a world free of any hatred or prejudice has still not been fulfilled, although science has recently demonstrated, once again, by the mapping of the human genome, that we are all draw our roots from the same human family.

Globalization gives rise to the emergence of new social fabrics where cultures, traditions, values and religions intertwine. This process is particularly prominent in the West where the decrease in the birth rate, combined with the aging of the populations, makes the need for immigration more compelling.

In previous times, newcomers essentially coalesced with a population of European roots with a relatively high fertility rate. Over recent years, this trend has changed for countries and regions such as Canada, the United States, Europe or Australia where the populations' renewal rate has diametrically dropped. Moreover, today's immigrants are informed about the needs of the host country. They are aware that they are needed and that they represent an asset for their country of adoption.

This diversity is a genuine source of enrichment but it also renders the process of integration more complex, affecting both the host population and the immigrant population.

In view of these changes, and the evolving nature of the human and social dynamics, a new vision is required to create new bonds of solidarity among all citizens in order to avoid possible exclusions and to defuse irritants that could induce feelings of bitterness and trigger conflicts.

In this perspective, it is necessary to reinvent a social system and to define a new paradigm, which entails:

- a) New educational approaches;
- b) A renewed approach to the administration of Justice which takes into consideration the new social fabric which is emerging from globalization;
- c) Family policies which differentiate between the nuclear family and the extended family and which define the rights and the responsibilities of parents and children;
- d) Adapted social policies.

In a more and more multicultural society, it becomes necessary not only to establish common denominators between the citizens of various horizons but also to develop common future endeavours. What is the role of the parents in this process? As the primary driving force of unity and cohesion, how can we involve them? How can this new perspective be reflected in health services, education, social services, the administration of Justice and the media? How can we foster a citizenship education?

This international event was intended to provide a unique opportunity to build a common vision for the future in order to allow each and everyone to participate in the growth and the development of this society. The promise of learning to live together can be within reach if we can build upon the strength of diversity, which stimulates intelligence, consolidates belonging and enriches cultures.



# Conference Opening



**Address by the Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, Ms. Francine Sénécal**

*Seated at the head table honour from left to right, the president of the SROH, Mr. Luc Dupont, The Representative for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Honourable Jacques Saada, the President of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitoni, the Director of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Ms. Cecilia Braslavsky.*

# Conference Opening

*Guests of honour and Speakers:*

Deputy Chair of the Executive  
Committee of the City of Montreal,  
Ms. Francine Sénécal

Parliamentary Assistant for the Quebec  
Minister of International Relations,  
Member of the National Assembly,  
Yvan Bordeleau

the President of the Union nationale  
des associations familiales de France,  
Mr. Hubert Brin



*Continued:*

- Mr. Yvon Charbonneau, Member of Parliament, Canada;
- The President and Founder of Fondation Education et société, and former Prime Minister of Haiti, Mr. Jacques-Édouard Alexis;
- His Excellency the Ambassador of Senegal to Canada;
- The Deputy Director General for Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, Mr. Ibrahim Özdemir;
- The President of the Moroccan Association for the Protection of the Family and member of Parliament, Ms. Latifa Bennani Smirès;
- The Honourable Justice Charles D. Gonthier, Supreme Court of Canada;
- Member of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Toronto, Canada, Mr. Gerry Robinson;
- The President of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré.



*From left to right, the Representative for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Honourable Jacques Saada; the President of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitouni; and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of International Relations, Quebec, Mr. Yvan Bordeleau, MNA.*

## Conference Opening



Speaker : **Mr. Luc Dupont**  
 President, Société de Recherche  
 en Orientation Humaine (SROH),  
 Montréal, Canada

**Mr. Minister, Madame Minister,  
 Madame Representative for the  
 Executive Director of UNESCO,  
 Honourable Elected Members,  
 Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
 Mr. President of the IFPE,  
 distinguished visitors from abroad  
 and around the country,  
 Ladies and Gentlemen.**

The Société de recherche en Orientation Humaine is proud and honoured to organize this international congress under the theme *“Building our Common Future Together: A unique Endeavor for a Plural Society”*.

Your presence among us is a testimony to both the importance and the urgency that we perceive in the theme, the relevance of which is brought home to us on a daily by a host of ordinary and less ordinary events, which underscore the importance of working towards the development of an inclusive society rooted in solidarity.

As the Decade Against Racism, decreed by UNESCO, comes to an end this year, new challenges arise to remind us that our work is not yet completed.

The only way that we will be able to meet the challenges of the future, including the challenge of sustainable development, will be by recognizing the common denominators that unite us and

allow us to build bridges to enhance solidarity. Such a dynamic is crucial in our plural societies and particularly between the countries of the North and of the South, whose destinies are intertwined.

Over and above their ethnic, cultural or religious origins, parents have a real interest in the future of their children. This common interest can inspire our discussions to allow us to delve into the issues of health, social services, administration of justice, education, the media and citizenship education within the context of our theme and to identify the actions that will prepare us for a better future.

The SROH is glad that this congress is taking place under the auspices of the International Federation for Parents Education, as our discussions and recommendations will not only foster the advancement of our cause in Canada but around the world as well. We hope that our discussions will illustrate how parents need to make a unique and essential contribution to meet the challenges of the future.

May we all benefit from the fruits of our deliberations so that we can all continue our mobilization, education and prevention work in our respective spheres of endeavour. ♦

## *A Word from the Honorary President of the IFPE, Mr. Jean Auba*

**Dear friends of the IFPE,**

This message fills me with emotion. Although I cannot be present in person, I join you with all my heart.

A congress of the IFPE is always of great value and this one is of particular importance. I had the privilege of participating at the last congress that was held in Montreal. It has been a rich and vivid experience, full of teachings.

It was after this event, that I was thinking how Mr Guitouni was my natural successor at the head of the IFPE. He has now been directing the

destinies of our federation for nine years. I am sure that the congress of 2003 will be as successful as the preceding one..

I have known the founding fathers of the IFPE, André Isambert and Dr. Berge very well . I was their friend and have tried to be faithful to them.

The IFPE is a remarkable association, which defends a vital cause. Across the world, thousands of men and women are working very hard to assure that they practise their role of being parents

(which is the most beautiful, the most noble of roles) in the best manner possible for the happiness of our children. The IFPE strives to unite all these energies, all this enthusiasm and all these efforts, to make them as fruitful as possible.

Many thanks to all who have helped achieve these results . Many thanks to all who will continue these efforts and to those who will pursue the objectives in the future.

***Long live the IFPE!*** ♦

## Conference Opening



Speaker : **Mr. Jacques Saada**

Member of Parliament and Deputy Whip  
for the Government of Canada,  
Representative of the Honourable Denis  
Coderre, Minister of Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

### Introduction

Thank you, Luc.

Members of Parliament are often asked to replace the Ministers for certain activities. I rarely accept, as I don't have enough time. As Deputy Whip of the Government, I have to be frequently present in the House and I will let you conjecture how much time it takes to serve as Chair of the Canada - U.S. Defence Commission.

However, I wish now to extend a warm welcome to one and all at this international conference.

I am delighted to see so many different people from such a variety of backgrounds gathered here to discuss the theme of how we can collectively build the future. Aside from the great respect that I have for the work of Minister Coderre and the longstanding friendship that unites us, I must admit that the theme of immigration is very dear to me. As a native of Tunisia, who came to Canada in 1969, who now sits in the House of Commons in Ottawa, it is with great affection for Canada that I have accepted to speak to you today. I am also inspired by the pride that this country inspires in me. Finally, it provides me the opportunity to speak to you about my own considerable challenges arising from my experience as an immigrant. I am personally proud of my work that culminated in the official declaration of the City of Brossard, designating it as a "multicultural city." This dates back to 1988, long before I was elected to Parliament.

Like many of the newcomers we welcome to Canada every year, some of you have traveled great distances to be here. A very special welcome to you. I certainly hope that we can help each other to promote more inclusiveness and pluralism in our respective countries.

Canada's experience with immigration as well as with diversity and inclusiveness is unique. Embracing immigration and celebrating diversity in one form or another have always been core to our identity as a nation, and vital to our future prosperity, cohesiveness and growth. Respect, belonging, compassion and peace are key values today that help define what it means to be Canadian. So is justice and treating one another with dignity. In Canada we *all* belong. There are as many approaches to immigrants' integration as there are countries of immigration. In our case, we decidedly promote multiculturalism. I sincerely, I fundamentally believe that the history, culture and traditions of our immigrants are not liabilities. They are assets. We believe that valuing our past is opening the door to the fulfillment of our dreams. I believe that Canada is a microcosm of globalization. It must succeed, if globalization is to succeed.

I therefore want to spend some time with you this morning talking about immigration in general. I'd also like to talk about our integration programs, in

particular, as well as our efforts to promote pluralism and inclusiveness while fostering social cohesion. The model is singular to our history and environment. It can't simply be transported somewhere else and expected to work in the same way. But I think it is important to learn from each other and maintain an ongoing dialogue about our experiences in order to continue moving forward.

### An Era of Migrations

Today we live in an epoch of migration. The International Organization for Migration has estimated that there are 175 million migrants throughout the planet, which represents a total of 2.9% of the world's population. This means that 1 person out of 35 is a migrant. It is true that throughout history, people have sought to achieve or reach destinations offering them a better quality of life or a place which offers them greater security, whence the expression "no one is a prophet in his own land." However, the proportion of migrants has never been as high nor have migrants ever enjoyed the means of transportation that are available today and that give them access to the most remote lands.

The diversity of planetary migratory patterns is an undeniable fact. Migration is no longer westward in direction—from Europe to the Americas. Many people from different cultural backgrounds, with different religious beliefs and who have a wide array of knowledge and skills, travel from place to place on the planet.

We must all together find new approaches to the management of international migrations and innovative ways to help newcomers adapt to our respective countries without, however, forcing them to abandon their own cultures, customs, and traditions.

We must also develop mechanisms or policies that will help and encourage them to participate as full citizens in our societies and national development. This is certainly a definition that we can accept when we refer to the development of pluralistic and inclusive societies. I emphasize these two words: "pluralistic" and "inclusive." They are both weighty words in terms of the commitments they represent. Much more than a mere question of management, it is also a question of vision.

Immigration, Source of Development

Canada is a country that has largely been developed through immigration. Canada has one of the highest levels of immigration in the world. Close to 17% of the population were born in a different country, and 30% are the offspring of immigrants, who are of neither British nor French origin. (At the present time, there are federal 43 MPs who were born outside Canada.)

Pier 21 in Halifax is Canada's equivalent of Ellis Island in New York. In 1999, I had the opportunity to visit Pier 21 and was extremely moved by the experience.

While most newcomers have traditionally come from Europe, the number of people with African, Asian or other non-European ancestry is constantly increasing, and now stands at about ten percent.

In addition to welcoming family class and economic immigrants, Canada today also maintains a strong humanitarian tradition of providing assistance to refugees in need.

Since 1990, Canada has welcomed more than 200,000 newcomers annually—with China, India, Pakistan and the Philippines now representing our chief source countries.

Immigration will be vital to maintaining Canada's growing diversity and capacity to innovate in the years ahead. Immigration is absolutely fundamental to Canada's sustainability.

But the wide range of backgrounds, skills, cultures, interests, languages, religions, myths and general narratives that each group brings to Canada today presents policy makers with a new set of challenges.

How for example do we promote social cohesion and the feeling of national identity? How can we do this in a way that favours inclusion and equality?

Effective Immigration Programs

In Canada, the key to success has not changed: national integration programs combined with a solid judicial framework. Integration promotes the establishment of bonds of trust that allow Canadians to work collectively together and to peacefully resolve their differences.

Canadian integration policies foster the development of mutual respect among immigrants, refugees and native-born Canadians. In many ways, integration is the very basis of our social cohesion.

The model is fundamentally based on a continuum that leads to naturalization after a relatively short period of time. It is a two-way adaptation process that allows us to accept immigrants into society and to ensure that they fully participate in all facets of our social, economic, political and cultural life.

Canada's Host program perhaps best exemplifies the two-way exchange to build respect and trust that is at the core of integration.

Support for young newcomers is also an increasingly important part of the integration continuum and essential to our future as a country. One way Canada has begun to address the needs of young immigrants is by providing settlement advocates in schools to help their families settle. Our main approach to addressing the needs of young newcomers is by working with the family as a whole.

The *Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program*, for example, is aimed at helping new immigrants settle and adapt in society. It provides reception, information, translation and community orientation services—which usually prove to be extremely helpful for newcomers.

Language can also act as a barrier that prevents the full integration and participation of many immigrants in Canada, which is why we provide basic English and French courses as part of Canada's *Language Learning Program for Immigrants*. By also providing advanced language courses, we recognize that many qualified immigrants in Canada also need to master their second language at a higher level in order to be successful in the labour market.

Appropriate Employment

It goes without saying that one of the more courteous and dignified ways of accepting immigrants is to provide them with the opportunity to exercise employment that corresponds to their level of education and experience. This is a question of basic cooperation that we

must all seek to resolve.

Experience proves that we have to involve all levels of government, both federal and provincial, non-governmental organizations, employers, professional associations and communities.

For example, last year Minister Coderre organized the first meeting in more than a hundred years of all the Federal and Provincial Ministers responsible for immigration, solely for this purpose. We also invited employees and professional associations as part of programs such as *The Provincial Nominee Program* and the *Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council*.

Community Infrastructures

We also realize that communities need to be able to set up appropriate infrastructure in order to accommodate newly arrived immigrants, who will be more inclined to stay in communities that meet their social, educational and cultural needs.

Many immigrants see a considerable advantage in being able to take language courses or acquiring new skills, which are important factors in their choice of a community. They also have aspirations for culturally appropriate social services, which are enhanced if they have access to a solid community-based network of contacts.

It is important for immigrants to be able to benefit from leisure activities, which enable them to give expression to their cultural uniqueness; cultural differences should be taken into account when planning for policy.

Most newcomers also consider that it is important to have access to quality services, as well as affordably priced housing.

Governments, along with other stakeholders, must assess the needs of new immigrants as well the impact on local infrastructures. They must ensure that suitable settlement services are readily available. Communities must know who will be arriving and when. They must also know how to prepare their communities to be able to provide the services that are indispensable for newcomers. ♦

## Conference Opening



Speaker :

**Ms. Cécilia Braslavsky**

Director, International  
Bureau of Education,  
UNESCO, Switzerland

**Mr. President of the Société de recherche en orientation humaine, Honourable Members of Parliament and elected officials, Madame Vice-President of the City, Mr. President of the International Federation for Parents Education, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Please allow me to begin by extending to you the most cordial greetings from Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, the Executive Director of UNESCO. As you are well aware, our Executive Director considers the theme under discussion to be of the highest priority: coexistence in an increasingly mobile and inter-connected world, co-existence, which is threatened by a concomitant increase in xenophobia, isolationism and cultural impoverishment.

The world that we presently inhabit was built at both the institutional and the symbolic levels in the aftermath of the Second World War, and in accordance with the organizational principles and political systems for social life that had evolved over the course of the previous two centuries. This is the world of nation-states, which are organized on the model of expert systems for the nationwide delivery of major services such as education, justice, health and social security, which in turn are designed to reinforce the very concept of statehood. This concept derives from a symbolic invention, according to which every nation represents a relatively closed and homogenous unit, characterized by the dominance of religion, of one or perhaps a few national languages, and of a relatively limited cultural landscape. Beyond this backdrop, the world in which we live is defined by the existence of political and social contracts, which in many nation-states are the guarantee of citizenship for members from other "Nations," who bring into such states new languages, cultures and religions.

However these institutional and symbolic constructions are nearing their end. International mobility, both real and virtual, has far surpassed known limits. Expectations in terms of integration—or non-integration — of nomadic populations into a host or a transition country

have evolved, as have the abilities and capacities for social insertion, considering the structures in which such populations and their children live.

More than 175 million people traverse the planet both from North to South as well as from South to North, East to West or West to East. In another twenty years, this figure will double. I am not so sure that it will be the same type of migrating populations, as it has been for the past few decades. Among this vast number of peoples, there are those who do not want to "integrate" into the countries where they live and work. Others, however, do. But as was indicated in the Notice of Congress, these people play a crucial role, which is just as important for the economy of the country for which they produce as the role of native-born members of the country. Aside from these considerations, these modern nomadic populations also make an important economic contribution to the economic growth of their countries of origin, to which they transfer more than 100 million dollars on an annual basis. Furthermore, millions of these people were trained in their native countries, a fact that represents a significant transfer of added value to the economies of the host countries where they work. Thus, the movements of such populations in terms of their economic, social and cultural contributions have gained a significant new importance.

But the most important change is the fact that the concepts and the institutions that have traditionally been used to "govern" the movements of peoples are no longer adequate to deal with the new situation.

Ladies and gentlemen, fathers and mothers, educators, Ministers and former ministers assembled here today;

New information and communication technologies have enabled modern migrant workers to stay in close and frequent contact with their families and friends, wherever they may be. This was far from the case in the time that our grandfathers and grandmothers were immigrants. The speed and the cost of transportation now make it possible for them to more easily return to their

country of origin and to travel back and forth between different regions of the world. This changes everything. I still remember my two immigrant grandmothers. The challenge they had to face was integrate or perish. Today, a large proportion of modern nomad populations can aspire to coexist and live.

Host countries are under enormous pressure to reduce the role of government, i.e. of public services. This was not the case in the time of our grandparents, who contributed to the construction of the new nation-states. At that time, all the newly emerging schools of political thought advocated the increase of government intervention as a way of responding to the increasing social needs of their populations.

How can individual nations respond to the new challenges, which are no longer limited to a single state, but which, for perhaps the first time in history, now concern the whole world? How do we explain to our children in Canada or in

Switzerland that, without immigrants, whether permanent or landed, there may be no one left to provide the care which is so much needed in our hospitals? How do we explain that both the U.S. and France may be required to increase the age of mandatory retirement to 70 if there is no increase in the size of the active population and if the only alternative remaining for the increase of the population is immigration? How do we ensure the reign of justice when, for some groups, the ethnically correct policies of individual states does not correspond to their judicially correct policies and their desires do not correspond to the opportunities that are available?

Likewise, how do we explain that the increase in mobility is essential to the improvement of our quality of life when, in the short term, we see in many countries that act as hosts to temporary or landed immigrants an increase in unemployment, the fear of diversity and the absence of hope?

UNESCO does not have the answers to all of these questions. It fosters values based on integration and diversity in solidarity. It draws lessons from the past in order to understand the richness that comes from accepting what diversity represents in the world. It is also cautious about the risks that are inherent in disrespectful and intolerant globalization, which fans the flames of hatred, racism and xenophobia. It seeks to enrich its work by the diversity of world experience and by specialized research. It asks serious questions, such as how to harmonize integration and intercultural experience and how to develop—if need be—global citizenship. This is why we are here with you today. In order to learn from each other how “together we can build the future of our societies in a world of pluralisms” and then share with others what we have learned here. ♦



*From left to right, the Executive Director for International Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Research, Romania, Ms. Elena Zamphir; Parliamentary Assistant for the Quebec Minister of International Relations, member of the National Assembly, Yvan Bordeleau; the president of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitouni; Director of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Ms Cécilia Braslavsky; Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, Ms. Francine Sénécal and the president of the SROH, Mr. Luc Dupont.*

## Conference Opening



Speaker : **M. Moncef Guitouni**

President of the International Federation for Parents Education (IFPE)

-Mr. Jacques Saada, Member of Parliament and Deputy Whip for the Government of Canada, representative of the Honourable Denis Coderre, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada ;

-Mr. Ybrahim Özdemir, Deputy Director General for Foreign Affairs, representative of Mr. Huseyin Çelik, Minister of National Education, Turkey;

-Ms. Gordana Matkovic, Minister of Social Affairs Serbia;

-Mr. Jacques Édouard Alexis, former Prime Minister of Haiti and President of the Fondation Éducation et société ;

-Ms. Cecilia Braslavsky, Director, International Bureau of Education and representative of UNESCO;

-Ms. Francine Sénécal, Vice-Presidente of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal and representative of the Mayor of Montreal, Mr. Gérald Tremblay;

-Mr. Luc Dupont, President of SROH,

-Mr. Ambassadors,

-Honourable Consuls,

-Guests of honour,

-Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the International Federation for Parents Education, it is my honour and privilege to welcome you to Montreal. On your behalf as well as in my own name, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Government of Canada, and particularly to the Honourable Denis Coderre, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who has accepted to Chair the opening session of our congress.

I also wish to express to all the Ministers who are here present how delighted we are to count them among our numbers as we discuss such an important theme. To all those who are attending this congress, and especially to those who have travelled so far, from across both the Atlantic and the Pacific, to all our Canadian guests, from Quebec and from all the other provinces, we express our sincere thanks. We are most grateful that you are here with us, as we continue the efforts and the commitments we made a few years ago in Morocco at the XIX<sup>th</sup> congress of the IFPE, which was organized under the theme *Globalization and migration: An uprooted youth*.

The concern with migrant youth, especially those of the second and the third generations, has inspired the theme of this congress and has provided us not only with food for thought, but has also inspired us to work at shedding light on the necessity of establishing parameters that will provide immigrant and indigenous populations with the possibility of uniting and developing together a common social project. A project, by which we cease to consider that those who are born in this country have rights, whereas as those who are born elsewhere are unwelcome. No country can develop in any sustainable fashion without all of its population progressing in the same direction. Economic progress, however essential it may be, must never usurp the primacy of social progress.

What is the value of economic performance if it is achieved to the detriment of men and women and their happiness? What is a society worth if it is at the height of its economic prowess and wealth, but its family units are in

disarray, its youth dissipated, its culture a cause of shame and its values reduced to the value of the dollar? Can such a society restore the solidarity of its members, strengthen its family structures, avoid deterioration of good conduct, and resist violence, drugs, alcoholism and crime? And how much more are youth from cultural communities subject to incomprehension, injustice and even racism because they do not conform to the social and legal rules of the host country?

Immigration is often seen and analyzed merely from an economic or sociological perspective. The psychosocial dimension as well as the emotions and feelings experienced by youth as the result of leaving family or friends are often ignored. These young people come to the host country with all this emotional baggage. Even if they are born in this country, they see themselves as foreigners, because even when they try to integrate or adapt, they are still considered to be non-integrated newcomers. It must not be forgotten that a family that moves to a new region or to a new country does so in the hope of freeing itself from specific economic or social difficulties and of improving its quality of life. Other immigrants arrive with a deeply rooted idea that they can make a positive contribution to the evolution and development of the host country. What then happens to their children who continue to be seen as foreigners? Are they the sons and daughters of the country or are they the eternal newcomers?

Moreover, if the host society does not take precautions, children of immigrant families will continue to encounter difficulties with stability, the pre-established social justice system and a certain ignorance of the sensitivities and subtleties specific to their culture of origin and interpersonal relationships. Thus those whose identity, culture, morality, habits and customs are different from those of the host populations risk being marginalized, excluded, misjudged or forced to give up their identity for the sake of integration or, should we say, submission.

In a homogenous society that does not require immigration for its survival, we can more readily understand such attitudes or reactions. But when the society into which these immigrants have chosen to integrate and settle tells them that they are full-fledged citizens and are entitled to equality, we must wonder why this same society behaves as if such people were unwelcome. Moreover, the young people who are born in the host country will quickly be able to compare what they see in society and what they experience in their own family. They will experience situations of injustice, racism or humiliation, not because the structures are lacking, but because attitudes have not changed or evolved and that rules have not been developed or adapted to the new realities.

Let us look, for example, at the laws that govern the family. Have these laws been brought up to date or renewed in order to take into consideration the new generation of young people that come from a multitude of cultures and religions? I don't believe so. And schools? Even though schools have successfully challenged the stereotypical images of men and women, what have they proposed in their curricula for a multicultural society, which includes all citizens, a society in which all ethnic groups and all religions are entitled to live in harmony? Have we adapted our social services to take into account the fact that many families are against the type of promiscuity that is tolerated in so-called progressive and developed societies? These are a few examples I leave you to think about.

Uniting people, creating solidarity, establishing laws and regulations that enable all to feel equal requires a new approach to reinvent society. The economic development, consumerism, or productivity models are no longer sufficient; what is required is a model that expedites the creation of a human society in which men and women feel they are entitled to live within their chosen territory, be it American, European or Australian. I must add that the developed countries have a greater moral duty because of their history of exploitation, colonization and extortion of the natural resources belonging to developing countries. The countries that have thus enriched themselves have become a point of attraction for those

populations that are seeking a better quality of life.

Several regions of the world represent a source of wealth creation for developed countries, because they can provide an abundant and inexpensive labour force of people who work in submission and at any price. But this will come to an end with their own generation. Their children do not see this in the same light. You simply have to consult the statistics about young Arab youth in France, Holland, England and elsewhere in order to grasp the urgency of the situation.

Immigration is required to compensate for the demographic deficit in host countries. Immigrants understand the importance of their position. Are we going to wait for the upheavals, frustrations, rebellions and other serious social conflicts as in the case of the United States, where the black problem has never really been settled, not to mention the problems of the indigenous peoples? The time has come, and this is our plea to all the representatives and authorities of the countries present here, to identify the solutions that will allow us to truly become the spokespersons of this beautiful theme "*Building together the future of our societies in a plural world.*"

This is a progressive project that is extremely relevant, because immigration has been transformed. We no longer have the same perceptions of the immigrant nor is the submission the same. If immigrating persons have themselves changed, what will the second and third generations be like? I am not saying that we will have to adapt to become more like them, but rather that we will all have to adapt together in order to develop a new social project based on human values for the benefit of a future in which all may live and feel that they are making a contribution to the betterment of society.

It was 30 years ago that Denis de Rougemont stated: "*Recreating a community in which man can regain the civic dimension, without which he is not truly a person, is the crucial challenge of our time.*" It is important, even urgent, for our society to stop looking at human beings as objects that can be bought, sold and exploited, in other words, as those who consume or are consumed.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Together, we must begin to write the first pages of a life of unity and solidarity that transcends ethnicity and religion. It is time to focus on respecting in all people their rights, quality of life, freedom of expression and entitlement to a healthy and equitable life.

The IFPE has as its main objective to defend and assist parents; to defend them against injustice and to assist them so that they can responsibly assume their roles as parents. But the Federation cannot do this without your support and help. Your attendance at this congress is a testimony to the concerns of your organizations and even, I dare say, of your governments to build and develop this social project.

In all countries, there are writings that bestow equality and rights on the person, but in actuality, there is a large gap between the theory and the reality; there is a high level of hypocrisy. How many people have been unjustly treated for the sake of some form of social justice that is interpreted and enforced by people who are intolerant of others and who are unwilling to change their conservative ideas or their racist and xenophobic opinions?

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all have an important role to play. Today we are issuing a cry of alarm, but it is not a pessimistic cry. It is rather a cry that is meant to awaken consciences, before we find ourselves overtaken by events that may overwhelm us. All societies that are complacent about their security become conservative. Likewise, all societies that are insecure or frustrated end up by becoming revolutionary and violent. This has countless times been proven by history. Despite our technological progress, human beings are still human beings. We must cease humiliating them and subjecting them to submission. Let us offer them the possibility of being respected, without indulging them in too much freedom, lest they become arrogant, scornful or end up by becoming aggressive towards others.

To all, a most fruitful congress! ♦

## Conference Opening



Speaker :

**Mr. Ibrahim Özdemir**

Deputy Director General,  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of National Education,  
Ankara, Turkey

### Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for such a kind welcome and warm reception. It is a great privilege and honor to be invited here and talk to you.

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. P. Luc Dupont, the President of the Organizing Committee, who made this presentation possible. Let me remind you a proverb from my culture: "What comes from the lips reaches the ears. What comes from the heart reaches the heart." So, what follows flows from my heart regarding the theme of this conference.

Let me tell you a story about the language of diversity and the wisdom to master this language for co-existence and living together. Rumi, 13th century Sufi poet, the most loved and read poet in Anatolia, tells us the following story:

Four persons, a Persian, an Arab, a Turk, and a Greek, were traveling together, and they received a present of a dirhem [coin]. The Persian said he would buy "angur" with it, the Arab said he would buy "inab", while the Turk and the Greek were for buying "uzum" and "astaphil", respectively. Now all these words mean one and the same thing - "grapes" - but owing to their ignorance of each other's languages, they fancied they each wanted to buy something different, and accordingly a violent quarrel arose between them. At last a wise man who knew all their languages came up and explained to them that they were all wishing for one and the same thing.

So, it is up to us to teach the language of co-existence in the multicultural world of today. I will focus on diversity and underline that accommodating and maintaining that diversity is necessary for our common future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe wholeheartedly that the links among diverse cultures in general and Islam and West in particular matter more today than ever before. The depressing fact, however, is that, despite the advances in technology and mass

communication of the second half of the 20th century, despite mass travel, the intermingling of races, the ever-growing reduction - or so we believe - of the mysteries of our world, misunderstandings, prejudices, and stereotypes among members of different faiths and cultures still endure.

Therefore, the need for building our common future in our increasingly interdependent world has never been greater. To respond this challenge, we have to learn the language of diversity and celebrate diversity.

This reveals both challenges and also opportunities for us. We can turn these challenges to new opportunities and hopes for humanity, if we can deal with the new phenomenon of diversity and multiculturalism with a creative mind. Then, I do hope that the new century will be the perfect time and place to live.

Victor Hugo, the French poet, novelist, and dramatist of the 19th century once said "Nothing in this world is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." I think it is the right time to talk about diversity, pluralism, dialogue, and intercultural education in a global world.

In passed February, I attended the meeting of The Committee of Ministers of Council of Europe. The topic was cultural diversity and the future of European Union. We emphasized that modern democratic states have a new challenge: the development of policies for assuring the recognition and expression of forms of cultural diversity coexisting within their jurisdictions. We agreed on the following principles:

- Cultural diversity is expressed in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products;
- Cultural diversity cannot be expressed without the conditions for free creative expression, and freedom of information existing in all forms of cultural exchange, notably with respect to audiovisual services;

- Sustainable development as defined in relation to cultural diversity, assumes that technological and other developments, which occur to meet the needs of the present, will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs with respect to the production, provision and exchange of culturally diverse services, products and practices.

As you know, culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. According to UNESCO, cultural diversity, as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.” Therefore,

“in our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.”

Furthermore, cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

Therefore, I do believe that the Intercultural education and maintenance of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental

freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples.

Let me give some examples from my own culture regarding cultural diversity and co-existence in peace. As you know, Turkey has a very central geography that bridges East and West, North and South, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. This unique geographical position implies rich biodiversity, sensitive ecological habitats and a wealth of cultural and historical resources.

Diversity as an asset is reflected in works of Muslim philosophers, scholars, and poets and shaped the vision of Turks for centuries. Yunus Emre, a Turkish Sufi poet of the thirteenth century Anatolia, celebrated the diversity and pluralism as follows: "We love all creation for the sake of its Creator"!

The great Sufi Master Rumi delivered to us this inspiring message of tolerance:

"O Muslims, you are asking me who I am ... I am part from here and part from everywhere ...I am half of pearls and half from remote shores..."

This poem, I think, reflects the current multicultural and diverse face of our modern cities, i.e., Montreal, New York, Istanbul, L.A., Cairo, etc. People from different cultural, economic, social and traditional backgrounds trying to live cheek-to-jowl. When they come, they also bring their cultural richness. So, it is a challenge to learn this multicultural phenomenon and then accommodate it. Cultural diversity, therefore, is important and vital as bio-diversity in natural world.

Ladies and gentlemen

Today, we live in one world, forged by instant communications, by television, by the exchange of information on a scale undreamed of by our grandparents. The world economy functions as an inter-dependent entity. Problems of society, the quality of life and the environment, are global in their causes and effects, and none of us any longer has the luxury of being able to solve them on our own. I will like to suggest

that any dialogue should be problem solving and therefore practical. I do not think we have luxury of indulging into theological and historical debates and controversies regarding our differences. However, we can work together hand-in-hand and shoulder to shoulder to solve specific problems, which are on our way of building our common future. For example, we can work together to eliminate, at least minimize the poverty, drug addiction, violence of any kind, illiteracy, ecological problems, hatred, etc. Then, we can discover and appreciate the richness and potentialities our diversity offers to us to overcome these problems.

Of course, these problems vary in nature and intensity between societies. I am not saying that the problems of New York, London, or Paris are identical to those of Istanbul, Cairo or Jakarta. But the similarity of human experience is considerable. We have to address these global threats and problems together.

When we look at as great empires of the past, we see that they found someway of accommodating diversity and pouring the energies of diversity for development and strength of their empire. When they fail to address and accommodate diverse and multicultural structure of their societies, they fall apart. Rome and Ottoman Empires are only two examples.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to educate our children - a new generation, whose attitudes and cultural outlook may be different from ours - so that they can understand too. We have to show trust, mutual respect and tolerance, if we are to find the common ground between us and work together to find solutions. To achieve this, we have been re-writing our text books and eliminating and erasing misunderstanding and prejudices from them. Turkey is an active member of Council of Europe to implement Intercultural Education Project, which is developed and implemented right after tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001.

The main goal of this program is to develop a new program for inter-religious/intercultural education, which is aimed at the preparation of all citizens

for participation in a democratic, multicultural society. It is based on a philosophy which is rooted in the ideals of democracy.

We believe that fostering the transition from totalitarianism to democracy and from centrally planned to market-driven economies are essential for mitigating conflict and preventing its recurrence. Let me remind you that the 20th century witnessed the tide of totalitarian ideologies, which tried to create monolithic and one-dimensional societies. These ideologies, which lay beneath the rubble of Berlin Wall, only increased the suffering of human-beings. I think, we should not forget this experience, when dealing with diversity. This also explains why intercultural education is an "education for democracy". And it deals both with issues of diversity and with issues of inequality.

Moreover, it also underlines the major idea of this conference: "Building our Common Future Together". When read the title of conference, I am excited. Yes, I do agree we should not leave our common future to some political leaders. We should engage to the process and take our own responsibilities to address it. Therefore, parents and NGOs will play a vital and constructive role when we try to build our future.

And that brings us to the role of education. We know that

"pluralism implies that people have learned to look at the world from different perspectives that they have learned to accept other cultures, other languages and other beliefs, and to respect the right to be different, that they have learned to communicate with "the other", which includes the obligation to take each other seriously. What we see nowadays is that cultural, ethnic, social diversity still is a phenomenon which causes problems for many people because they never learned to accept and to value diversity".

Therefore, to build and maintain a multicultural society we need:

- communication;
- cooperation;
- open minds, awareness of the effects of prejudice and self-fulfilling and
- mutual respect.

In this context, I am utterly convinced that the Islamic world, in particular Turkey and the Western world have much to learn from each other. These two worlds are at something of a crossroads in their relations. We must not let them stand apart. I am utterly convinced that our two worlds have much to offer each other. We have much to do together. I am delighted that the dialogue has begun, here and elsewhere. But we shall need to work harder to understand each other, to drain out any poison between us, and to lay the ghost of suspicion and fear.

In today's global world where the lines between East and West, between "us" and "them", and among Jews, Christians, Muslims and members of other faiths are no longer clearly defined thanks to the development of mass communications and global mobility, the need to engage in dialogue - with other cultures, with other people, and with other religions - is even more urgent than in the past if peaceful co-existence and dialogue are to prevail over confrontation and conflict. As you know, cultural, social and economic issues are becoming increasingly important in international relations. Turkey, with her rich cultural heritage and potential, is prepared to play its role in the exciting journey that humanity will embark upon in the new millennium.

Let me summarize what we have been undertaking in my country to respond new challenges.

First, we are decentralizing the old structure of ministry of education, which has 18 million students and almost one million teacher. All is connected to the ministry. We are giving more responsibilities and space to local and NGOs to be a part in education.

Especially we are encouraging parents to engage in the process in creative and meaningful way.

Second, we have been re-viewing and scanning all text-books and updating them to meet new challenges. In this process, we are eliminating any information which is not in accord with a sense of plurality and accommodate diversity. For example, we take a very important step to overcome the existing reservations, prejudices and animosities between Christianity and Islam in Turkey. First, we analyzed the textbooks in regard to Christianity and then improved these text books with cooperation of World Conference on Religion and Peace. Therefore, we consider this project as a very important example in practice for the inter-religious dialogue that we need nowadays more than ever.

Third, as a candidate for EU we are updating our curricula to the standards of EU regarding education. As a result, we include chapters on democratic values, democratic citizenship, human rights, and intercultural dialogue to our curriculum.

Fourth, we are training our teachers with cooperation

To sum up, it seems that the world of the 21st Century will be quite another world than we have lived in so far. Now, we have to understand the new challenges, problems and find new answers. We do need imagination and we will even more so need tolerance vis-a-vis other civilizations than our own.

Thank you very much for your attention and patience. I expect you all in Turkey to discover this wonderful country, which is an open museum of civilizations. You will enrich your experience and spirit with the wisdom of all these civilizations and Turkish people.



# Health Forum



*The Health Forum was chaired by*

Mr. Jacques Rhéaume, Director of the Research and Development Centre of the Côte des Neiges CLSC in Montreal,

*the speakers were*

the President of the Union nationale des associations familiales de France, Mr. Hubert Brin

and President of the Moroccan Association for the Protection of the Family and member of the Parliament, Ms. Latifa Bennani Smirès.



## *Synthesis of the Health Forum*



**Dr. Yves Brissette**

Secretary General,  
Société de recherche en orientation  
humaine (SROH),  
Rapporteur

*The Health Forum was chaired by Mr Jacques Rhéaume, Director of research and development centre of the Côte des Neiges CLSC in Montreal. Distinguished speakers were Mr. Hubert Brin, President of the Union nationale des associations familiales de France and Ms. Latifa Bennani-Smirès, Member of Parliament and President of the Association for the Protection of the Moroccan Family.*

The goal of this forum was to examine the following questions:

**How can we strengthen the capacity for scientific intervention in the health care system through increased knowledge of the beliefs and social and cultural values of patients?**

**How can we ensure parent involvement?**

**How do we develop prevention approaches that reflect the pluralism of patients?**

### **Conferences**

First and foremost, the Chair opened the debate by giving a brief description of the research work that he currently directs on the pluralistic practice of inclusive citizenship in the framework of health and social services. He referred to the subtle forms of exclusion associated with the cultural values underlying the supposedly neutral science of medicine. Mr. Rhéaume specifically raised the question of how to reconcile the concept of universal health care programs and cultural and multi-ethnic diversity.

Based on his wide experience as a family activist and in reference to the republican ethic of assimilation, which is characteristic of French society, Mr. Brin summarized his thinking on five basic questions:

- How to take into account the historical relationships between the host country and the country of origin;
- How to reject stereotypical clichés and politically correct attitudes;
- How to objectively analyze what is specific to culture and what is independent of culture;
- What specific consideration should be given to the position of children in the relationships between health care providers and beneficiaries;
- How public discourse should distinguish between what is specific to culture and what is inherent in parental responsibility.

In conclusion, he pointed out that public discourse should always look for the meaning of man. In terms of public health, Mr. Brin emphasized the importance of distinguishing the cultural from the political.

Ms. Bennani-Smirès presented her thoughts in a framework that identifies three dimensions of health: physical, mental and moral health. She clearly pointed out the necessity of taking into account cultural distinctions in health care delivery systems, with an emphasis on the psychosomatic dimension. In reference to Moroccan experience, Ms. Bennani-Smirès described the internal migration process from the countryside towards urban centres, which presents quite specific challenges with respect to integration. Basing her analysis on a macroeconomic context, she drew particular attention to the imbalanced exchanges that exist.

The Chair opened the floor to the participants by asking the following question: are cultural—ethnic differences similar in nature to the oppositions that exist between parent-child and city-country?



## The Debate

The president of the IFPE drew the participants' attention to several notions, including the concepts of parental stress, the emotional influence of the mother on the child and the idea of emotional muteness linked to anxiety. During the debate, he raised the idea of a social contract to be signed by candidates for immigration, which would include, among other things, a commitment to learn the language of the host country. Mr. Guitouni also recommended that preventative education against racism and xenophobia be directed mainly at parents rather than at children and that schools be provided with the resources required to ensure that young immigrant children will be spared the psychological distress associated with solitude.

Given the imperatives of public health that preclude any challenge to the fundamental policies in this area, the president of the Constitutionnal Council of Burkina Faso invited the participants to reflect on what might induce people to submit to such imperatives, without having to have recourse to the coercion of the law. He also emphasized the importance of the International Congress on Migrant Workers of the World Labour Organization, as well as the urgency of implementing the Congress with regard to information about the host country before the emigration of workers.

### Numerous other participants also made proposals, such as:

- The valuable work of cultural interpreters in consultations involving newborns in immigrant families, especially in the area of taboos;
- The involvement of both beneficiaries and communities in public health decision making, particularly at the local and municipal levels;

- The presence of case managers in the school system to promote better understanding between parents from various cultures; the same role can be carried out at the neighbourhood level in countries that do not have an abundance of resources.
- Promote human skills and vision, independently of cultural origin;
- Encourage community action in the fight against poverty.

Mr. Brin raised the question of whether or not culture has primacy over life in public health questions. He underlined the trend to see only dysfunctions, where in reality, the vast majority of newcomers do not have problems. He also stated emphatically that children should not be used as mediators between adults and institutional authorities. Mr. Brin also raised the sensitive question of universal health care programs, especially with regards to coverage to be provided for illegal immigrants. Based on his extensive experience with families in France, he pointed out the value of mutual help, listening and parental hosting networks, which he would like to see increase in importance, and made available to families, regardless of their place of origin.

Ms. Bennani-Smirès provided a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic conditions that condition the so-called freedom of choice to emigrate. She deplored the fact that there was no follow-up to the World Summit for the Fight against Poverty and pleaded for further pressure for the reform of international law. In such conditions, and from an ethical perspective, Ms. Bennani-Smirès challenged the policies of wealthy countries to limit their intake of immigrants. The review of economic policies is an inevitable factor in the review of the root causes of poverty. ♦

## Health Forum



Speaker : **M. Hubert Brin**

President, Union nationale des associations familiales (UNAF), France

### Summary

Let me begin by saying how much I have appreciated the communications I have heard this morning, for the quality of their humanism. However, what concerns me is the amount of progress that will be needed in order to translate these ideas into reality, as such ideas should not merely be shared at the intellectual level.

*"A unique Endeavour for a plural society,"* this very title is problematic in France, because officially, the national policy focuses on integration into the Republic rather than on community development. In fact, when most people hear the word integration, they think of assimilation.

They agree to tolerate different cultures, as long as the expression of such cultures is limited to the private sphere. By way of example, I will make reference to my own field of activity, the National Union of Family Associations (NUFA). The NUFA consists of 8,000 different associations, which represent more than one million families. This association is lay and non-denominational.

In 1975, the movement requested that membership be opened up to foreign families. This allowed several existing denominational associations to join. To my regret, no Muslim cultural rather than

religious family associations was admitted.

Just as importantly, we have to reject stereotypes and political correctness. By stereotypes, I refer to the tendency to associate immigration with all of society's ills. In terms of political correctness, in order to avoid using stereotypes, we are not allowed to say that some families are dysfunctional. Furthermore, we need to proceed to an objective analysis of what specifically belongs to cultures.

In terms of integration, I wish to emphasize the importance of avoiding the political simplification of opposing children against their parents. Indeed, children must never be used as mediators between adults and institutional structures. The integration contract implies rights and duties. This is equally true in the field of health. Parents are responsible because they are confronted with a public discourse.

Yes to a culture that is not subjected to religious practice. Yes to culture, as long as it is not equated with the domination of men over women or of parents over children.

We must help the media to focus their attention on paradoxical successes. ♦

### Summary

It is impossible to adequately discuss the subject of health without first specifying the two or three levels that make up overall health, namely, physical health, mental health and moral health.

The same approach applies when comparing the so-called exact or pure sciences such as medicine and the less exact or social sciences, which are said to have greater fluctuations as they must take into account the human factor.

As we live in a society that is increasingly opened to the other, we have to take into account the specific characteristics and uniqueness of the other.

In order to enhance the capacity of pre-established systems to deliver services, we must ensure greater inclusion of the human dimension. A good example is the Jean-Talon Hospital in Montreal and its excellent initiative in creating a Department of Ethno-Psychiatry, which offers the type of interventions that should

be promoted and multiplied. In this perspective, conventional medicine is attempting to take into account the life experience and the origins of the patient. The effort to understand the religious beliefs, the social practices, and the range of cultural references of patients can in many cases be very helpful in shedding greater light on certain aspects of an illness or of physical or moral suffering. This can also greatly enhance treatment. By reaching out and attempting to recognize the patient's specificity, it is possible to provide him or her with a certain amount of psychological security, which consequently requires the patient to take an interest in and to become curious about his or her new counterpart, environment or society.

Such a mission requires innovations in the field of health, the adoption of new measures, and the ability of staff to adapt to different needs. It also requires the sharing of information with the family and the involvement of the whole health team. The role of family remains crucial throughout the entire procedure. ♦

Speaker :

**Ms. Latifa Bennani-Smirès**

Member of Parliament and  
President of the Association  
for the Protection of the  
Moroccan Family

*Social Services Forum*



*The members of the Social Services Forum were*  
Ms. Lyliane Laloum, Director of the Parent Education Department of the Municipality of Rishon le Zion, Israel;

Dr. Rae Simpson Director of the Family Resource Centre at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (and Forum Chair);

The Honourable Gordana Matkovic, Minister of Social Affairs, Serbia;

Ms. Micheline Létourneau, Psycho-Educator at the Montreal Youth Centre, who acted as rapporteur.



## *Synthesis of the Social Services Forum*

*The Social Services Forum was chaired by Ms. Rae Simpson, Director, Family Resource Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. The speakers for the forum were Ms. Lilyane Laloum and the Honourable Gordana Matkovic, respectively, Director of the Parent Education Department of the Municipality of Rishon le Zion, Israel and Minister of Social Affairs of Serbia.*



Ms. Micheline Létourneau,

Psycho-Educator at the  
Montreal Youth Centre,  
Rapporteur

The Forum focused on the following themes:

**How can we enhance support for family and youth, while taking into account new social pluralisms and promoting the emergence of shared citizenship?**

**How do we ensure parental involvement in this process?**

### **The Conferences**

The Chair of the Forum raised the question of cultural diversity in various countries and the new paradigm it has raised with respect to the attempts to understand and find new and enhanced ways of providing support for families and youth. She pointed out however how research and literature reviews performed in the United States show that families in the United States, regardless of their social or cultural origin, commonly identify five aspects of the parenting role that contribute to teenage development. The five aspects are:

- 1• Parental attachment, including support and empathy for the young person
- 2• Supervision of youth and the limits that are set
- 3• Financial security and the ability to satisfy their needs
- 4• Guidance, family values, and parental behaviour
- 5• The fact of acting as a role model, and of teaching by way of example.

The problem that was examined in the workshop was how to enhance support for families and youth, in the context of social pluralism, in order to foster the emergence of shared citizenship. Various types of intervention in varying degrees of action and decision-making were suggested in order to promote community integration.

Focusing on the Serbian context, Ms. Matkovic explained how the major social service reforms initiated in Serbia in 2001 led to the adoption of a series of measures to support the integration of groups and communities that are typically the victims of social exclusion such as the Gypsy population, the war amputees, refugees, and displaced peoples from Kosovo and Metohia (Internally Displaced Persons).

The measures are social, administrative and legal in nature and revolve mainly around:

- employment,
- social and financial support measures for the disadvantaged and for families with children,
- education programs that are adapted to the needs of the groups concerned in order to facilitate their integration into the school system,
- health improvement programs and access to medical care and prevention services,
- recognition of children's rights and measures to prevent family violence.

Ms. Laloum, for her part, described the same issue in the context of Israel. Israel first developed its immigrant accompaniment system fifty years ago. Under its program, all newcomers, regardless of age or country of origin, receive housing services, learning, language courses, a monthly allowance, technical training, and job search assistance for a period of 6 months.

Government policy defines the legislation and the benefits that are available to newcomers, while municipalities enact complementary measures. In the field of education, schools provide support structures for children, and community centres provide extracurricular activities to round off formal education and to enable integration adapted to the cultural origins of each group. Another useful measure has been the use of mediators and social caseworkers who hail from the same regions as the newcomer beneficiaries. The idea of using caseworkers from the same region as the immigrant communities has also been used in other projects, such as the Montreal project, which provides outreach work to young Jamaican families.

Due consideration must also be given to the children, who bear the burden of immigration: they are the ones who bear the brunt of the cultural shock of transition from one country to another. The Department of Parents and Families within the Ministry of Education in Israel provides support to new newcomers families and reinforcement of the parenting role, despite the new social context. It is a source of legitimacy and empowerment for them, despite the personal challenges they may face in their new communities. The family is and will continue to be a source of stability and value. In spite of the geographical shocks, it helps to develop a healthy citizenship program for the future. These measures are also inspired by the conviction that immigrant populations have an important contribution to make to the economic health of the country.

## The Debate

Several types of problems and case intervention methods were discussed during the debate. In reference to children who are victims of family violence as well as in an attempt to break the vicious circle of violence, considerable emphasis was put on the importance of intervening against the perpetrators of violence. Many of them were themselves victims of violence and abuse, which is why the problem tends to be self-perpetuating.

A Swedish intervention method, based on massage for children who are victims of violence, was described. This type of therapy has a beneficial, relaxing effect on children, just as love and security provide children with a sense of security and helps to reinforce their sense of identity. In Canada, we seek to pass legislation that punishes the minority of violent parents (3-5%), despite the impact that such legislation will have on the majority of parents, as it weakens their authority. Such legislation may also deprive parents of their responsibilities, whereas we prefer to encourage the reinforcement of parental responsibility, which we can best do by re-establishing dialogue and communication. As of early infancy, it is important to establish a humanitarian approach with children: the teaching of democracy and the right to self-expression begins in the family, through the establishment of dialogue and communication.

Reference was also made to the importance of reinventing community roles or of cultural associations. Such groups or associations can often organize activities based on the preservation of the original culture, although the danger is that sometimes they may cause the exclusion of members of the host culture. It was proposed that such associations assume a dual role, for both the promotion of the original culture and the adaptation to the new host culture, through the creation of projects that required the participation of all.

Other immigrant integration programs have proven successful in specific countries, because individuals have united behind a common objective. This is not always the case in Canada, where there is a multitude of distinct groups that sometimes pursue objectives that are at cross-purposes. In order to bring together people who come from a variety of origins, and to unite them behind a common project, the transcendence of

specific and divisive cultural goals is required. It is essential that they be able to come to a humanitarian appreciation of people that goes beyond culture.

Poverty is another important factor that increases newcomer exclusion. In regions such as Africa, it forces people to migrate in search of a better future. Due to the lack of resources, very little is done to help these people, who are then accused of being the cause of all the ills that occur in the host society.

The relevance of partnerships between governments, public institutions, private organizations and NGOs was mentioned by several speakers. Some countries, such as Romania, went through revolutions and now face new problems (street kids, drugs, family abuse) and now understand the importance of uniting the strengths of the entire community. If you succeed in uniting people and channelling their energies into a common project, you will also save precious resources.

Frequently mentioned as well was the necessity of proper training for social caseworkers, who need to have the right knowledge and skills to work with the members of cultural communities.

The following recommendations were formally made:

1. Reinforce the basic consideration that we are all human beings and need to foster, for ourselves and for our children, a solid sense of identity in order to build a society that measures up to the extent of our humanitarian ambitions
2. Encourage parents' organizations and associations to become involved in this process
3. Provide, as part of the academic and community training of social workers and psycho—educators, courses that will increase their knowledge of the cultures, mental attitudes and family concepts, particularly the concept of authority, that will permit them to have a better understanding of immigrant families.
4. Develop a university training program for facilitators of parents' groups
5. Transmit one's convictions and one's passion for school to parents ♦

*Social Services Forum*

Speaker :

**Ms. A. Rae Simpson, Ph.D**

Director, Family Resource Center,  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
USA

**Thank you, and may I join the many others who have thanked the conference organizers for creating this extraordinary opportunity to exchange ideas and build new knowledge on this critically important topic.**

**Greetings to this distinguished gathering of participants, organizers, and guests. Welcome to all of you.**

**It is a pleasure and an honor to preside at this Forum on Social Services.**

I have been asked briefly (1) to set a context for our discussion; (2) to introduce to you our two outstanding speakers; and (3) to facilitate what I hope will be ample time for discussion after their presentations.

I welcome the opportunity to do so, because I so fully support the premise of this conference: that we need to create a new paradigm for the future, one that takes into account two precious qualities of human experience—our rich diversity and our common ground. This new paradigm is created by tapping the potential of both qualities, integrating them, and creating an approach of shared vision, shared endeavors, shared citizenship. I believe our very survival as a global society depends on making this paradigm shift.

The question posed to us today by the organizers, for this particular forum, is, How can social services contribute to this effort? That is, “how can we enhance family and youth support by taking into account the pluralism of the population in policy formation and in the training of social workers and educators in order to foster the emergence of a shared citizenship?” And, in particular, how can we involve parents and parenting services in this process?

**Nothing could be more important.**

As a springboard for our discussion, I would like to share with you a piece of research that I think affirms that these are indeed the right questions, and that there is powerful potential for finding answers to them, including within the context of parents and parenting.

A few years ago I had an opportunity, with funding from the MacArthur Foundation, to conduct a project at Harvard University to pull together research on the role of parents in adolescence, that is, research on the ways in which parents and others in parenting roles influence healthy adolescent development.

There is in fact a rich literature on parenting of adolescents in the United States, on parenting practices and their correlations with positive outcomes for teenagers, including research that looks at a broad diversity of subcultures, ethnic groups, races, and communities in the U.S.

What I discovered, to my delight, is that there is indeed, as one would expect, a rich variety of approaches to parenting across subcultures in the U.S., leading to a wide range of parenting practices, beliefs, and behaviors, many of which are very successful in contributing to healthy adolescent development.

However, there are also profound similarities—commonalities—across this rich diversity of cultures, family structures, religions, socioeconomic circumstances, and other factors.

The differences are largely in strategies, practices, day-to-day decisions. For example, in some families, children are encouraged to stay in their parents' homes at least into their twenties, until they are safely situated either through marriage or financial independence, because of the value placed on "interdependence" and family support. In other families, parents become uneasy if children are not living separately by age 18 or so, and push for their living away at school or in separate households, because of the importance placed on "independence" and "autonomy" as an indication of successful childrearing.

However, underlying these differences in beliefs and situational strategies lie some profoundly important common goals and overall approaches.

With respect to goals for our children, there is a striking similarity across a broad diversity of cultures and backgrounds represented in the U.S.

Parents' goals for raising children almost invariably include:

- Survival
- Mental and physical health
- Economic self-sufficiency
- And generally: social responsibility regarding family and/or citizenship

From this common ground, a great deal of commonality also emerges with respect to parents' roles in the lives of adolescents. Analyzing over 300 research reviews representing a broad range of family cultures and circumstances, the study at Harvard found that five basic parental roles emerge as contributing to these goals. These roles are common, because they are needed to accomplish the goals we hold in common.

In a report based on the Harvard study, called *Raising Teens: A Synthesis of Research and a Foundation for Action* (Harvard School of Public Health, 2001), I refer to these common roles as the "Five Basics of Raising Teens." [Copies of the report are available at the table at the back of the room, and copies are also available on the internet at [www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/parenting](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/parenting).] The "Five Basics of Raising Teens" can be summarized as follows:

### I. Love and Connect

Teens need parents to develop and maintain a relationship with them that offers support and acceptance while accommodating and affirming the teen's increasing maturity.

### II. Monitor and Observe

Teens need parents to be aware of—and let teens know they are aware of—their activities, including school performance, work experiences, after-school activities, peer relationships, adult relationships, and recreation.

### III. Guide and Limit

Teens need parents to uphold a clear but evolving set of boundaries, one that maintains important family rules and values but also encourages increasing competence and maturity.

### IV. Model and Consult

Teens need parents to provide ongoing information and support around decision-making, values, skills, goals, and interpreting and navigating the larger world, teaching by example and ongoing dialogue.

### V. Provide and Advocate

Teens need parents to make available (although they cannot always provide it themselves) not only adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, and health care, but also a supportive home environment and a network of caring adults.

Thus some parental goals seem to be virtually universal, some parental roles therefore nearly so, while some goals, and most strategies and individual decisions, are richly diverse.

The hearts and minds of parents share so much. We all want basically the same things for our children, and most of us are willing to make great efforts on their behalf.

This common ground clearly has enormous potential for influencing policy and shaping the training of social workers and educators with the goal of shared citizenship.

Our two distinguished speakers will now share their observations and experiences with respect to tapping this potential and shaping policy and programs in the arena of social services. ♦



## Social Services Forum



Speaker :

**The Honourable**

**Gordana Matkovic**

Minister of Social Affairs,  
Serbia

The Serbian Ministry of social affairs' mandate consists to afford social assistance, child and social protection (child-parents relationship, adoption, fostering, residential care, elderly and disabled persons), pension insurance and to help war veterans.

In the republic of Serbia some groups are socially excluded, such as Roma population, refugees and persons displaced from Kosovo and Metohia (called Internally Displaced Persons-IDP). According to official statistics (census 2002), the Roma population is 108 193. This statistic is between 300 and 400 thousand, according to some non governmental organisations (NGO) sources. Indeed, the precise number of Roma is extremely difficult to estimate because some educated Roma often do not declare themselves as Roma and some Roma do not want to register, and therefore have no valid documentation (for example IDPs).

Compared to the population, where 22% are under 20 years old, 41% of Roma population are under 20 years old. The average age for Roma is 27.5 years old compared to 40.2 for population (census 2002).

Concerning the refugees, they are 280 000 and the Internally Displaced Persons are 230 000.

In order to integrate these excluded groups, Serbia has implemented some strategies like the "National Strategy for Integration of Refugees and IDPs" and "Poverty Reduction Strategy" which was completed and approved by the Government on October 16 of 2003. This last strategy includes all excluded groups as cross-cutting issues. The average-cost for the implementation of this strategy is 363 million Euro per year. These amounts have been allocated for excluded groups for programmes in

social protection, education, health, employment and housing.

Moreover, a draft "National strategy for Integration and Empowerment of the Roma" has been prepared and is in the phase of public debate.

In addition, Serbia adopted some short-term mechanisms for poverty alleviation. These mechanisms includes:

- Regular payment of social assistance: survey data show that 30% of Roma receive some social/cash assistance, meaning that a high share of social assistance beneficiaries are Roma (over 50%)
- One-off Fund: approximately 100 million EUR for covering arrears in farmers pensions, child allowances, social assistance, energy to social cases, war veterans.
- Pilot reforms to family Material support: 5 million EUR to cover piloting for MOP – reached/covered additional 13 000 poor families.
- Improved living conditions in social welfare institutions: 27 million EUR of donations were used for renovating institutions for social welfare (homes for children without parental care, homes for disabled, homes for the elderly). Total number of beneficiaries in 60 institutions is approximately 15 thousand, out of which 1500 beneficiaries are refugees and IDPs, which is approximately 10%.
- Conversion of collective centres into homes for the elderly and extension of existing capacities
- Partnerships with international humanitarian organizations

To support the inclusion of the excluded groups, some changes in the legislation and some non-legislative social reforms have occurred. The changes in the legislation include :

- New Law on Financial Support of Families with Children: this law has two aims: (1) a better targeting of vulnerable families and individuals and (2) establishing the absolute level of social protection and continuity of access to entitlements.
- Amendments to Law on Social Assistance. This allows to determine minimum social protection for the vulnerable based on poverty line and define the unique minimum at the central level and complement social protection at the local level.
- New Family Code which is harmonized with the congress of the Rights of the Child. This new family code aims the protection of victims of violence and abuse.

The non-legislative social reforms include in particular:

- Integrative approach in social protection at local level
- Management and organization, norms and standards in CSW
- Transformation of residential institutions-development of alternative forms of care
- Improvements in foster care and adoption
- Protection of victims of violence and abuse. Family violence is identified as one of the problems in Roma families.

These social reforms are realizable thanks to the Social Innovation Fund (SIF). The SIF is a mechanism that ensures:

- Decentralisation by supporting projects at local level;
- Reform (supports new alternative services);

- Transition (covers) transitional costs;
- Poverty reduction of vulnerable groups;
- Innovation (does not prescribe themes for all projects in advance);
- Learning, education and good practices transmission (offering help in next round of application to the Fund);
- Partnership (giving priority to joint projects of GO and NGO).

Therefore the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) acts as a:

- Poverty alleviation mechanism
- Sustainable strategy to interface between government/social welfare policy, donors' support, local social welfare and other public institutions, civil sector/NGO activities and private sector.
- Framework for investment in alternative forms of social protection and new services contributing to reform in social welfare, with inbuilt sustainability mechanisms.

In 2003, the SIF projects for inclusion of excluded groups has received 399 project proposals in the amount of 10 million EUR. These projects concern as well the Roma population as the refugees and the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). For the Roma, the projects are proposed in the following areas:

- Social integration,
- Preparing children for primary school
- Toy libraries for children
- Providing assistance for improved access to public services.

The projects proposed for the inclusion of refugees and IDPs aim their integration into the local community and alternative forms of social protection.

As a conclusion, the integration of the excluded groups can be achieved by simultaneous measures in different areas such as:

- Employment
- Social housing: a separate strategy is being developed on the national level. The local level is beginning to address this problem. For example, Belgrade will be building social apartments and allocating 10% to the Roma population; activities have started in either re-allocating Roma living in Roma settlements or legalizing them and introducing sanitation and other facilities.
- Education: programmes tailored to the needs of these groups for better inclusion into the education system.
- Health: programmes tailored to clients needs, improving access to health services and preventive health care programmes. ♦



*Education Forum*



From left to right, the members of the Education Forum were Ms. Elena Zamphir; Executive Director for International Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Research, Romania;

the Director of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Ms. Cecilia Braslavsky (Chair);

and the President and Founder of the Fondation Éducation et société, and former Prime Minister of Haiti, Mr. Jacques-Édouard Alexis.

Dr. Denise Normand-Guérrette, Professor of the Faculty of Education at the University of Quebec in Montreal acted as rapporteur.



## *Synthesis of the Education Forum*

*The Education Forum was chaired by Ms. Braslavsky, Director of the International Education Bureau of UNESCO, located in Switzerland. The Forum speakers were Ms. Elena Zamphir and Mr. Jacques Édouard Alexis, respectively Executive Director International Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Research, Education and Youth, in Romania, and former Prime Minister of Haiti and currently President of the Fondation Éducation et société in Haiti.*



**Dr. Denise Normand-Guérrette,**

Professor, Faculty of Education,  
University of Quebec in Montreal,  
Rapporteur

in collaboration  
with

**Ms. Yousr Masmoudi**

This forum addressed the following questions:

**How can didactic science take into account the new diversities that are encountered in the classroom?**

**What means should be used to reduce misunderstandings that arise from conflicts between the private sphere (family) and the public sphere (school, work), especially for children born in host countries?**

**What is the best way to understand intercultural dimensions in order to provide sound and effective pedagogy?**

**How is it possible to overcome the cycle of exclusion that will likely have an impact on the second generation of immigrant children?**

**How do we support parents in this process?**

### **The conferences**

By way of introduction to the theme of the Education Forum, the Chair stated that “Building Together” implies a joint effort to build the future. There has to be both the will and the capacity to work together.

Ms. Zamphir from Romania explained that the education reform in her country also took into account the social dimension so that appropriate prevention measures would be included. From such a perspective, the reform went beyond the issue of multiculturalism, as it included measures that enhance the global inclusion, for example, of members from isolated rural communities, disadvantaged groups, and cultural minorities. Both formal education and informal education have important roles to play in the fight against poverty and marginalization, because education provides the means of self-expression. Some of the measures adopted include: literacy programs for parents; reserved space for young girls from cultural minorities in order to increase their chances of getting an education (a program which has shown good results); home schooling for handicapped children or adults; milk and croissant distribution programs in schools; guaranteed minimum income after completion of 72 hours of community work; training and participation of social workers. Furthermore, two committees were created to identify solutions:

- Social Work Interdepartmental Committee
- Committee on Anti-Poverty Strategies and the Promotion of Social Inclusion.

Mr. Alexis from Haiti explained that the prevailing demographic and economic conditions have led to an increase in migratory movements. However, there is a high risk of social disintegration if we fail to harmonize individual and collective projects. With regard to the last wave of migration to America, he specified that it came mainly from the disadvantaged groups of society who face the new difficulties of being able to decipher the new social codes and integration into the labour market, which makes it difficult for them to develop personal social projects. The parents faced the added difficulty of the cultural gap between school and family, which can spark intergenerational conflicts and breakdown in communication between parents and children. Parents try to hang on to values that are absent in the host society and children in turn claim their own rights. In view of the difficulties encountered, the following are some of the measures that have been proposed: create more equal social relations between the various groups, make use of positive discrimination as a mechanism for social integration, promote access to high-quality academic and vocational training and labour-market integration by removing invisible barriers, emphasize the necessity of co-operation between school and family, reinforce parenting skills, and keep parents informed about the social codes, behaviours and standards that are prevalent in the host society so that they may become powerful social actors and project a positive image for their children.

## The debate

During the course of the debate, the participants discussed various issues, such as the recourse to immigration as a means of answering needs, the place of human beings at the centre of all actions to be contemplated, as well as the roles of parents, education and labour-market integration.

The discussion of the first point, immigration as a way to respond to individual needs, allowed participants to realize that immigration is a universal reality, which goes back to the beginning of human history. In today's world, the reasons for immigration are mainly economic. People leave the countries of the South in order to find better living conditions in the countries of the North. At the same time, people in the northern countries depend on immigration to overcome their demographic deficit. However, it should also be realized that there are limits to a host country's capacity to integrate large numbers of persons from a variety of diverse origins. Several speakers also mentioned the problem of the brain drain from South to North as well as the depopulation of southern countries. In addition, many southern countries also export their natural resources to the North, where they are processed and manufactured. Is there not some kind of solution available that would provide a better balance to the established world order?

### Two recommendations were made as a result of these observations:

- If the immigrant who leaves is well educated, the host country can provide some kind of financial compensation to the country of origin. The amount should correspond to the cost of the education incurred by the country of origin.
- Natural resources should be processed in their country of origin, which would help to create employment and stop the exodus of immigrants.

With regards to the second point of discussion, the participants emphasized the importance of placing human beings at the centre of all actions to be contemplated, instead of merely subscribing to the current economic imperatives that predominate in the context of globalization. Also emphasized was the importance of mutual respect and equality between individuals, as between nations. Such mutual respect must be based on the value of the human being. Thus, in order to build our common future and accomplish the unique endeavour for a plural society, we must place human beings at the very centre of the process, policies, and programs, by maintaining an attitude of mutual respect.

The central and essential role of parents was also discussed in order to ensure the inclusion of children of the second and third generations. Education transmitted by parents to their children is a pillar of the process of learning to live together. The role of parents should be acknowledged by the state. Some of the participants cited successful projects that promote the inclusion of parents and children in the host society. In Quebec for example, there are programs for the integration of immigrant women, school homework support, and support for parents who stay at home, parenting courses offered to young secondary school students, which is designed to reach them before they become parents and other similar prevention projects.

There was also a proposal to develop support programs to help parents to fulfill their role, to strengthen their skills and to assume their full responsibilities. They must also be given the appropriate

tools to learn the new language, so that they can help their children through school.

### With regards to the education system, especially in an intercultural context, the following suggestions were made:

- Include in teacher-training courses conditions that foster mutual openness, such as knowledge of a second language or of different religions. Future teachers should be given incentives to learn the languages spoken by the children in their class.
- Enrich teaching programs by focusing on diversity rather than on differences.

Another participant pointed out that rejection of others goes beyond the phenomenon of race, religion or culture, because the child who is not given what he wants will also develop a feeling of rejection. Given this reality, children have to be taught how to respect others, recognize their differences and understand their right to be different and to live with their respective strengths and weaknesses.

In terms of education, one respondent pointed out that international schools are also a good way to take intercultural dimensions into account.

Functional illiteracy was also identified as a problem that requires the provision of appropriate resources, because it affects a large portion of the world population.

### With regard to labour-market integration, the following two recommendations were put forth. It is necessary:

- To establish mechanisms of social and professional inclusion of immigrants, by recognizing the training and experience they have acquired in their countries of origin, and by offering them, if necessary, any additional training they may need to apply their practical skills to the new realities of the host society.
- Promote the inclusion of people from different ethnic origins in various social and governmental functions.

### At a more general level, participants proposed:

- The creation of an international observatory to study migration movements and the inclusion mechanisms available to immigrants to a new society.
- The establishment of a better balance between the values of global civilization, based on the respect for the human being, and the need to develop a national identity.

### The following demand was formulated:

- That the IFPE and the SROH continue their pursuit of a joint endeavour, that they draw attention of the authorities to the problems faced by families and that they make policy proposals to ensure the building of a common future, by means of a unique endeavour for a plural society.

In his conference, Mr. Assareh stressed the importance of educating and encouraging youth to maintain their heritage and cultural and social values. To achieve this they must develop a sense of identification with a group and respect their obligation to abide by its values and heritage. ♦

## Education Forum



Speaker :

**Ms. Elena Zamphir**

Director General of International Relations and European Integration, Ministry of Education Youth and Research, Romania

### The social policy for child and family in Romania during the transition

Twelve years after its revolution, Romania is facing other social problems, particularly in the child area. These problems are explicitly raised by the western political observers while examining the international adoptions and the persistence of the institutions for the abandoned children.

According to the Romanian specialists, the problematic child area deals mainly with the risks of the child in his own family or outside it. When neglected, this problem can evolve into crisis situations such as:

- children abused and neglected in their own family and/or victims of domestic violence
- delinquent children
- vulnerable children, at risk of becoming offenders or victims of the delinquency who once having broken the law do not find adequate support for integration into community.
- children who live in precarious conditions, in extreme poverty, unacceptable in a civilized society
- street children
- children who don't attend school or who abandon it after the first classes, becoming illiterates, difficult to be recovered in the future, excluded from a normal and prosperous social life.

In order to correct these long-lasting weak points of the Social Work and Child Protection System, it is necessary to give an adequate answer to two main questions:

1. Are the Child's problems inevitably generated solely by the economic difficulties of transition? Could they be solved by the economic revival that prefigures?
2. Do the Child's problems appear to a certain extent also as an expression of the chronic crisis in the sphere of the support Social Policy?

It is true that the economic aspect is a very important factor, but it is not the only one, for solving the serious problems of the child and family in Romania. Indeed, the major risk situation is the outcome of a constant poverty and an inadequate social policy of the socialist regime.

Within the social policy framework, it is still compulsory to take into account some political options such as the establishment of priorities in the child

protection system; the de-institutionalization and new legislation; a better coordination of the support programs for children and families; the harmonization of the reform actions of all the crucial actors involved in child protection and finally, a better incorporation of specialists in the child protection system. These political options form the mandate of two committees: the "Interdepartmental Commission for Social Work" and the "Commission for Anti-Poverty Strategies and Promoting the Social Inclusion".

The efforts made by all the social forces involved in the support policies for child and family caused a decrease, at the end of the year 2000, of the direct and indirect economic support, especially to families having more children. Moreover, the allocation for children, the most important instrument of financial support for families with children, decreased to 25% of its real value from 1989.

Concerning the minimum income guaranteed, it was voted in 2002, after a rather failed attempt in 1995. This minimum wage, although modest, is provided for all families. In addition, the public support to housing for both the young people who leave the institutions and the poor families does not meet the requirements.

The main developments of the policies and governmental responsibilities in the field of Child protection were related to the promulgation, in 2001, of the law of the National System for Social Work. This law contains some important reforming elements for child's protection:

- the necessity of setting up a coherent public system of social work services focused on family and community care, as part of the local public authorities. The public social work services will help in preventing many of the child's problems and in solving these problems in the child's natural environment (i.e. in the family and community)
- monitoring the risky situations
- establishment inside the government

of an Inter-ministerial Commission for Social Work to coordinate the government's efforts for social support in the social work and protection field.

In 2002, the Romanian government passed the National Plan of Anti-Poverty Strategies and Social Inclusion. According to this plan, the education is a cornerstone to prevent the risk of poverty and exclusion. It ensures human development and promote an inclusive society. In addition to education, this plan consider that there are some strategic objectives to improve the child welfare.

The main groups faced with education risks are the Roma population, the extremely poor families, the families in poor areas, the poor and remote rural areas and the disabled children.

To help these vulnerable groups, the government has set up some educational objectives within the National Plan of Anti-Poverty Strategies and Social Inclusion. These objectives are as follows:

1. Ensure quasi-unanimous enrolment of school-age children in the education system
2. Bring school dropout rate in compulsory education toward zero within five years
3. Revitalise post-compulsory education, with special emphasis on vocational and technical education
4. Within ten years draw nearer to the situation where all young people have graduated from a school programme that provides certain occupational skills
5. Improve the rural education system
6. Ensure access to lifelong training
7. Enhance the school function of educational and career orientation
8. Promote equal educational opportunity as a key instrument to address the polarisation
9. Generalise the attending of the pre-school year

10. Promote mainstreaming of disabled children
11. Increase school capacity to promote social inclusion
12. Enhance personal and professional competencies in school

Concerning the strategic objectives of the National Plan of Anti-Poverty strategies and Social Inclusion to improve the child welfare, they are as follow:

1. Substantially reduce child poverty
2. Mitigate the risk of abandonment, also by ensuring that a child is born in a family that had planned to have it
3. Rapidly reduce the number and seriousness of cases of children neglected/abused/exploited by their families
4. Radically reform the approach to abandonment
5. Stimulate and sustain the quality of birth environment
6. Diversify community-based child support services
7. Professionalise child care workers
8. Eradicate street children in 1-2 years' time
9. Prevent juvenile delinquency and restore juvenile offenders to society, provide social support to victimised minors

Following the new strategy of anti poverty and social inclusion, some reforms of institutions for children were established. They concern the elaboration of a new model of institution organisation and its rapid implementation; the institution of some quality standards at national level of child care inside and outside his family and the follow-up of the public and private (NGO's) institutions and the families in which children are placed; elaboration of a national support programme for facilitating the integration of young people who leave the institutions and the families in the adult life.

It is also important to note that the National Plan of Anti-Poverty and Social

Inclusion has focussed its actions to support children in their own families. Thus, the national plan of Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion has implemented some action directions such as:

- Increasing of parents' responsibility to child birth by spreading the services for parental consultancy of high risk groups;
- Preventing the abandonment through an early identification of the risk cases of abandonment, social work services, material support and recognizing the support system for the families with a great risk of abandonment, inclusively creating some day centres to help supporting the children.
- Promoting national adoption, diminishing in time the international adoption
- Improving the system of familial placement
- Improving the procedures of selection and training maternal assistants
- Reconsidering the financial system for family placement. There are signs for the risk of a system's financial crisis
- Organizing a support system and continuous monitoring of the children in family placement. ♦

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## Education Forum



Speaker :

**Mr. Jacques Édouard Alexis**

Former Prime Minister of Haiti  
and President of the Fondation  
Éducation et société, Haiti

### Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Moncef Guitoni and Mr. Luc Dupont, respectively President of the IFPE and President of the SROH, for the cordial invitation they extended to me to attend this conference. Thanks to this invitation, I will be able to formulate my comments on a theme that is important to all of us: the pluralistic nature of our societies and the need to develop a unifying project. How can we help to rebuild the social, as our societies appear to be increasingly subject to the forces of dissolution that are eroding the very fabric of society? How can we learn or relearn to live together in society, when society itself encompasses such a wide array of divergent social imperatives?

The timeliness of these questions is immediately apparent. The first and foremost reason is that our societies will be built on diversity. There will be the diversity of individual options, once it is established that individuals have the full right to autonomy, i.e. the capacity for self-development and self-realization in their capacity as subjects of their own history; in other words their capacity to display a singular identity. There is also the diversity of the groups to which individuals belong, which form the locus of the collective identity. This is an intermediary level of identity, which may come into contradiction with other collective identities within the same society.

Modern societies are being built on diversity in a much more radical fashion, because for reasons of demographic balance and economic activity, they will more and more be required to seek and accept migratory movements of workers from the South. Whether they like it or not, they will have to manage the arrival of new immigrants who hail from diverse cultural spaces and of differing socio-economic status. The question

then will be how to integrate and accept, in mutual respect, others as they are and without any kind of exclusion and without endangering the unity of a given socio-cultural space.

In fact, these questions have become all the more relevant since September 11, 2001. We will have to relearn how to live in what some have referred to as a "society of risk." One of the manifestations of this new kind of risk is the threat of social implosion, which can occur when a society fails to unify in the face of a multitude of individual or collective ambitions. It is no longer a simple issue of identifying points that are shared in common or common denominators or of ensuring respect for differences. It has already been stated that September 11 is the most catastrophic expression of the inability to communicate and to understand one another, which is not, however, insurmountable, despite social differences. The challenge will be how to handle diversity, without destroying it. In other words, how can diversity be put to good use for the benefit of society? Basically, the question is, how do we develop a singular project from the heart of diversity?

These considerations are eminently political, in the widest meaning of this word. They call for the ways and means to manage the social element. They already imply a vision of how to live in society. They are opposed to defeatism, all forms of rigidity of thought, all denials, or all utopian oversimplifications of the complexity of social life. They call on all politicians, educators, journalists and on all those who help fashion public opinion to define themselves as facilitators of the art of living together. They draw the road map of the route that has to be built that will lead to a true common good, which can only be built through a dialogue of all partners in society.

It will come as no surprise if I tell you that the theme under discussion appeals to me at various levels. How could I not mention the situation of the majority of my compatriots living here in North America, many of whom have been destined to live in ghettos, as victims of exclusion? They all came with their own unique lives, many of them as part of the wave of emigration. As we shall see later, many of them are incapable of mastering the new codes to which they are exposed; they have difficulty integrating into the labour force; they live a family life which is exposed to intergenerational conflicts, some of which are often quite severe. The Haitians of the Diaspora, for the most part, do not seem to be contributing to the building of a singular project. How then can we fail to see the interest behind your approach, which aims to define the set of elements that constitute a process of inclusion?

As a native of the Caribbean and of the West Indies, I am concerned with the desire to collectively build a common project. Transplanted to the Americas more than five hundred years ago, the populations of the Caribbean are still under the influence of the myth of the universality of Western values. This myth does not seem to have much of a future. However, our Caribbean world still remains, both one and pluralistic. We all live there—black, white, yellow, red, but for the most part Creole, i.e. “hybrids.” Our reality demands that we evolve together in a mosaic of cultures, which ultimately forms the Caribbean or West Indian culture.

“Building together our common future: a unique endeavour in a plural society”; this is the issue that is at the heart of the Haitian struggle in general. Haitian society was born from exclusion. By exclusion, I mean total exclusion from the entire political, economic, social and cultural majority. The fact that this same majority is now seeking integration calls for the formation of a singular endeavour in a plural Haitian society. In a certain sense, it is no longer forbidden to think that the long-ranging instability of

Haitian society stems from the inability of the players to actually draw the contours of this singular endeavour.

Let me point out in passing that, in the present situation, parents who remain in Haiti also face serious challenges. This is even more so because families themselves are now exposed to certain forces that must be described as centrifugal. The strong attraction of internal migration, which sometimes separates youth from their parents, the perverse effects of external migration, which tends to separate children and parents, even if only on a temporary basis, and the various influences to which youth are exposed complicate their effects, thus threatening the social fabric. Faced with the symptoms of a disintegrating society, what should be the role of parents living in Haiti? But you would undoubtedly prefer to hear about the development of this singular endeavour in your own countries, you who allow immigrants to settle in your territories, such as Haitians, for example!

I shall introduce my proposals by referring, as examples, to some of the difficulties that must be faced by Haitian youth and parents when they come to live in North America. Although Haitian society is my point of departure, my comments will have a more general scope.

Various studies have already provided the social profile of Haitian immigrants over a period of approximately forty years. The Haitian immigrants of the last wave of immigration generally come from the underprivileged classes. It is true also that a smaller number of young professionals have obtained Canadian resident status. But, on the whole, there does not seem to be much fluctuation in the migration movements from Haiti to North America; new immigrants stand out distinctly from the first wave of Haitian immigrants who were, for the most part, professionals.

The gap between life experienced at school and the family experience creates

a hiatus to which the children of Haitian immigrants are exposed: the gap soon increases and has a profound impact at the very heart of the family relation. In fact, there is a real breakdown in communications between children and their parents or the young and the old. Youth, even as they find themselves in difficulty at school, are exposed to language practices, cultural objects, lifestyles and fashions that are completely alien to their parents. Furthermore, the young people are influenced by school and youth counsellors, who advise them of their rights and propose strategies for the defence of these new-found rights, often in opposition to parents who are not “connected.” This is so pervasive that there eventually develops at home a true dialogue of the deaf. The conflict over standards and codes sometimes becomes unbearable. The rest is easy to imagine...

This brings us to the very fundamental problem: the ways and the means of defining a unique endeavour for a plural society.

I would propose in the first place the need to develop social bonds between various groups that have a greater basis in equality. Living together in a plural society means taking up the peaceful struggle against social exclusion. Quebec has already provided an exceptional example of this with the Quiet Revolution. Living together in a plural society implies the moral imperative of democratic and harmonious cohabitation in a multi-ethnic environment. Living together in a plural society implies the development of democratic citizenship, which guarantees entitlement to civil, political and social rights.

I realize that in terms of legislation and regulation there has been considerable progress made in North America. But we all agree that the fight against social exclusion must be constantly resumed. There are several indicators that illustrate this for us. Right intentions, right policies, that have already been defined, must be reflected in facts, and in facts

that are enduring. And, for this purpose, we must never cease identifying the barriers that subtly foster exclusion. Volunteer actions should not be absent; however, as is often said, south of Canada, positive discrimination can often be used as a means of social integration.

In addition, greater attention should be paid to youth from immigrant families. Certainly, from a Haitian perspective, I am of divided loyalties, as I observe that Canada continues to systematically attract young professionals from my country, although I fully understand that the latter need to succeed in their new host country. But once such young people are installed here, not only they and their parents must aim at successful social integration, but also the host society in general.

Creating winning conditions for young people from Haitian families requires that they be given access to high-quality professional and academic training. They should not be penalized merely because of the fact that they come from the underprivileged classes of society. We know how relevant it is to have specific interventions that begin at very beginning of school life. At every stage of the education system, specific terms and conditions of advancement should be defined in order to overcome the perverse effects of systemic discrimination, which is rampant in many teaching institutions.

The best way to implement the conditions needed to ensure equality of outcomes in the labour market is to create conditions for the successful integration of youth from immigrant groups. Completing a high-quality professional or academic education is one thing, but succeeding in the job market is another. I'm not saying anything new when I say that the invisible barriers of the job market are often the ones that are the most pernicious. To be successful in any unique endeavour requires that the host society does not renounce the ideal of

providing a high level of professional insertion along with stable employment for young immigrants, just because some immigrants have failed to successfully integrate into the labour market.

Furthermore, as was stated in the letter of invitation to this conference, consideration must also be given to initiatives for parents. Haitian parents need assistance that will allow them to gain access to positions of influence in the host society. Without a doubt, their status as social inferiors has a negative impact not only on their self image, but also on the image they project to their children.

How can we not talk about the complementary roles that should be assumed by parents and schools in terms of the education of their youth? We all know that as agents of socialization, the family and the school have irreplaceable contributions to make in the social formation of children. It is therefore important to emphasize that a high degree of cooperation between these two primary networks of socialization is essential. The development of this unique endeavour that we all heartily seek to achieve is based on the adequate harmonization of response by family and school to the challenges encountered in a plural society.

And how could we fail to demand that the school be called upon, as part of the dynamic of inclusion, to help reinforce parental capacity? By allowing parents to assume their rightful place in the participative management of schools, parents are empowered to intervene as important players in an area of prime importance for the future of their children and for the future of society in general.

In order to allow parents of foreign origin to make a contribution, in their capacity as educators, to the development of a unique endeavour, it is important not only to focus on their integration into the labour force, but also to focus on the development of their parental skills and

their mastery of the new social codes in the host society. Maybe parents of foreign origin, as educators, also need access to education which will initiate them to the norms of behaviour in the host society and which will accustom them to conduct themselves as full-fledged actors in the new society.

Building our future together: a unique endeavour for a plural society: we are of course referring to pluralism, diversity, and even cultural diversity. Ultimately, we must go beyond euphemisms! The juxtaposition of diverse points of reference and cultural horizons seems to be one of the main features of modern society, yet this notion also needs clarification, based in fact on the relationship of domination that exists between different social groups. In a host society, some groups are aligned with the focus of power, while others are in a state of social inferiority. The cultural difference between these groups is therefore based on their relative social position. Based on social position, cultures are not merely different from one another, they belong to either dominant or dominated groups. In other words, there are dominant cultures and dominated cultures.

It is inconceivable, that groups that have a status of social exclusion will be heard by those who define the common projects on a national scale. The fight against exclusion and the construction of citizenship will eventually allow both the parents and the children of immigrant families to play their part in the process of developing a unifying social project.

Thank you. ♦



Speaker :

**Dr. Alireza Assareh**

Vice chancellor,  
Dezful Islamic Azad University,  
Iran

## **Building our Common Future Together a unique Endeavor for a Plural Society**

The world in which we live has undergone a lot of changes. These changes have all taken place due to the communication technologies such as satellites, and to internet system, on the one hand. Along with these changes, the issue of emigration across the world has brought about a particular context necessitating the increasing coexistence of human beings, on the other. With different races, languages and cultures, human beings, in effect, have been able to enjoy their social lives and live as much peacefully as possible, based on morality. To do so, the emigrants have to base their lives on moral and humane principles rather than racial or personal prejudices. As Sa'di, the greatest Iranian poet, whom the world honors today by gracing the entrance to the hall of Nations in New York with this call for breaking all barriers:

**Of one Essence is the human race,  
Thusly has creation put the base;  
One Limb impacted is sufficient,  
For all Others to feel the Mace.**

Moreover, as Imam Ali, the first Islamic Shi'ite Imam, in one of his orders to Malek-e Ashtar, his provincial general governor in Egypt warns him of the fact that human beings are either of your own religion or of your own kind in being a human, so whatever they are, you have to try to behave them in such a way that you like them to behave you. On the

other hand, the new era with all its features both locally and globally have brought about a context in which all human beings have no option but to coexist although they are different in their beliefs, concepts, mentalities and cultures. Although they should be helped to remain convinced in their own cultural and national identities, although separation from their religious and racial as well as tribal identities is associated with some psychological and social harm, they have to act upon their own cultural foundations to have peaceful life with a relative welfare.

Although acculturation might be associated with partly losing some of their racial identities and beliefs which, in turn, might be consequently associated with some psychological and social harm, they must learn to conduct their lives in terms of their own social and cultural values. That is, having various interactions with other people with variant economical and cultural maxims, they must respect their humanely shared features as they are respected even by the international law included as an integrative part of the main charter of the UN. There are, in effect, the principles which have strengthened the necessity of coexistence associated with peace and friendship.

Now, many years have lapsed since the UN charter was established with so many universally humane expectations, and undoubtedly great deal of changes including the issue of globalization which stands at the top of the other social shifts have occurred since then. This last issue, globalization, made human's destiny be faced with more and more changes in the contemporary time.

To name a few of the most important issues occurring recently, are as follows:

- Globalization;
- The youth's getting detached from one's own national values and customs;
- Reduction as well as transformation of tribal and national values;
- Great many changes and gaps in the new generation's tastes, aspirations and their expectations in life, on the other hand; and their disintegration from their ancestral values as well as their misunderstanding of their own parents and their own previous generations, on the other;
- Change in family system structure;
- Illogically increasing emigrations from rural areas to urban ones, on the one hand, and from local areas to global areas, on the other.

### **The gap between generations**

The above-stated parameters have raised certain problems of identity in new generations, moreover, they have endangered both the maintenance of the cultural heritage and the relationship between parents and children. Furthermore, the factors stated above have decreased the state of independence in the young generations, and they have found a more tendency towards the foreigners at the cost of losing interest in nationalism. This may result in many social sufferings for the new generations and finally making them psychologically vulnerable to anxiety, loneliness and disappointment. On the other hand, the issue of globalization depicts a future with the best type of coexistence, so it

necessitates certain predictions in educational issues be taken into account to be added to the charter of the UN. That is, the new aspect of life, globalization, which can be considered as a new phenomenon, requires its own skills with which people seem to be essentially provided to let go on living side by side peacefully. They can be instructed in a way to keep their heritage to pride in their civilization, and to maintain their religious and national identity to feel belonging to a certain group which, in turn, gives them a mental convenience and makes them feel repose and finally, to feel the pleasure of life. So to encourage the new generation in maintaining his heritage and other social and cultural values, two things should be done:

- 1• Creating a feeling of belonging to a group
- 2• Creating a feeling of obligation to the previous and current heritages and their relevant values; and maintaining the heritage of the global civilization which is considered as a duty of the UNESCO. One of the ways to maintain heritages is to develop and propagandize different languages of different cultures and their relevant literatures. An other way is to develop their national, racial and tribal arts. We should not let the weaker countries unsupported lose their identities in the challenge so-called the cultural aggression. This is the reason why today the contemporary human beings particularly those in charge embark on keeping the rarest remnants of certain kind of a bird or animal or a plant not to be extinct. This may assist the maintenance of historical, herbal, animal types. So,

enough attempts must be made not to let globalization take place at the cost of destruction of any national or religious identity, culture, heritage, literature or historical remnants and relics. But all global citizens should try to approach to the expected global coexistence with full understanding while each nation keeping its own values. Therefore, a globally beseeched education is felt to be needed for all citizens, making up the present parents and their children of the globe to help development of the ideal global system. Such a system to be fulfilled, it has to adopt all the suggestions made by such prophets as Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and Mehmet (Peace Be Upon Them) who have, all, stressed affection, kindness, and morality as building blocks of coexistence. To have such a citizen attributed with the previously stated attributes as an ideal citizen, the International Federation of Parents Education that is in charge to educate parents in the world today has a more important responsibility in realizing construction of a common peaceful society for the future in the countries which are UN members. ♦



# *Administration of Justice Forum*



*The Justice Forum was chaired by W. Gerry Robinson of the Immigration and Refugee Board, Canada.*

The speakers were the President of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré

and the Honourable Justice Charles D. Gonthier, Supreme Court of Canada.



## *Synthesis of the Administration of Justice Forum*

*Mr. Gerry Robinson, a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board, presided over the Forum on the Administration of Justice. The Forum brought together several eminent jurists, including the Honourable Charles D. Gonthier, Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, and His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, President of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso.*



**Me. Nicole Ladouceur**

Rapporteur

The forum examined the following questions:

**How can the justice system be adapted to take into account the changing fabric of society?**

**How do we ensure that justice will be enforced according to the acts and actions of a person rather than according to the ethnic origin of the person?**

**Does the training of magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers and police officers need to be updated?**

### **The conferences**

The first conference was given by Honourable Justice Gonthier of the Supreme Court of Canada and was entitled: "Law and Morality: morality as a foundation for law and the effect of law on the moral environment." According to the author, law and morality form the basis from which we must begin to reflect in order to answer the questions as stated above. Justice Gonthier divided his presentation into three sections. In the first part of his presentation, he described the framework that is used by the Canadian justice system to distinguish between law and morality, demonstrating that in order to ensure compliance with the law, the law must not only be founded in law, but it must also help improve the moral environment of a society. This section examined to what extent laws must be an expression of morality.

In the second part of his presentation, Justice Gonthier sketched the three major themes which serve to articulate the opposing visions in the debate on law and morality, namely: freedom and power; the individual and the community; the global village and regionalism. According to the Honourable Justice, our capacity to protect and promote the moral environment will be judged on the way our legal system and our society respond to these three themes.

In the third part of his presentation, Mr. Justice Gonthier spoke about the value of fraternity. In his opinion, this notion has an important place in the realm of human rights. Despite the fact that it is rarely quoted in the jurisprudence, fraternity is indirectly invoked through the related concepts of solidarity, the social condition, equity, justice and human dignity. It is based on the four major values of inclusion, commitment and responsibility, justice and equity, and finally, co-operation.

The second conference was presented by His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré on the theme: "Discrimination: law, justice and the principle of the equality of opportunity." Mr. Traoré focused on three themes : positive discrimination, prohibited discrimination and the solutions required to effectively fight against discrimination.

Positive discrimination, according to His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, refers to the specific measures that may be adopted in order to compensate for the real inequities that groups that are in a position of social inferiority are subject to. According to the arguments of His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, positive discrimination is justified through values of solidarity, fraternity, human dignity, social condition, equity, etc. It can be implemented through legislation and reinforced through jurisprudence, in the areas of politics, culture and religion.

In terms of prohibited discrimination, Mr. Traoré made reference to all forms of distinction, exclusion, or preference based on race, colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, the purpose of which is to limit the rights and fundamental freedoms to which man is entitled in the area of politics, the economy, society and culture.

The best way to fight against prohibited discrimination, according to Mr. Traoré, is through the adoption of a national policy. Such a policy must meet several objectives, two of which are: to allow anti-racist associations to legally exist or to intervene without limits to their authority and to increase the list of offences to include all discriminatory behaviours.



## The Debate

The discussion focused on two themes: the first was the very meaning and the foundations of justice and second the administration of justice.

The discussions began with a general statement that was accepted by all: that our societies are less and less defined by their geographical boundaries and that international treaties are gaining increasing importance in the definition of the norms that reign in society. This gives rise to a major challenge that is faced by all societies: given the increased importance of a plurality of beliefs, values and customs, how can we ensure that the justice system has sufficiently evolved to respect the diversity that comes with pluralism? How can we reconcile respect for individual rights with society's collective rights, especially in the cases of immigrants who are in their new country of adoption?

In order to deal with these questions, the participants reviewed the fundamental principles of justice, law and morality, as the key elements of social governance.

A specific issue that was raised was the dual expectations we have of the justice system; on the one hand we expect that our moral values will be reflected in our laws, because the law is a system of the rules of conduct that govern individuals in society.

On the other hand, in order to protect the moral foundation of a society, a foundation that is based on consensus, we expect our laws to ensure that law suits are settled in a just fashion, without being arbitrary or unpredictable.

Other issues raised were the triple relationships that characterize the dynamic foundations of society, which by their nature tend to create tensions that are expressed in terms of balance: the balance between freedom and power (or rights and duties); between the individual and society (does the individual live in isolation or is he part of the social whole) and lastly between regionalisms and the global village, which ironically, despite the fact that they are contradictory, are both merging forces.

To help us in our search for a solution to a dynamic which originates at the international level, we revisited the year 1948, the year when the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted, stipulating that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

This notion of brotherhood, which some refer to as solidarity, must inspire behaviours and includes four concepts: inclusion, responsibility, justice and equity, and co-operation. These precepts are the very expression of human dignity and should be the foundation of every society.

As the integration of ethnic groups is essential for social stability and represents a unifying force in society, all forms of discrimination must be resisted. If the justice system is a reflection of the intrinsic social values of dignity and fraternity, it must necessarily protect the values of society by rules of law.

However, although we observe that society evolves, the justice system has not always followed suit. The role of the justice system is to provide parties with the tools they need to ensure that justice is achieved. Thus victims must have faith that complaints they lay will be heard and treated equitably under law. The whole judicial system must be sufficiently sensitive to understand that the notions of authority, police, and law are not immediately understood by immigrants, who have had negative experiences in this area.

Rules have to be adapted to situations where evidence is not always easily established. Victims must be able to make claim to their rights and must be assured that they will not be subject to sanctions for having exercised their rights. All participants agreed that greater awareness and education are required for the stakeholders who are responsible for the administration of justice. As the administration of justice is a reflection of man, logically it is imperfect, which is why education is needed. But education must not be limited to those who are responsible for the administration of justice. Education must also focus on behaviours; in other words, there is greater need for an increased human understanding of solidarity and fraternity. ♦

## **Law and Morality: morality as a foundation for law and the effect of law on the moral environment**

### **Introduction**

I am presenting these thoughts to you as a backdrop against which we should base our reflections in answer to the questions that were raised in terms of the administration of justice in today's society. I think they are at the very heart of the contemporary issues and challenges we face.

Contemporary societies have dual expectations from both the law and the law courts. Their first expectation is that laws adequately express and confirm morality—the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the most eloquent expression thereof; their second expectation is that the particular rules of law be carefully designed and enforced in order to provide fair and equitable rulings in matters under litigation—specific injustice for the sake of a general rule is less and less tolerated.

It is still the rule however that the primacy of law requires objective rules to which judges can refer, lest such primacy be diluted by the mere presence of the judge and lapse into the arbitrary or the contingent. A modicum of stability is an essential quality of law.

I propose to sketch the role of law, what we are entitled to expect from law, as well as the limits of the law as an instrument of justice. To make proper use of the laws, laws must be understood. At the very heart of this question is the relationship between law and morality. The fundamental aspects thereof must be understood in order to assess the orientations and actions or initiatives that must be undertaken.

I wish to examine this question from two perspectives: first of all the moral order as the foundation of law, and secondly, the effect of law on the moral order of society.

I will divide my presentation into three parts; in the first part I will describe the approach that is used in the modern Canadian legal system to distinguish between law and morality. I will highlight the differences between law and morality and shall demonstrate that, to be respected, law must be founded on morality, and furthermore, that it must strive to improve our moral environment. This part will help to establish a clearer idea of the extent to which laws are the expression of morality.

Next, I will invoke three major themes against which are arrayed the opposing views that arise in the debate on law and morality. I will also propose that our capacity to protect and promote our moral environment will be judged on how well our society, on the whole, and our legal system have dealt with these three themes.

I will conclude with an invocation of the value of brotherhood and the response that we must make so that it can rise to meet the challenges of humanity.

Before getting into the heart of the matter, it will be useful to set out certain definitions.

Law is a system of rules that are used to govern the behaviour of individuals, when such behaviours have an impact on society or on other individuals in society. In some rare cases, it may be used to govern the individual's behaviour toward himself. Thus, in Canada, Section 14 of the *Criminal Code* prohibits individuals from consenting to have death inflicted upon them. Section 71 prohibits individuals from consenting to fight in a duel. Section 290 prohibits bigamy, even if it is consensual. Thus law basically governs conduct and not thought.



Speaker :

**The Honourable Justice  
Charles D. Gonthier**

Supreme Court of Canada

Morality is a set of rules that govern the conscience and the conduct of a person towards himself, his creator, other people and society (including its institutions). Thought, therefore, is at the very heart of morality.

As to the extent to which the two notions overlap, I believe that it is generally admitted that there are some fields in which law has nothing in common with morality, and others in which morality is inherent in the rules of law.

An example from the first category are laws that are of a regulatory or purely arbitrary nature, such as municipal regulations or traffic codes that stipulate that traffic may run from east to west, for example. The law can just as easily stipulate that traffic can go from west to east. Neither of these two options has anything to do with a particular form of morality. This is a purely regulatory decision, based, we trust, on an efficient traffic model.

In order to illustrate the second category of laws, let us examine the disciplinary codes governing professional orders. Here we find the intersection between the rules of law and the rules of morality. Thus, in Section 2.03 of the Code of Ethics for Lawyers in Quebec it is stated: "Objectivity, moderation and dignity must characterize the conduct of lawyers." The obligation to act in a dignified manner is deeply ingrained in moral principles. The oldest code of ethics is likely the Hippocratic Oath, that governs the behaviour of physicians.

The essential elements of questions put to the Supreme Court are focused on the rules of penal and civil law. In many fields of civil law, we have accepted without hesitation the introduction of moral elements into the law. In terms of commercial law, for example, several recent decisions of the Court have reinforced the notion of "good faith" and of "fiduciary obligations." The concept of "good faith" is incorporated in Articles 6 and 7 of the Civil Code of Quebec. The very fact that we have naturally included these moral concepts into the field of law is indication of a positive evolution.

In criminal and penal law, however, the extent to which moral rules are admitted remains the subject of fierce debates. This is hardly surprising, since criminal and penal law are legislative domains that have contributed the highest number of sanctions to our legal system and which have the greatest potential impact on the freedom of individuals.

The rules of our penal law system are fundamentally moral rules and were designed to govern, protect and promote our moral environment.

As regulatory mechanisms, laws have a moral function, because if there were no moral foundation, it would be very difficult to enforce them in the societies they are meant to govern. Even the great liberal thinker, H.L.A. Hart, recognized this when he wrote: "In the absence of this [moral] content, men by their very nature would have absolutely no reason to willingly abide by any type of rule; without a minimum amount of cooperation, freely consented to by those who feel that it is in their best interest to obey and to preserve rules, it would be impossible to enforce compliance from those who do not willingly agree to obey laws." (*Le concept de droit*, p. 232).

Laws protect our moral environment to the extent that they are the reflection of a moral consensus on the level of tolerance for certain activities. I would like to emphasize the word tolerance. Law cannot impose on a population the moral convictions of the majority, with regards to what they consider to be right living. It is the community, rather, that establishes the rules to proscribe the behaviours that it cannot tolerate and which it deems to be fundamentally prejudicial to society and its moral environment.

This does not mean that law cannot have some kind of exemplary function in terms of moral behaviour. On the contrary, as stated by the Supreme Court in *R. v. Morgentaler*, [1988] 1R.C.S. 30, p. 70 and more recently in *R. v. Keegstra* [1990] 3 R.C.S.697, p. 769 where Chief Justice Dickson had to deal with the constitutionality of provisions of the *Criminal Code* with regard to hate messages:

« [...] Par. 319(2) is meant to demonstrate to the public the profound feeling of reproof that society has towards hate messages that target particular racial or religious groups. The existence of a particular rule of criminal law, as well as the pursuit of a trial, where such a disposition is enforced, is in itself a form of expression, and the message thus communicated is that hate propaganda is harmful to target groups and is a threat to social harmony.

As I stated in my rulings in *R. v. Morgentaler*, p.70 :

"Criminal law constitutes a very particular kind of government regulation, because it seeks to express the collective disapproval of our society with regards to certain actions or omissions."

In the *Summa Theologiae*, Saint Thomas Aquinas reminds us that the purpose of laws is to make men better. (I-II, Q.92). They can do so and do do so, but within the limits tolerated by our multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural countries, in which various moral convictions coexist. However, I believe it would be imprudent to rely too much on the judicial system to improve the moral environment in society.

### **Themes for future reflections**

In order to determine whether or not law can continue to protect our moral environment, I believe we must focus our debate on three important and inter-related themes: freedom and power, the individual and society, global village and regionalism, or nationalism. My purpose is to present each one of these themes by way of using a few straightforward examples. I will leave you the much more delicate task of determining the relevant balance in each case.

### **Freedom and Power**

The debate which seeks to strike a balance between freedom and power consists in fact of trying to determine whether rights exist for their own sake, for the sake of self or social interest, or whether they come with concomitant

duties toward the community, which must then be taken into account to ensure that rights are properly exercised. The debate could be summarized equally well under the title of rights and duties.

Criminal jurisprudence places this debate at several levels. For some time, the Courts in Canada did not seem to consider the rights of the accused when deciding what procedural guarantees were appropriate in areas such as the admissibility of evidence. We have observed, however, that judgements are making increasing reference to the impact of certain behaviours on victims and to the necessity of striking a balance between the protection of the accused and the search for the truth. For example, the attempt by the government to adopt provisions that will limit the use of evidence related to the prior sexual conduct of a woman in sexual assault cases. If it is necessary to ensure that the accused is entitled to a fair trial, consideration must also be given to the effects of inappropriate cross-examination of the alleged victim, particularly if such a cross examination is mainly intended to be dissuasive in nature and is not justified by any valid legal arguments.

Our *Charter*, similar to the international covenants by which it was inspired, is essentially expressed in terms of rights. These rights form the framework of control of certain actions by the government. However, every individual must be ready to comply with certain obligations and responsibilities in order for our society to follow a positive course of evolution. Without any commitment to duties, only the power to enforce compliance with the law remains. Such duties do appear in common law (for example, the individual's duty to exercise due diligence in some situations). They also appear in the *Civil Code of Quebec*, which refers to both obligations and to rights. It is perhaps time to begin to think in terms of a Charter of Duties if we want to preserve the dignity of the person in society. Should we not begin to think of rights in relationship to their corresponding obligations, and freedoms in relationship to their concomitant responsibilities?

### Individual and Society

The second debate revolves around the opposition between the individual and society. Do individuals exist as isolated atoms that have minimal interaction with their entourage? Or are they integrally woven into the social fabric?

In my opinion, the constitutional history of Canada reveals that the answer to this question is far from being easy, or perhaps even essential, because the two notions can coexist. Whereas, the *Charter* refers to individual rights, the constitutional framework also contains collective rights. In Canada, this may find application, among others, in the area of the rights of linguistic minorities and the rights of the First Nations of Canada.

We cannot consider the rights of individuals separately from their responsibilities towards society. We must take into consideration, the essential interaction between individuals and the larger community in which they live.

### Global Village and Regionalism

The third theme focuses on the global village in opposition to regionalism. One of the most disconcerting characteristics of our times is that, in spite of the remarkable progress that has been achieved in the area of communication technologies and the unprecedented level of international cooperation, regionalism and nationalism have also been in resurgence. Is this perhaps because individuals, after they have become independent, have a greater need to identify themselves in terms of their adhesion to smaller and more distinctive groups? These groups naturally form around very different moral concepts.

In the regions of the former Soviet Union and ex-Yugoslavia, we have seen the resurgence of religious and ethnic divisions that were for many years kept under control by the use of force in communist countries. In Algeria, we witness the political struggle for the creation of an Islamic state to be ruled exclusively by the moral rules of the Koran against a government that is

seeking to preserve the secular rule of the state. Is it possible to establish a global morality? Does morality (and, hence, its appropriate place in law) transcend borders?

I believe that the multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural context in Canada has enabled the creation of legal structures that allow for the diversity of moral convictions. This is largely due to the immigration that hails from a wide variety of cultures and that allows more direct interaction with different systems of values. At the same time, we are witnessing the decline of traditional structures, which for a long time supported a shared perspective of what was moral, particularly in our religious institutions and in the family. Our justice system has conformed with these realities, not through recourse to the laws as a means to impose moral choices, but only through recourse thereto, when there are conducts which society can no longer tolerate, as they pose a threat to the fabric of society. I believe that the Canadian approach is more and more adapted to the contemporary global context. It does, however, include as well a degree of dilution or weakening of respect for moral rules, which is harmful to the social order.

Since we live in a global moral environment, we must define international norms of tolerance. In fact, such a process has already begun, and its beginning can be traced back to the 1949 drafting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the first article of which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." What began as a general resolution of the General Assembly, with no effect in law, led to the 1966 ratification of a new treaty, which did have the force of law, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. More recently, the United Nations established an International Criminal Court, which has jurisdiction over crimes against humanity. We have also affirmed that we are more and more resolved to sanction any behaviour that poses a threat to the global moral environment. Moreover, we have progressed from the

mere condemnation of such behaviours via resolutions by the General Assembly of the United Nations to concrete actions against the perpetrators of such reprehensible acts, whether they be undertaken by the International Criminal Court or by armed intervention, under the approval of the U.N. Security Council.

As I stated at the outset, the universal expectation of justice for all and of respect for moral values is the challenge that contemporary society addresses to the legal system and to those who are responsible for its administration. Such values are to some extent both in the declarations, covenants and international treaties as well as in national charters and constitutions. Our rights must perfect them in response to this expectation.

Our laws contain a multitude of rights and obligations that are precisely set out and based on moral values. But, I also wish to point out, we also find provisions in our laws that are in fact moral precepts in the way they are stated; the best interest of the child, good faith, abuse of rights, numerous professional and commercial codes of ethics, fiduciary obligations, obligations of trustees, environmental standards, right to privacy and other similar human rights. This is a reality that is gaining increasing importance with the extension of law into fields of activity where the standard rules of behaviour are difficult to define with precise clarity, due to the situational complexity characteristic of many new contexts. This new reality more often requires recourse to experience and empiricism and solicits in particular fashion the judicial and administrative authorities. It transcends borders and judicial systems; it moves towards convergence. It calls for reflection and the sharing of experience for the development and implementation of norms that are sensitive enough to determine what rightly falls within the domain of the law, given that the specific function of law is to establish the rules, the infringement of which may be sanctioned by the authority of the state. Laws, it must be remembered, gain legitimacy and are respected thanks to the moral values by which they are inspired. They can instill in them a

certain expression which is limited by the respect for the freedom and dignity of all, but they cannot and should not replace morality, the precepts of which are a call to personal perfection that fosters the betterment of all of society.

There are limits to the protection that law can afford to our moral environment. Laws cannot go beyond a minimal moral consensus, lest they quickly lose their legitimacy. The real protection that is required for our moral environment depends on the degree of responsibility that individuals are ready to assume in the exercise of their freedom. It is wrong to assume that legal rights will provide a universal solution to all our ills. Greater emphasis must be placed on the duties and the responsibilities of the individual towards his community. But this cannot be accomplished through decrees alone. We must also strive to promote assent. One of the major faults in the communist system was the attempt to reach social compliance through obedience. In order to conserve our moral environment, we must be ready not just to foster compliance, but also to instill, especially in youth, a sense of personal commitment towards others and towards society.

Earlier, I made reference to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It has become a central reference point for the definition of certain fundamental values in Canadian society and for the increasing awareness of the need for public values. However, its purpose is only to reflect a minimal consensus that is enshrined in laws that are of universal application, and failure to comply with which may lead to public sanctions, either in the form of imprisonment, fine, injunction, prohibition to exercise a profession or actions for damages.

But this is not sufficient for proper functioning of a society and much less so for the governance of individual conduct. Today, as ever else, this falls into the realm of morality, even if the *Charter* introduced into law an immense new field where hitherto it dared not venture, except under very narrow prescribed limits, for questions that society preferred to reserve solely to morality and to the sanctions of the individual

conscience, the family and the church.

This change has clearly been a giant step forward, and an essential stage in the evolution of our society and of the world. It is necessary due to the increasing complexity of society and social relationships, which call for the emergence of guiding principles. It is essential due to the increasing diversity of individual experience and values.

Still, the *Charter* only represents a small step. It is a call to personal commitment towards the perfecting of society. Such an accomplishment will never be achieved through paper declarations, as charters of rights and freedoms are only worthless texts if there are no responsibilities and duties which ensure that they are enforced and respected. In fact, the biggest challenge that must be met in order to ensure the fulfillment of the promises in the *Charter* is, in my opinion, to ensure that this reality is understood and accepted and that a commitment is made to embrace it. There are many individuals and organizations that have devoted themselves to this task, both here and elsewhere. However, rarely is mention made of obligations and duties, possibly because such words sound like a burden and have negative connotations that are not popular in today's society, where it is much more fashionable to be a militant for human rights. The *Charter* has raised some great hopes, but like all human endeavours, it has its shortcomings and inconveniences. It is a passionate ideal to develop awareness of the existence of rights and to advocate their protection. This is the great motivation behind the *Charter*. But this can also lead to aggressiveness and conflict, because a right has no meaning if it is not respected or exercised. In legal terms, this means that a right is null if there is not a corresponding duty to give effect to the right. Duties are incumbent on individuals. Duties are much less attractive and harder to sell than rights. However, it is through duties that rights gain their fundamental significance.

This is an aspect of the *Charter* that is too often forgotten, in my view. It is a little bit like the dark side of the moon: invisible, sometimes forgotten, less

attractive, but just as vital. To a certain extent, the *Charter* is a statement or a reflection of the moral order, which underlies our society. Even more important is the fact that its achievement depends on the moral order. It is certain that a moral order is the basis on which judicial decisions must be based. It is also certain that the protection of our moral environment is measured by the commitment of our institutions and of all of us, in our work, in our family, and in our private life, to the respect and betterment of law and of the moral which serves it.

We must apply ourselves to better understanding and taking advantage of the resources of our reason and of our consciences, by remembering the first Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which bears repeating:

#### Article One

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

#### Brotherhood

"Spirit of Brotherhood"—This has been at the heart of our discussions since yesterday morning and has provided us with great inspiration. I would like to revisit this subject myself, and to delve a little more deeply into it, to explore its genesis so that I can better grasp and understand it.

Liberty, equality, fraternity—the famous elements of the revolutionary triad have been subject to the vagaries of fortune for the last two centuries. After they were mistreated by colonialism, terrorism and the two world wars that ravaged the twentieth century, the principles of freedom and equality were solidly entrenched in the post-war liberal constitutions. They were more recently incorporated, almost naturally, into the post-communist legal orders over the last decade. Today, increasing numbers of citizens throughout the world are entitled, at least on paper, to the clear legal protection of their rights to freedom and equality.

Protected freedom — or rather freedoms — have become familiar to all of us : freedom of expression, religion, association; political freedoms, protection against arbitrary arrest or seizure, right to a fair trial, etc. These form the fundamental basis of personal rights at both the national and the international level. Their protection has progressed considerably, whether through the actions of international authorities or through recourse to new instruments, such as the project to integrate a European Charter of Fundamental Rights into the future European Constitution. As for equality, it has been protected in many countries by the adoption of provisions to eliminate discrimination and ensure the uniform and fair enforcement of the law. As was so aptly stated by Mr. Jacques Robert,

" [this] concern to ensure the respect for the principle of equality at the highest level of standards certainly represents substantial progress for democracy." <sup>1</sup>

This victory—we are even tempted to say: this triumph — for the legal protection of freedom and equality does, however, pose certain difficulties. The thing that springs immediately to mind is the classical problem of tension between fundamental rights and freedoms and democratic practice, which is based on the will of the majority. Jurists might be tempted to answer that this is more of a political than a judicial problem, since, as the decision to offer protection for fundamental rights and freedoms was made by the legislator, the interpretation of such rights should not in any way be influenced by such considerations. From experience, judges have learned that whenever protected rights require interpretation, the question of the role of the courts in a democratic society as well as the restraint that is required in the context of such deliberations will always arise.

Furthermore, even if we admit the validity of this response, it will not, however, answer all the questions that arise. The second question that arises is in fact strictly legal in nature: this is the question of the balance that has to be struck when protected rights come into conflict among themselves. The clearest

examples of such conflicts are the issue of hate or racist literature or propaganda, which engender a conflict between freedom of expression and the right to equality. We might also think of positive discrimination, which is a policy that opposes two fundamentally different concepts of the meaning of the right to equality. Dilemmas of this nature are bound to increase in societies where the most diverse types of claims are made on the basis of human rights ideology, which the Canadian philosopher Michael Ignatieff, has described as a true "revolution of rights." <sup>2</sup>

Jurists throughout the world are struggling with sensitive questions arising from the judicial consecration of freedom and equality. Is it not possible to find part of the solution by examining the complement to these two in the revolutionary triad?

Indeed, brotherhood does have a rightful place, however modest, in the post-war human rights movement. Again I will quote Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Brotherhood has also been consecrated, albeit indirectly, in the constitutions of various states. In the most salient cases, the principle of brotherhood is given direct expression, very often right in the preamble.<sup>3</sup> In other case, which are much more frequent, brotherhood is not mentioned directly, but rather is alluded to by reference to related principles and values, such as solidarity, social justice, the social state, the dignity of man, tolerance, and other similar concepts.<sup>4</sup> Finally—and this is the case in Canada, whose constitution, arising from the British tradition, avoids making declarations of general principles—we need to examine the non-written constitutions and in legal practice or case law to find the principle of brotherhood.

The challenge we face is how to go beyond brotherhood as an ideal or philosophical aspiration, in order to delimit the specific judicial dimension.

From the outset, a few observations need to be stated:

First of all, in our attempt to give concrete meaning to brotherhood in today's world, we must not underestimate the multiple historical realities that precluded its adoption in many states. In fact, as a value, brotherhood has taken on different shades of meaning and sometimes has a meaning that is remarkably different, depending on the circumstances from which it springs.

The idea of brotherhood has paved a path through the course of the history of several states. In Haiti, it became synonymous with the fight against slavery and the movement to establish national independence, which began at the opening of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also played a key role during the decolonization, following the Second World War, of many of the African countries. More recently, it was invoked as an expression of the will for reconciliation and for the re-establishment of national communities in countries that had gone through destructive divisions, such as the states of the former Yugoslavia, South Africa, or Cambodia. Elsewhere, we see brotherhood or solidarity in manifestations of popular attachment to ancestral traditions or religious traditions. In the Western world, the consecration of values such as solidarity or the social state stems from the will to promote and provide constitutional protection for the mechanisms of social and economic justice that are characteristic of our universal social program.

The varying ways in which brotherhood has been historically manifested bring us to a new observation: we must recognize the flexibility of this value and the wide variety of meanings it can assume—as well as the hopes it can give rise to—for the future. If brotherhood is an absolute and universal value in theory, it is variable in the way it has been implemented. Beyond its national manifestations, brotherhood has a universal scope that applies to all of humanity, as is evidenced in international humanitarian law, which posits a minimum level of respect for human

dignity, even in cases of war. It also has extensions over time, in terms of our obligations to future generations. For example, the obligation to leave a viable and healthy environment to future generations as well as a world order based on peace between nations.

However, in order to be meaningful, brotherhood must be limited in each particular context, over time and space. The link between this concept and the values by which it is constituted lies in the notion of community. Brotherhood is the concept or value that can unite the abstract values of freedom and equality within a real community, above individual interests, by sharing beliefs, values, a same concept of history, a desire to promote the continuity of communities and quite simply, a sense of identity. The values on which it rests are numerous, and there are at least four that immediately come to mind and which are particularly useful for the analysis we wish to make. These values do, of course, go beyond the narrow framework of written law—their first effect will be to inform the administration of the law. In this sense, they are much closer to the spirit of the law than to the letter of the law. Beyond the interpretation of law, brotherhood must inspire conduct to instill courtesy and respect for others.

The first value is **inclusion**, which is the recognition that certain members of society, owing to their vulnerability, require greater protection and a particular commitment from society so that they can fully participate in the community—in this sense, brotherhood also elicits the concept of empathy. Secondly, the community requires **commitment and responsibility**; this is why law recognizes that certain relationships between individuals create specific responsibilities, which sometimes enter into conflict with the more individualistic notions of freedom and equality. Thirdly, brotherhood creates awareness of an obligation, in many cases, to go much farther in our interpersonal relations than just treating them with formal equality or freedom. We are also called upon to act with **justice and equality**, which will help us gain a measure of trust. Lastly, brotherhood in the community calls for

**co-operation**, i. e., the pursuit of common interests through the sharing of resources, which idea is also invocative of the notion of the redistribution of wealth, to the extent that such a notion is compatible with the idea of individual responsibility. Inclusion, commitment, responsibility, **justice and equality**, trust and co-operation are the values that, when placed in the context of community, will guide our examination of the notion of brotherhood.

In the first place, it is important to emphasize the increasing importance of notions related to brotherhood in the constitutions and laws of states. So, even though brotherhood is scarcely ever mentioned before the courts and is even rarer in the written judgments they issue, there is a series of related notions that have been recognized for a long time. The broad diversity of these concepts—whether we invoke solidarity, the social state, equity, social justice or human dignity—does not obscure the link they often hold in common with the values of brotherhood, especially social co-operation and inclusion. It is interesting to note that although the invocation of these related concepts was once rare before the courts, it is becoming more frequent, and consequently, there have been more frequent sanctions. In France, for example, the principle of solidarity has been explicitly mentioned, especially since the beginning of the 1980s. As we have already stated, the enforcement of the principle of equality has also made considerable progress in a variety of fields.

One of the most important developments has been the emergence of the principle of human dignity as a distinct value that is worthy of constitutional protection, as it provides the conceptual foundation for the rights and freedoms that are expressly protected. The Constitutional Court of Albania specifically stated this notion when it confirmed that “both the concepts of life and of human dignity [...] embody very important values, which are considered as the source from which all other rights are derived, as fundamental and absolute rights.” The French Constitutional Council ruled that “the preservation of the dignity of the human person against all forms of

degradation is a constitutionally valid principle," which it applied in order to enforce the right to decent housing, as a constitutional guarantee and to confirm the constitutionality of legislation that sets out certain fundamental principles, including the primacy of the person and the integrity of human space. In Canada, the notion of human dignity has taken a central place in the interpretation that the Supreme Court has given to the constitutionally guaranteed right to equality. Thus, rather than just routinely deciding whether a law being challenged has established distinctions based on grounds that are constitutionally prohibited, the Court ruled that the purpose of this provision is:

To prevent any injury to the essential rights of dignity and human freedom, through the creation of disadvantages, stereotypes, political or social prejudices and to promote a society in which all are equally recognized under the law as human beings and members of Canadian society, all of whom are equally capable, and deserve the same interest, respect and consideration.

This approach, which focuses on the effect of the contested measure on human dignity has enabled us to more clearly define the debate over the legality of measures of positive discrimination that are enacted for groups who are more privileged than the group of the plaintiff, which in no way would cause prejudice to his dignity, despite the formal inequality they entail.

3. This concept, by virtue of which human dignity forms the basis of protection for all fundamental rights, also provides quite an interesting perspective on the legality of restrictions imposed on these rights for the sake of the common interest or for the sake of finding the right balance between conflicting rights. Most constitutions, as well as international human rights covenants, do in fact contain provisions that allow for restrictions on basic rights. The interpretation of what are acceptable limits is the source of constant debate. In Switzerland, as well as in several other countries, the reigning opinion is that the criteria of public interest and of

proportionality applied in this particular context arise from the idea of fraternity. Moreover, Chief Justice Dickson of the Supreme Court of Canada stated in 1986 that "the values and principles that underlie a free and democratic society"—including "respect for the inherent dignity of human beings " and "the respect for all cultures and groups"—"are the very source of the rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the Charter and constitute the fundamental norm, by virtue of which we should establish whether or not the restriction of a right or freedom, despite its effect, constitutes a reasonable limit the justification of which can readily be demonstrated." One may immediately think of the restrictions to freedom of expression which were adopted by many countries in order to protect minorities against hate propaganda.

4. It would be impossible to conclude this discussion of the increasing importance of brotherhood in contemporary jurisprudence without mentioning the increasing importance of international and community law and of the supra-national courts that implement it. Even if its decisions are not binding on a country, it has been observed that the decisions rendered by the European Human Rights Tribunal and European Community Court of Justice, for example, have a considerable impact on decisions rendered by the national courts of the member countries, in the way they develop their general principles in the area of human rights. There are also international treaties and instruments that enshrine brotherhood or its related values, for example, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which is mentioned directly in several constitutions, as well as in the *Congress on the Rights of the Child*.

#### **Future Goals: Brotherhood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The considerable progress that has been achieved in the legal recognition of brotherhood and its related values automatically raises the question of what will be the perspective for these values in the future.

First of all, the increasing influence of

international norms draws our attention to the multiple extensions that flow from brotherhood. If brotherhood is firstly established between individuals and groups within communities, it can also be extended to the different regions and communities that cohabit the same state, then to the international level through the establishment of minimal criteria (such as the protection of fundamental rights and the right of war) as well as the pursuit of common objectives (such as economic development and peaceful conflict resolution). Brotherhood can even extend through time by the concept of intergenerational equality, which exhorts us to take into account the rights and interests of future generations, through policies that are mindful of the environment, sustainable development, control of crimes against humanity and the reconstruction of societies that have been devastated by internal conflict. At every level, brotherhood creates different obligations, but the fundamental underlying obligations are the same.

Then, the choice of relations between the state and the communities, as a central example of progress achieved with respect to brotherhood, should not obscure the fact that are still a great many challenges that remain. The efforts devoted to this task should not be diminished, given the importance of the issues at stake. The integration of ethnic groups and minorities into the political body of the state is not only essential for political stability, but is also a formational experience for all political and judicial classes of societies. The capacity of the law to take into account social diversity in order to make it a unifying rather than a centrifugal force in society will also enhance the capacity of the country to effectively conduct its international relations on a planet where in fact we are all minorities who aspire to be recognized.

One of the important aspects of brotherhood within each country is the recognition and the promotion of alternate modes of conflict resolution, such as conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Methods such as these often go beyond the mere resolution of conflicts between opposing parties, by

allowing them to reconcile their long-term interests in order to prevent the recurrence of similar future conflicts. Clearly, the legal system must ensure that a clear balance is maintained between this desire to promote good relations between parties and a good faith dialogue, free from any inequality in the relations between the parties.

This propensity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, which is at the heart of brotherhood, is evident not only in the context of the resolution of private litigation, but is also of fundamental importance for the negotiated resolution of fundamental constitutional issues. For instance, in a major advisory opinion regarding the terms and conditions of the potential separation of Quebec from the Canadian federation, our Supreme Court responded that even if the Constitution has not provided for such an eventuality, when confronted with the clear will of the majority of the population of the province to separate, as indicated in response to a clear referendum, both federal and provincial authorities would have the obligation to negotiate in good faith, in respect of the rights of all in accordance with the Constitution in response to a legitimately expressed demand. The same obligation to negotiate in good faith and to take into account the tacit obligations arising from the honour of the Crown also emerged in the context of our relations with aboriginal peoples, especially when it comes to negotiating the modifications or renunciations of any of their fundamental rights in order to enhance economic development, for instance, or the exploitation of the natural resources that are found on their ancestral lands.

At the international level, it is to be hoped that the exchange of ideas, information, and resources by organizations like the ones that are responsible for the planning of this conference will make a significant contribution to the emergence of the international brotherhood, of which we are so in need.

Brotherhood does, of course, have its limits, and the rights that find their

inspiration therein are not a necessary guarantee for the resolution of all the disputes that arise between individuals, communities and even nations. But we still have the duty to strive to our utmost to ensure that the spirit of brotherhood will provide support to all those who seek to maintain harmony in the world.

Let us come back for a moment to the slogan "freedom, equality and brotherhood." In my opinion, we cannot talk about a hierarchy between the three elements. If indeed it is true that brotherhood can only exist between men who are free and equal, it is no less true that freedom and equality cannot subsist in a society in which brotherhood is absent. The recognition of this interdependence and the integration of the essential values of brotherhood into the judicial system are essential for the preservation of peace and democracy in this new century.

I would like to conclude by summarizing a few of the guiding principles that should orient our thought, our discussions and eventually our actions to ensure that justice and the administration of justice are in harmony with trends in our society:

1. Justice and the administration thereof must be based on moral values.
2. These values must find their expression and be applied in accordance with a rule of law and not according to the will or intentions of persons in authority.
3. Such values are the expression of the dignity and respect of human beings.
4. They must be defined in accordance with a social consensus on what is essential, while respecting the diversity of application in terms of cultures, beliefs and religions.
5. The values of freedom, equality and brotherhood are the essential expression of the dignity and respect of the human person, and are thus essential to maintaining the social fabric of democracy.

6. The content of these values is a reflection of the attributes of the human person, of his behaviour and of his life framework: needs, family, privacy, property. Such content is variable, within certain limits.
7. Every person individually and collectively in his private and in his public life and every society through its institutions must assume, implement and promote these values. Each and every one of us has this obligation. The respect of rights over obligations.
8. The spirit of the law must have primacy over the letter of the law. This spirit is a test of brotherhood, which is expressed directly through rules and standards, but even more importantly, through our conduct and communication with others. Despite the avatars of history, humanity has an immense reserve of brotherhood and thrives thereon. It is our duty to promote its manifestation. We must find the ways and means to bring to fruition the subjects that we were invited to discuss and reflect upon here.

Thank you. ♦

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- 1 Voir Rapport général de M. Jacques Robert, p. 560.
  - 2 Voir M. Ignatieff, *The Rights Revolution*, Toronto, Anansi, 2000.
  - 3 C'est le cas de la France, d'Haïti, de la Guinée Équatoriale, du Bénin et du Cameroun.
  - 4 Voir Rapport de synthèse de Madagascar, II.2.

## Administration of Justice Forum

### Discrimination: Rights, Justice and the Principle of Equality of Opportunity



Speaker :

**His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré**

President,  
Constitutionnal Council  
of Burkina Faso

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens of 1789 states that “men are born free and equal in rights.” Yet some men are subject to discrimination by their peers or by their governments.

The outcomes of the 1970 oil crisis, as well as the consequences of globalization and political conflicts have intensified the problems of discrimination, which have become a true scourge. All men of democratic principles, who are responsible for the future of humanity, must join forces to eliminate this scourge.

There are two ways in which this can be accomplished: the promotion of so-called ‘positive discrimination’ and the condemnation of prohibited discrimination.

‘Positive discrimination’ consists of taking specific measures in favour of any group of people who are in a position of inferiority with regards to other members of the same group, by means of compensation or as measures that will help to reduce the inequalities to which they are subject.

Positive discrimination can therefore be seen as an attempt to create equality of opportunity for any disadvantaged group so that they may live in harmony with the rest of society.

Positive discrimination is based on the principle of equality itself, which is justified on the basis of the values of solidarity and fraternity. Fraternity must therefore be seen as the link that closely binds individuals in a society, whereas solidarity is the duty of each individual to support, by way of this bond, all other members of society who have fewer material or psychological resources at their disposal.

Positive discrimination has often been criticized. Thus, according to Stephen Breyer of the United States, some people feel that positive discrimination will only perpetuate greater divisions within society. People entitled to benefit from certain advantages simply because they are members of a particular group will continue to identify themselves as members of a minority group, to the detriment of other groups and to the detriment of society itself. Social divisions will only worsen and will inhibit, rather than enhance, the fraternal achievement of true equality in society.

In general, justice does not respond favourably to the notion of positive discrimination. But following the example of the French Constitutional Council, it will countenance positive discrimination on the condition that the measures adopted do not themselves become the source of any kind of discrimination that is incompatible with other constitutional principles or with the goals of law.

Positive discrimination has regularly been used by legislators as a way of achieving equality of opportunity for specific groups of people, as in the cases of Niger and Morocco. Both of these countries introduced quota systems to enhance the presence of women in state institutions, particularly in elected assemblies.

Positive discrimination as a means of achieving equality of opportunity has also been invoked as a means of recognizing specific communities. This is true in the constitutions of such federal states as Belgium, Canada and Switzerland.

The case of Canada is quite particular and worth quoting. In fact, the 1867 Constitution protects the rights of the Protestant minority in Quebec and the Catholic minority in Ontario, which were both entitled to publicly funded separate schools.

The same religious minorities also correspond to distinct linguistic minorities. Section 94 of the Constitution has often been interpreted as a provision that was adopted to provide explicit protection for linguistic minorities.

Current demographic realities in Canada make it impossible to establish direct correspondence between language and religion. The Constitution, which seeks to reflect new realities has moved away from the protection of religious minorities and has emphasized the protection of linguistic minorities.

Hence, in accordance with the 1982 Constitutional Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian citizens whose first language learned and still understood is either English or French, who received their primary education in Canada in either one of these two languages and who live in a province in which they belong to a linguistic minority group, are entitled to enroll their children in a school of their language.

Positive discrimination in favour of minority communities may translate into overriding special status. Hence:

- In Niger, ethnic minorities are entitled to an overriding clause in electoral matters.
- In France, overseas communities have special constitutional recognition.
- In Canada, the Inuit of Nunavut, while not entitled to true special status, do, however, enjoy a degree of self-government.

The international community has developed an array of international instruments that allow national legislators to enact positive discrimination measures that have an impact on the political, economic, social and cultural life of the state. For example:

- The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man;
- The Covenant on equal compensation;
- The Congress on the political rights of women;

- The Congress on the struggle against discrimination in the teaching field;
- The International Congress on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;
- The International Congress on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

International law has defined the types of discrimination that are proscribed. The 1966 International Congress on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination sets out the principle of the prohibition of any "distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, intended to or the effect of which is prejudicial to the recognition, enjoyment or free exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the political, economical, social or cultural spheres or in any other field of public life."

National rights set out in constitutions or legal charters define prohibited grounds of discrimination and also provide mechanisms for their eradication.

Justice, by way of national and international jurisdiction, has come into play in the struggle to eliminate all forms of discrimination, with varying degrees of success. Court referrals are not always adequate to counter the discriminatory acts to which victims are subject.

In somewhat fortuitous fashion, the Court of Justice of the European Communities (CJEC) has demonstrated its concern with the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms by reversing the burden of proof to the detriment of the presumption of innocence.

Higher jurisdictions have not gone this far, because many of them place limits on the freedom of evidence out of respect for the rules of production and will even sometimes go as far as treating certain forms of evidence as theft (sic).

Jurisdictions limit victims' leeway by refusing to grant them the procedural measures they need in order to amass the evidence required to prove discrimination.

In other areas, some jurisdictions are in

the forefront in the fight against discrimination.

These are in the areas of education and social protection. Thus, with regards to social protection, the Court of Justice of the European Communities in the KRID judgment dismissed the condition of reciprocity and condemned France for having maintained in its social security code a condition under which immigrant workers are denied social security benefits.

Similarly, in the field of social protection, certain French administrative policies were deemed by local communities to have been illegally introduced into legislation: the exclusion of parental leave benefits, because neither of the parents were of French nationality; the family allowance for the birth of a third child being made conditional upon the parents' registration on the voters' list; and subjecting the 5,000 franc birth allowance to the condition that the parents be of French nationality or citizens of a European Union country.

With regard to the integration of immigrant populations into the school system, France is the country that has the most significant corpus of jurisprudence relating to the wearing of headscarves by Moslem girls. After a first case emerged at the College of Creil in 1989, the National Minister of Education requested a legal opinion from the Council of State on the compatibility of allowing religious apparel in a public school system. The full General Assembly of the Council of State issued a response on November 27, 1989, affirming that "the wearing of apparel which indicates membership in a religious group is not in itself incompatible with lay principle to the extent that it represents the exercise of religious freedom."

The Council of State confirmed the legality of this opinion on November 2, 1992, and November 23, 1993.

Between 1992 and 1999, the Council of State overturned 41 of 49 decisions by school administrations that had forbidden the wearing of headscarves. However, according to the Council of State, students do not have absolute

freedom because in its legal notice it states that “such freedom does not allow students to wear signs of religious adornment, which by their nature, or by way of ostentation or vindication, constitute acts of proselytizing or propaganda, cause prejudice to the freedom or the dignity of the student or of other members of the educational community, endanger their health or security, perturb the conduct of regular activities and the educational role of the teachers, or are disruptive for the school establishment or the proper functioning of regular public service.” Sanctioned under these conditions were:

- Repeated absence from physical education classes;
- Acts of proselytizing
- The wearing of apparel incompatible with the normal flow of classes.

The struggle to eliminate prohibited grounds of discrimination has also been hindered by other obstacles, owing to:

- 1) The negative reaction of the police (frequently reported in Europe), who have been criticized for the little interest they showed not so much in the complaints as in the complainants, who often were charged with insulting and obstructing officers in the course of their duty;
- 2) The negative reaction of courts that tend to classify such complaints with no due follow-up and without notice to the complainants;
- 3) The lack of protection afforded to complainants against reprisals from their employers, if they have taken out complaints against the latter;
- 4) The lack of means of intervention by unions and by anti-racist movements;
- 5) The passivity of judges and their refusal to order measures that are favourable to the victims;
- 6) The limits placed on the offence itself;
- 7) Ineffective convictions.

Fortunately, such obstructions can be

corrected. At various times, the creation of an independent administrative authority that would be given full jurisdiction over such types of discrimination has been recommended. This has been achieved in various jurisdictions in the European Community: through the Racial Equality Board of Great Britain; the Centre for Equality of Opportunity and the Fight against Racism in Belgium; the Centre for Equal Treatment and the National Discrimination Expertise Centre in the Netherlands; the High Commission for Integration in France, and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

The mission of such administrative structures is to fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance from the perspective of human rights, especially through the provision of judicial and financial assistance to victims, and the development of proposals and suggestions regarding the problems as identified.

Furthermore, and in a general fashion, the adoption of a national policy against discrimination has been proposed. The goals of this policy are:

- The inclusion in the Labour Code of an explicit provision to protect complainants and witnesses against employer reprisals;
- The permission for anti-racist associations to pursue legal cases or to act as party to cases, in the same capacity as unions, without limitation to jurisdiction;
- Lengthen the list of potential offences in all cases of discrimination;
- The broadening of the investigative powers of labour commissioners, particularly with respect to the type of documents they may demand;
- Allow victims and union stewards the right to consult labour inspector files in order to amass evidence of discrimination;
- Protection of victims’ rights against

undue reprisals by defendants;

- Confirm the rights of victims to sue defendants who engage in reprisals;
- Ensure victims have the right to due procedural measures;
- Recognition of victims’ rights to the disclosure of all documents of the alleged perpetrator of discriminatory acts or behaviour;
- Obligation of the police and the courts to examine all complaints and authorize them for judgment, where applicable;
- Training for police personnel and magistrates of specialized courts that have jurisdiction over violations of human rights, fundamental freedoms and discrimination;
- Establishment of a special section in the police and courts to deal with discrimination and racism complaints;
- Increase the severity of sentences and include additional measures for deterrence for potential perpetrators of discriminatory acts or behaviour;
- Incentives to courts to pronounce maximum sentences;
- Establish hiring quotas from ethnic and linguistic communities for police and court staff;
- Where possible, reversal of the burden of proof.

I thank you. ♦

# Media Forum



*The Media Forum was chaired by Peter Desbarats, Professor Emeritus of the University of Western Ontario.*

The speakers were the President of the IFPE and Director of the Centre for Preventive Psychology and Human Development, Mr. Moncef Guitoni

and communications consultant and former journalist, Mr. Philippe Bélisle.

## Synthesis of the Media Forum



**Ms. Monique Laboureur**

Vice-president, IFPE,  
Rapporteur

*The Media Forum held on October 28 in Montreal was chaired by Mr. Peter Desbarats, Professor Emeritus of the University of Western University, Ontario, Canada. The Forum facilitators were Mr. Moncef Guitouni, IFPE President, and Mr. Philippe Bélisle, former journalist and communications consultant in Canada.*

The objective of this Forum was to examine the following questions:

**How do the media influence our perceptions of and knowledge about other people?**

**Do they have some kind of accountability in this respect and can they be monitored? Can they be perceived as a factor of inclusion?**

**Do they have any contribution to make towards the educational reinforcement of parents?**

### The conferences

The Chair, Mr. Peter Desbarats, asked the following questions: What responsibility do the media have? Do the media have a role to play in education? What is their contribution to the advancement of democratic values in the context of linguistic, racial and cultural pluralism?

According to Mr. Desbarats, written and broadcast media essentially deal with the news, and thus reflect change as it occurs in an irreversibly pluralistic society. The media promote freedom of expression and of the truth, at all costs, even at the risk of the lives of journalists.

Mr. Philippe Bélisle stated his regret that, despite the undeniable presence of the multicultural media, there has been no real ethnic dialogue. In fact, these media groups usually propose news content that is specific to the cultural groups they represent, and do not to any great extent represent the global issues of the host society. According to Mr. Bélisle, the dialogue between cultures should be conducted in a spirit of openness and not in a spirit of confrontation.

He also noted that there are very few journalists who hail from ethnic groups in Quebec, with perhaps the exception of radio. Most immigrants do not see themselves reflected in most media.

Mr. Moncef Guitouni mentioned that the presence of the media in the home or at school is an advantage, but one that is often challenged. According to Mr. Guitouni, we are only beginning to understand the hazards of television on human development. The dangers involve culture, education and the individual person. Among the most notable threats, Mr. Guitouni cited the induction of alpha waves, one-dimensional thinking, excessive commercialism, manipulation, violence, etc. Youth are exposed to such dangers on a daily basis. Alpha waves have a psychological impact that renders youth neutral and passive. The brain is limited to passively receiving information that it does not have the opportunity to analyze and understand.

Despite the fact that it does enhance the early intellectual maturity of children, the bombardment and intensive stimulation of graphic images also thwart the affect maturity of children. Mr. Guitouni stated that because parents are occupied elsewhere, children are left to themselves and their own devices with respect to the media (television, Internet, etc.) which may induce them to adopt lines of conduct that are dictated from afar.

In order to ensure proper management in this domain for the present as well as for the future, Mr. Guitouni stated that the media must, to some extent, be held accountable and that parents have an educational role that must not be neglected if we are to pursue the appropriate solutions.



## The Debate

Mr. Philippe Bélisle drew the attention of participants to the following example: the media helped to accelerate the end to the war in Vietnam.

In order to relate this to the theme of the forum, he asked a question relevant to his own experience as a father and as a journalist. "As a father and journalist working evenings at a T.V. station, I wondered whether or not I could limit my children's right to watch T.V. during the week?" The following answers were proposed as possible justifications: parents have a duty to educate and control. They can limit television, but it is a much harder thing to put restrictions on the computer and on the Internet.

During the course of the debate, the participants raised a variety of questions such as: What is the role of public television? What price is society willing to pay for quality journalism when we know that it costs \$12,000 to ensure a war correspondent? The participants suggested in answer to these questions:

- The denunciation of sitcoms and network television in general as broadcast across most channels from north to south.

- Careful attention to the onslaught of images and information. They tend to disturb family life, social behaviours, and the ability to think and communicate.
- The distinction between good and bad media; we must absolutely be able to develop our capacity to choose. This is the role of parents and educators who must remain open to dialogue with their children.

Generally speaking, the participants noted that the media have an important role to play in the promotion of democratic values in society. For this reason, the press must maintain its freedom, but it must also be governed by solid ethics and some kind of professional corporation. In fact, there are almost no more career journalists. Most are self-employed freelancers, who have no choice but to often ignore their principles in order to ensure that the newspaper sells.

Participants also emphasized the importance of critical thinking in society. This provides the antidote to disinformation that can have serious consequences as well as racist connotations. ♦

*Media Forum*

Speaker : **M. Peter Desbarats**

Professor emeritus,  
University of Western Ontario, Canada

The timing of this conference is particularly fortuitous. In Canada and other developed countries the concept of a pluralistic and democratic society is increasingly under attack from within and without. Nothing could be more opportune than what this conference is doing - reviewing what we have accomplished in recent decades, or failed to achieve, and making a reasoned assessment of where progress can be achieved in future. The future, of course, is in our children and in this sense it is literally in our own hands as parents. And I should include, for those of my own generation, grandparents, being the proud grandfather of 10 representing many ancestries: Québécois, English, Scottish, Irish, Jewish, German and, most recently, Cameroonian.

In this forum, we are discussing specifically the role of media in furthering democratic values within a pluralistic society. Of course we all tend to see this topic within the context of our own societies but I think I can make a case for considering Canada as a prime example of a modern and increasingly pluralistic society. You can see and hear this in the streets of this city. I'm particularly conscious of this change as someone born and educated in Montreal, an anglophone of French-Canadian, Scottish and American ancestry. And I'm even more aware of this during my frequent visits to Toronto, two hours east of my home in London, Ontario. Toronto advertises itself as the most multicultural city in the world with about half its population being made up of visible minorities. Montreal and Toronto symbolize the changes that have occurred everywhere in Canada in my generation. We have become racially and linguistically a far more diversified society - in fact, a radically different society - and we have achieved this in a very short space of time and with - I can say this, I hope, without being too parochial - an unusual degree of success. But even in this country, in recent years, the concept of a free, open and tolerant society has come under attack more frequently. The small-l "liberal" dreams of the Sixties and Seventies are now often regarded as impractical, romantic and old-fashioned. There has been a perceptible drift to the right in our major federal political parties which is also illustrated by the recent emergence of a right-wing federal party to balance the traditional but currently enfeebled socialist party on the left. Since Sept. 11, 2001, civil liberties in Canada have come under attack, although not as severely as in the United States.

Our news media have reflected this development both in their coverage of events and in recent changes in the structure and ownership of Canadian media. As in many developed countries, ownership of our media in recent decades has become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. In recent years, for the first time, our federal broadcast regulators have permitted cross-ownership by allowing the formation of huge media empires embracing newspapers, television and new information media. And in one case in

English-speaking Canada we have seen this unprecedented concentration of editorial and political influence used openly to promote the views of an individual owner, in this case to advocate support of the Israeli side of the current conflict in the Middle East and to castigate journalists who don't agree with this position. This has created a predictable backlash among our growing Islamic minorities and aggravated divisions within our country during a time when the values of tolerance and freedom of discussion are already under threat because of external events over which we have little control.

You will have to forgive me for immediately launching into a discussion of news media when the title of this session is simply "Forum on the media." After spending 50 years as a working journalist and journalism educator and commentator, I have a tendency to insert the word "news" before any reference to media. And I suspect, in fact, that we will spend much of our time this afternoon discussing the pervasiveness and influence of modern news media but it would be a mistake to limit our discussion to news media and we will certainly welcome comments from and about other media worlds. That being said, it's also true that all types of media are now being brought together within a new information universe, that many of our best sources of information about political, economic and other developments, including news media, are found today on the Internet and that they are produced by people who hardly resemble journalists according to the old congress.

The organizers of this conference have posed a number of questions to this forum. These deal with media influence and responsibility, with the thorny issue of media regulation, with the question of whether media have a responsibility not only to reflect our societies but to improve them and finally with the difficult question as to whether a productive connection can be made between the media's responsibility to society and parental responsibility toward children since we are all, to some extent, the children of our news media. We all live in a world where, to give George Orwell's famous phrase a new twist, Big Brother Is Watching You

Watching News Media about Big Brother  
Watching You Watching News Media  
About...etc...etc.

We also have to remember, as we discuss media this afternoon, that the word itself, even when limited to news media, is handy and essential shorthand for a universe that is extraordinarily diverse, that contains The Globe and Mail, The New York Times and the National Observer, that news media are produced by some of the world's largest corporations as well as

some of the smallest from General Electric to a neighbourhood church publishing a bulletin every Sunday, that journalists can range from brilliant writers and political philosophers to the most venal purveyors of smutty gossip, and from multi-millionaire television anchors to reporters on community weekly papers who earn far less and work much harder than the teachers in local schools whose strikes and work-to-rule campaigns they dutifully report.. And finally we have to remember that beneath all the dross and confusing clutter of modern media, journalism rests on a rock-solid foundation of commitment to free expression. The free press and democracy are inseparable; the need of many journalists to report the truth under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances is rooted in the human appetite and struggle for freedom. And that's why, in this struggle, journalists continue to risk their lives and to die in increasing numbers.

Recently I was involved as an expert witness in a court case concerning police seizure of documents from a newsroom in Toronto and police attempts to learn the identities of whoever had supplied these documents to the journalists. The lawyers for the police, for the state in effect, rested a large part of their case on the fact that journalism is not a profession like others. Unlike law or medicine, for instance, journalism has no formal entrance requirements in most democratic countries, no certification process, no legislated disciplinary boards. In the eyes of lawyers, this absence of formal credentials and legal structure is a fatal flaw. So much for the limitations of lawyers. My response to this is that this so-called flaw is the sine qua non of a free press, it's most essential characteristic. The lawyers cry, "Where are your credentials?" The journalist's

response is to point at the bodies of hundreds of journalists killed every year in the course of their work and soon largely forgotten by everyone except their own families and other journalists. What other credentials do we need? How many lawyers give up their lives every year in the cause of freedom?

But we have two speakers more familiar than I with these issues. Let me close these introductory remarks by placing some relevant data on the table. This comes from an ongoing and unpublished research project undertaken by the Canadian Journalism Foundation. It is based on a series of 16 focus groups across the country, in both English and French, as well as interviews with opinion makers and influential decision-makers in Canadian news media and Canadian society generally. This data will form the basis of a national survey in the near future involving several thousand people.

I might add that this is the first time that such an independent survey of media and public expectations has been undertaken in Canada. The title of this project is "Media and Public Expectation" and the most important finding to date, to journalists like myself who are involved in the Foundation, is the high value placed on news media by the Canadian public. In the words of a preliminary report on this project to the Foundation, there is a "deep and profound appreciation of the role of news media" in our society and "participants in the focus groups had a deep and abiding understanding of the essential rationale for a free press." This was an encouraging finding for journalists who sometimes develop a cynical attitude toward the mass audience and a rebuke to those media owners whose business strategies are based on appeals to the "lowest common denominator" of public intelligence.

But this surprisingly high level of public expectation was also reflected in equally high levels of dissatisfaction with news media. In the focus groups there was concern about sensationalism and negativity in the news. This was seen as contributing to a "mind-numbing sameness across news media" as well as neutering debate on important issues and escalating conflict.

In this area there was a profound disconnect between journalists and media owners who believed that the media are responding to public demand by producing a sensationalized product and members of the media audience who blame journalists and media owners for promoting an appetite for cheap and sensational news.

Although the readers, viewers and listeners involved in this study tended to describe Canadian news media as more objective and accurate than news originating in the United States, there were still significant levels of discontent with the Canadian product. This was reflected in a finding that "most focus group participants believed that the media should be held accountable for their actions, above and beyond basic legal accountability, and most also felt that there should be some type of regulatory body for the media." This finding relates directly to one of the questions about media listed by organizers of this forum: "Can they be supervised?" Our study suggests that the Canadian answer to this is "yes" although we also found that the notion of regulatory supervision of news media was more strongly supported by participants in central Canada than in Western Canada. Those who supported regulation of news media felt that, in the words of one participant, news media are "not held accountable to the same extent as we are in our jobs."

There was one aspect of news media that all participants in our study agreed on: its importance. The program for this forum asks: "What is the influence of news media in the making of our perceptions and of our understanding of other people?" Everyone in our study agreed that it is enormous. They also indicated through their own patterns of media usage that technology is changing the role and influence of newspapers, that the rise of television in recent decades to become the most important news medium may be levelling off and that the Internet is becoming a major source of news for the public and, significantly, for journalists themselves.

So we're dealing with a subject in this forum that affects everyone, that is controversial and that is undergoing rapid technological change and that should make for a lively, informative discussion. ♦

*Media Forum*

Speaker :

**Mr. Philippe Bélisle**

Former journalist and communications  
consultant in Canada

### Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I prepared my notes for today's presentation, I must admit that I had the same reflex as Professor Desbarats, to focus explicitly on information media, while the workshop theme is devoted to the media in general. This is perhaps just an intellectual prejudice, after having spent more than twenty years as a radio and television reporter in several regions throughout the country.

I will therefore be talking to you today about information media and focus my comments on a field that is much more familiar to me than the "new media." Even if it may appear somewhat presumptuous on my part, as an old-stock Québécois, to address the issues of cultural communities and to think out loud about the role of the media in a pluralistic society, I can at least confide to you that my family experience reflects this reality. One of my brothers is married to a Chinese woman, another to a Latin-American woman, and one was married to an Italian woman. The mother of one of my own children is from Cambodia. But at this point I will stop making any further disclosures concerning my private life.

On a more serious note, and judging by the number of newspapers that are published in languages other than French or English, we are tempted to say that the ethnic media are thriving in Quebec. There are roughly forty different publications addressed to as many different cultural communities currently established in our city.

In Montreal, Radio Centre-Ville is a multilingual community radio station that provides regular broadcasts in at least 7 languages, including Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Greek and Spanish. There is also a multilingual, multicultural T.V. station, CH TV, which broadcasts in about a dozen different languages.

The ethnic media have become a fertile target for specialized advertising and press relations firms seeking to market their products and services and specific projects for their corporate clients. The Quebec Ministry of Relations with Citizens and of Immigration, as well as federal departments and agencies

communicate regularly with these media in the course of their ordinary mandates.

In appearance at any event, the impressive number of foreign language media, as well as the access to international information from a variety of sources, thanks to new technologies, such as the Internet, is evidence of the explicit recognition of the pluralistic nature of contemporary Quebec society.

But we must note a paradox. If the ethnic media are a reflection of our multicultural society, they seem to be just as negligent as the major media in omitting from their editorial content the whole aspect of intercultural dialogue. This is the conclusion that was reached by eminent specialists and reported at the conference held last year in Montreal by the Association for Intercultural Education in Quebec.

According to Gilles Monrosty and Rosario Demers, who are respectively the Director and the President of the Association, the ethnic media in general offer content that merely targets their intended cultural groups, and has little reflection on the issues of interest to all of Quebec society. The danger, according to these authors, is one of cultural isolationism and the emergence of distorted perceptions that readers, listeners and viewers are likely to develop with respect to other members of Quebec society. In some ways, it would be like the return to two solitudes that typified relations between French and English society in Quebec and Canada.

During this meeting, it was also disclosed that immigrants prefer to buy foreign newspapers as a means of staying abreast of international news. They find that local news outlets depend too much on international press releases and have an overly homogeneous view of events happening around the world.

For many newcomers, the press from other countries, especially from countries in the south, available either at newsstands or via the Internet, offer a more comprehensive view of international events, and are therefore more closely aligned to the expectations and perceptions that are characteristic of newly created ethnic communities.

Are we facing a new and serious trend in immigration? If so, it stands as an indictment of major Canadian and Quebec media, which have failed to attract a broad readership that would include all citizens, regardless of their origin.

It must be remembered that, in the aftermath of 9/11, the mass media were accused of overexposing certain features of the Islamic community. According to Demers and Monrosty, Islamic communities were stigmatized by the way they were portrayed in the media, which led to a deterioration in intercultural relations. This situation was well documented in the United States, where the major media were accused of anti-Islamic hysteria.

How, then, did our own media in Canada and Quebec fare on the same subject, that is, on the consequences of September 11? A study conducted in the same year by François-Pierre Gingras, Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Ottawa, is quite disturbing.

Entitled, *The Portrayal of Identity Issues in the Media in the Aftermath of September 11 (our translation)*, the study by Gingras and his research team sought to understand how the media help to model public opinion, especially when dealing with identity issues. In other words, how do the media succeed in presenting differences to their readers when they cover international events in times such as 9/11?

The study first sought to establish the relative importance of space granted to various identifiable groups in international news coverage. It then set out to verify whether or not the representation of such differences was either negative or positive. The authors referred to "identity distinctions" in terms of differences in language, religion, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, race or geographical region within the same country or between two or more countries.

The team then spent two weeks during November 2001 scrutinizing five major Canadian dailies. These included the Globe and Mail, the National Post, Le

Droit, the Ottawa Citizen, and Montreal's La Presse.

Result: the major part of the information contained in 4 out of the 5 daily newspapers scrutinized made reference to identity distinctions.

86% in the National Post  
58% in La Presse  
39% in the Globe and Mail

As to the nature of the identity distinctions that were most often reported, nationality or ethnicity (in 60% of cases) and religion (in 17% of cases) occurred most frequently.

"It goes without saying," as was stated by the author of the study, "that identity distinctions are at the heart of most political conflict, especially distinctions based on religious or ethnic groups, although they are less frequently the cause than the consequence of conflicts between political and economic interests."

According to the author, this result simultaneously confirms the diagnosis reached by several other researchers, who assert that the media too easily attribute blame to particular groups and who describe antagonisms in terms of ethnicity. This only too easily reinforces the stereotype of ethnic hate that opposes groups in conflict.

Even though the study did note variations from one daily newspaper to another, most of the headlines reflected a negative portrayal of identity distinctions; in other words distinctions of language, religion, ethnicity, etc. are closely associated with the emergence of tension, conflict, rivalries, dangers, violence, etc.

Thus, 84% of the headlines in the National Post portrayed unfavourable identity distinctions, as opposed to only 53% in the Globe and Mail and 49% in La Presse. The proportion was almost the same in terms of the photos or the political caricatures that were published.

On the other hand, maps and tables that were published to portray identity distinctions were not on the whole unfavourable.

The author reached the following conclusion: the close scrutiny of 5 influential newspapers in Canada showed that identity distinctions occupied an important place in the coverage of international political news two months after the events of September 11, 2001, and that the portrayal of such distinctions tended to be unfavourable or negative.

This did not, however, prevent some newspapers from publishing highly critical articles and editorials on American policy and balanced views of Islam, Afghanistan and globalization, particularly in La Presse of Montreal.

While this study is interesting from several perspectives, it represents a snapshot of our media during a given time period. It remains to be established to what extent the negative portrayal of identity distinctions has an impact on the evolution of public opinion in Canada and Quebec. Although I do not want to hazard a response to such a question, it is nevertheless a question that is worthy of future investigation.

In the second part of my presentation, I would like to deal with the question of media accountability with respect to the formation of our conceptions and knowledge of the "other."

This question has been regularly raised for the last eighteen years, during which time I practised as a journalist. I think we had to wait until the early 1980s before the first Asian reporter was hired at Radio Canada. She was of Cambodian origin and settled in Montreal during the great wave of immigration in the mid-1970s, following the Vietnam war. When she was interviewed during the selection process, one of the directors, thinking he would trap her, asked her whether she knew the name of the goalkeeper for the Montreal Canadiens Hockey Team.

Since the young journalist was an avid fan of our national sport, she pleasantly surprised the selection committee by delivering a monologue that lasted for several minutes about the chances of the Montreal team making it to the play-offs that year. ...

She not only got the job, but today she pursues a fruitful career and was even elected vice-president of the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists.

Another anecdote will help to illustrate the thinking of the media when it is time to hire reporters of ethnic origin. In the early 1990s, the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists proposed the organization of placements for candidates from cultural communities in various media enterprises.

I was a member of the jury, and there was a young woman with an exotic name whose parents were from Sri-Lanka.

The difficulty was that this young woman spoke with the same Québécois accent as me. She was born and completed her studies in Quebec. For me she was “*pure-laine*,” as we are accustomed to say... That year, she was the candidate chosen by the selection committee.

On the one hand, we were seeking to create a visible place for a member of a minority group within the media, but on the other hand we didn't want the chosen candidate to be too different. Quite an irony of fate ...

How does the situation stand today? We are forced to admit it; today, journalists from cultural communities are still few and far between in our media, and this is even more alarmingly so on television.

Whereas, in Toronto, it is not unusual to see African or Asian journalists as anchormen, in Montreal unfortunately, our visible minorities still remain ... invisible.

There are of course exceptions, such as my ex-colleague, Michaëlle Jean, who is Haitian in origin; and Céline Galipeau and Nathalie Chung, both of whom are Eurasian and very competent, and who hold sway over a desert of uniformity of native-born Québécois.

At the beginning of the 1990s, a private station from Montreal was the first news outlet to appoint a Black anchorwoman for the news hour. The poor, unfortunate woman was literally cast into the lions' den in that she was not given the appropriate training and was consequently pulled by the station a few

months later. If anyone wanted to kill her career it would have been hard to find a better way. ...

The situation is a little bit better on public radio. In the past several years, a number of journalists from cultural communities have been hired by Radio-Canada.

Among others, I can think of the very talented Akli Ait-Abdallah, who has provided us with an alternative perspective of current affairs and who has done some great reporting from the Middle East.

He is not the only reporter of North African origin, but he is the only one whose voice is heard on the radio. Others are limited to writing copy or doing research, which is still better than it was a few years ago.

As for the national French-speaking print media, there are some important exceptions. It is generally recognized, however, that Quebec still has a good deal of progress to make before we can put a true face on our rich cultural diversity.

Ironically, if you read the English papers or watch English TV, you will find more visible minority journalists in Quebec.

The reason most frequently cited by French-language media companies to explain the absence of more candidates from cultural communities is that qualified candidates are not applying in great numbers. I am not sure whether or not this is a legitimate reason, but I think we should examine the question from the other end of the microscope: the absence of journalists, other than white and old-stock candidates, is a way of sending a clear message to visible minorities. As the latter do not see themselves reflected in our major media, they are disinclined to pursue a journalistic career.

Another explanation, which is commonly accepted by most journalists, is that because Quebec is itself a minority group in North America, it unconsciously seeks to protect itself and to exclude journalists who are not part of this “majority minority group.”... an attitude that does little for the honour of the profession...

The fact remains, that to my knowledge, the Quebec Federation of Professional Journalists has never given any award, scholarship or bursary to any journalist hailing from a cultural minority. They do, however, offer a scholarship to the Aboriginal communities of Canada in order to encourage their members to undertake studies in journalism.

In such conditions, it is difficult to hope that the information media will play some role in the perception that Québécois listeners, viewers or readers have of others.

We must not of course fall into bad faith. We do have to recognize that all of our media sources, both written and electronic, have made considerable efforts over the course of the past few years to better explain the international issues and the complexity of many conflicts, whether they be in East Timor, Rwanda or in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

While the didactic dimension of the message has improved, the messengers are still white and old-stock. It is equally true that certain members of the cultural communities of Quebec do not see themselves reflected in the media.

If the past is any guarantee of the future, it is very unlikely that any changes will come from the barons of the media industry. Cultural communities will themselves have to exercise more lobbying. We can only hope that a true debate will take place in the utmost of serenity and open-mindedness rather than in a spirit of conflict and confrontation.

I thank you for your attention. ♦





Speaker :

**Mr. Moncef Guitouni**

Psycho-sociologist,  
President,  
International Federation for  
Parents Education

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The theme of my presentation, **Mass Media and Education**, urges us to go beyond the mere observation of the pros or cons of television. There are a multitude of questions that need to be answered. Television, whether in the home, at school, or in society in general, is not simply a convenience, as it is also under serious challenge. We are only just beginning to understand the dangers associated with the influence of television, which tends to condition human beings, especially children, through the omnipresence of the artificial image. The artificial also becomes increasingly realistic as the creative abilities of producers are enhanced and refined through technological progress.

Countless studies have been conducted to facilitate the development of the perfect recipes to stimulate specific emotions or reactions in television viewers. As it is clear that this new universe that is parallel with reality will continue in the future to make important claims on the emotional experience of future generations, it is essential that we learn now how to manage the media, especially television. There is a very simple reason for this. All education and every emotional relationship, whether between an individual and a young person or between an image and a young person, create predispositions, develop relations and will structure the mental capacities. This structuring of the cognitive dimension is a basic element that touches upon the emotions, inciting movements or reactions; in children it may also induce the person to adopt lines of conduct from a distance. We know for sure that television has an influence over children.

Today's youth do not have a historical legacy of relationships to the past, past civilizations or culture in their mental structure. Nor have youth had the opportunity to develop the ability for critical thinking, analysis and understanding. Their brains have been neutralized by the alpha rays that radiate from the luminosity of the screen. These restraining rays induce somnolence in

individuals, especially in children, cloud their judgment and tend to make them passive.

Toffler stated in *Future Shock*:

One of the great unformulated dilemmas of our times involves the relationship between factitious and authentic experiences in life. No past generation has ever lived a tenth of the factitious experiences which we generously make available to ourselves and to our children. And no one in this world has the least idea of the consequences that such a monumental transformation will have on the personality. Our children are maturing physically faster than us. (...) Young people grow up faster. It is clear that many young teenagers today, who are children of television and immediate access to mountains of information, are precociously reaching intellectual maturity, but what happens to affective development when the proportion of factitious experience outpaces real experience? Does this escalation of the artificial contribute to or stunt emotional maturity? (our translation)

For several decades now, education and culture have become dependent on economic markets and consumption. In this framework, human intelligence does not have access to true culture or true education, by which it is stimulated; i.e. the entire set of social structures, artistic, religious, intellectual and educational manifestations and knowledge based on the human person in evolution. They have been replaced by mass culture that focuses mainly on leisure and recreation, designed to socially condition people to become remote-controlled robots, whose actions can be triggered by advertising slogans sponsored by those whose interest it is snatch them into their nets. Throughout the entire Western world, television programs have as content more than 50% violence and 35% work of consumerism, with less than 5% devoted to education.

Such observations justify impact studies that should be performed to evaluate not

only the dangers for culture and education, but also the dangers for individual persons. Furthermore, for several years now, more and more scientists and specialists on psychological conditioning have sought to understand the entire process, beginning with the proliferation of the mass media and extending to the transformation of behaviours and attitudes of people. For my part, since 1972, a large portion of my own research has been devoted to observing and analyzing people's behavioural fluctuations and mental structures. The work I was conducting in the 1990s led me to some troubling discoveries concerning certain behavioural manifestations in young people, notably involving violence. I found that there was an absence of feelings of guilt or remorse in young people when they engaged in violent actions. I also observed that parents had strong feelings of guilt when their children did not meet up with their aspirations. Unfortunately, such feelings of guilt often led to permissiveness, which left young people with the impression that, they themselves, and not their parents, were on the right track.

My findings were not meant to criticize anyone. As a researcher interested in human behaviour, my main interest is to help people achieve balanced behaviours, which are formed not simply by conformity to external laws, but rather by conformity to their own identity, as loving, well-grounded individuals, respectful of who they are, as well as respectful of nature and the environment, and as persons who do not exploit their capacities to act unjustly or by force, or to commit wrong or to injure or harm others. The work that is expected of adults, in order to understand youth, should not be unduly affected by emotional sentiments. We do not merely seek to fulfil all the satisfactions of the young person or to provide them with whatever he or she may wish because we also have a responsibility towards the young. We have to know how to prepare youth, to accompany them in their efforts in life, day in and day out, so as to assist them as they move towards adulthood. We must assist them with authentic and not factitious experiences, so that when they reach adulthood they will be able to understand life as it is, not as it has been conveyed to them through the artificiality

of images, which may give them a false direction, leading them away from their true interests and the interests of the community, and even the nation, in which they live.

Globalization and the information highway have today opened the borders of the economy and of communications. However, has the opening up of our borders been for the benefit of human beings, or has it merely been for the benefit of those who exercise the capacity to condition and to dominate others? Turn on your television at any time during the day and you immediately have access to a multitude of channels via cable, satellite or digital signal. Our children are no longer in our own hands and our societies are no longer protected. How will we succeed in giving our children a solid education, teach them the art of living, and prepare them for the future while they remain under the influence of the media, about which we know so little in terms of who controls them or what their motives are?

Today, even the notion of nationhood has almost entirely lost its meaning. The media have so completely penetrated our borders and invaded our economy that we now live under the control of interest groups that often haven't the slightest inkling of the significance of our cultures, aspirations, emotions and needs. Unfortunately, since the 1960s, few adults have attached any importance to maintaining any meaningful links with knowledge of the past or of ancient civilizations. They fail to understand that by severing our bonds with the past, they might cause irreparable harm to future generations. Today, because of our insatiable desire for progress and the pursuit of technological advancement, we adults have been seduced by the facility and convenience that progress procures, and all the more so when we think back to our own youth and the hardships we were forced to endure, which we tend to see as injustices.

Research into behaviour, as part of the development process of identity, is not meant solely to procure an enhanced sense of self-assurance for the ego. It must form the basis for the consolidation of the ego by means of resisting pressure and hostility. If technology makes daily living easier by eliminating some of life's

tasks and drudgery, we must remember that there are still many people who encounter considerable social and material difficulties. However, they are also seduced by television that they, too, will one day have access to such technology, which they may legitimately strive to acquire. Yet, they are not informed of the concomitant dangers and consequences.

It is also true that no one from past generations ever really foresaw the speed with which television would develop or how quickly mass communications would become omnipresent and invade our family life, our schools and our society. The world of mass communications is beyond our control and has fallen into the hands of interest groups interested in marketing consumer goods, such as electronic goods disks, breakfast cereals, soft drinks, cars, drugs, and all other manner of household consumer appliances.

The mass media have fallen under the control of the mercantile class and the rule of money. As nothing is accomplished or achieved without the help of sponsors or advertising, the media have fallen under the control of capital, and this is particularly true in the United States. Schiller has stated that: "In order to properly function as a system—deliver goods and services to consumers, reminding them constantly that democracy is consumer freedom, — print media, radio, television, cable, and satellites have to become marketing instruments" (*our translation*). Broad, another specialized journalist, sums up such progress in these terms: "The cold war provided more research than it had ever obtained in the past; an explosion of funding, talents, and means without precedent; the increased funding then led to the appearance of all related industries, the space industry, communications and electronics" (*our translation*).

These comments show that the whole mass media issue is not just one of technological or economical development, which is exempt from all intentionality or afterthought. Marenches writes: "Today we do not seek to conquer territory to gain people; we conquer men in order to conquer the psyche. Once we have conquered his psyche, we have

conquered man" (*our translation*). We are forced not only to admit the truth of such observations but also the danger. First of all, every person has needs, hopes, desires and the constant solicitation to which he is exposed, due to advertising images, only succeeds in escalating his desire for ever-increasing sources of satisfaction; satisfaction for those who have the means, but a crescendo of frustration for those who don't.

But there is still worse. As adults, we have maintained a certain link with the past and history and the rules of civilization. Young people, however, because of the very complexity of the modern world, have very little contact with their parents and too often find themselves abandoned to the mass media. How many modern families, especially in North America, rely on television for babysitting? Videocassettes and video games are used to bargain for peace, so that we can spend our evenings in tranquillity. Family and social life are undergoing profound mutation. Young people today are witnessing an unprecedented explosion of the power of the media. Where will they draw the strength to maintain a culture in which they will recognize themselves? Parents, where will we draw the strength to provide them with an adequate education?

Fernand Seguin, a Québec intellectual, wonders why social sciences and mass media communications have had so little influence on the profound subterranean gestation that has taken place in the human subconscious over the past few decades:

"... these invisible cultural concoctions that ferment in the individual self-reserve and in the millions of daily exchanges, by which we interpret and reinterpret collective events as they resound in the media; cultural concoctions which give shape to new mentalities, characterized by a thousand and one shifts in attitudes, sensibilities and behaviours, which go unnoticed by learned analysts or professional communicators, but which show up in the public place" (*our translation*).

Even though radio, books and newspapers have an impact, since they

imply the consent of the reader or listener to receive the message, we cannot really accuse these media of conditioning or alienating people. In fact, tools of communication such as these stimulate the intellect as well as the emotional and relational capacities of people, owing to the effort of availability they require. The unfortunate thing is that these same media are losing in popularity today in favour of the popularity of audiovisual. According to Madelin:

"Because of its capacity to deliver instantaneous information, television has plunged all written media into an incessant race for speed. As the mind is conditioned by the pace of the media, it has little by little lost its capacity for reflection. (...) With television, even more than with radio, time flies, similar to the fleeting countryside we observe from the window of a moving train. It is forgotten as fast as the speed that allows it be swallowed permits, so that we can save even more time. (...) The television mode has dragged along all other media in its wake. Today magazines have to be short, brief, and comprehensible in a flash. Long articles are no longer acceptable" (*our translation*).

Cohen-Seat adds the following:

"Modifications on the electroencephalogram may at least in part be due to the contents of television 'discourse.' Certain reactions, however banal, are definitely linked to such significations. A certain type of psychological moment is naturally accompanied by a pause reaction or by 'theta' spurts on the electroencephalogram, whatever be the physical characteristics of the film image (morphology, brilliance, movement, etc.), whereas in the same fashion, another type—containing a different content—leads to the reappearance of the "alpha." In brief, under similar 'tele-screen' conditions, the succession of one moment of content after another, even if in very rapid succession, can be read on the trace of the electroencephalogram i.e., on the mental structure of the child" (*our translation*).

We have here proof, and the same has been confirmed by other researchers, that due to the repetitive process of image transmission and to the development of alpha waves, human beings have become capable of receiving information, while allowing themselves to become conditioned by the image due to the somnolence that is provoked by the screen luminosity, which causes alpha rays that have an influence on the psyche, which is neutralized and rendered passive. The brain immediately receives information that it does not have the time to analyze or understand.

In conjunction with these observations on wave and nervous system modifications linked to the repetitive viewing of television, there are other findings we wish to report. Since the 1970s, both television and computers have been introduced into schools as learning enhancements, especially to improve the capacity of young people to do memorization. It is also true that large corporations have used the same means to increase productivity of both staff and management, but this was a case of proper exploitation of the potential for increased memory capacity through recourse to such technological means. But are we not now subjecting our children to the influence of these waves?

As time goes on, research reveals more about how people's behaviour is being transformed. For example, in 1982, the Société de recherche en orientation humaine (*Society for Research into Human Orientation*) became interested in the manifestation of guilt-free acts of violence by young people. The finding was all the more troubling because, according to the current state of scientific research, we considered that a lack of guilt or remorse was a sign of pathological delinquency. The study we conducted on young people revealed not only the absence of remorse following the commission of a violent act, but also that the young person experienced a type of pleasure in the violence. Young people stated that after having been subject to a violent act or after being frustrated, they enjoyed venting their violence on more defenceless victims, rationalizing that the satisfaction they derive is a justification of the act.

Given this state of affairs, how do we

explain our lethargy? Have we, as adults, been so conditioned by audiovisuals that we accept without challenge everything that appears on the screen or without trying to prevent the dire consequences? Are not our young people, and this is the very crux of the issue, as well as those who are responsible for teaching them, presently undergoing the total transformation of their mental structures? MacBeth Williams has observed that people, especially young people who watch excessive amounts of television, have reduced problem-solving abilities, more stereotypical views on gender, and significantly higher aggressive behaviour, both verbally and physically, and this in the case of either sex. For her part, Healy has noted that young people today, in their electronic environment, are constantly subject to external stimuli such that they are left with very little time for thought or interior dialogue.

To this, we must also add the influence that is exerted on the emotional, interpersonal, relational, family and social planes. It needs to be said that the mass media are a greater reflection of a consumer and leisure society than a universe focused on knowledge as in times past, despite recent efforts to instil a modicum of commitment and accountability. Audiovisual techniques continue to develop and to gain in sophistication. Interest groups take full advantage of this to maintain their domination, development, and control of consumer sales in world markets. The direct influence they exercise through recourse to audiovisual allows them to neutralize the last few national barriers that remain, preventing them from invading all foreign markets and cultures.

What will be the future of education, culture and civilization if we yield to this new approach and culture of mass marketing and consumption? We foresee two trends that may emerge. The first trend will be in the wake of those who are unconditionally favourable to all evolution that leads in the direction of universality. This will coincide with the disappearance of distinct nations and cultures, without a single afterthought, in favour of a type of universality, which is perceived as the natural consequence of evolution. However, there are two immediate dangers to this trend. One is

the loss of identity and the rupture with history, with our origins and with morality. The risks will be even greater for subsequent generations because they will not have any extended experience with identification to a nation. The second trend involves those who want to eliminate anything that is foreign to their region and who will refuse all confrontation, all exchange and all new knowledge. In this case, the danger is isolationism, which will confine them, and the generations that follow them, in a type of obscurity that will forcibly be characterized by aggressive types of behaviour that may even border on chauvinism and racism, in the elusive hope that they will be preserving their culture.

Unfortunately, experience from the past has shown that both groups are wrong. By way of example, we may remember that, a few decades ago, for the purposes of transfer of technology, there were implanted in several countries sophisticated systems that did not take into account the social and economic realities of markets in these particular nations. At the same time, many countries flatly refused any kind of technology transfer. The ones that accepted these new technologies went deep into debt and did not gain any meaningful new market access, although they maintained an allure of modernity. The others were left behind and did not see any meaningful increase in their productivity.

Are we not today faced with something far more powerful, through the cultural invasion of the audiovisual? This is a new type of culture which is short-circuiting intelligence and thought for the benefit of consumerism and leisure. In fact, it is really a soul-numbing culture that neutralizes intelligence for the benefit of pleasure, which makes intelligence a captive of so-called cultural creativity, whose only true *raison d'être* is to enhance consumer habits. In the Declaration published after the Morelia Symposium in Mexico, we read that the cause of the scandalous unequal distribution of resources in the world is due to the "cultural pollution and loss of identity resulting from global uprooting that makes human beings vulnerable to the habits of mass marketing, the pressures of economic

and political totalitarianism, and other despoliations that have endangered the Earth."

Moreover, there are also those who enclose themselves in what the proponents of universality refer to as 'regressive culture.' However, there is nothing old-fashioned or regressive in seeking to protect one's culture and one's sense of culture. Any culture that does not evolve, that does not allow for the renewal of the spirit, of the mind or of intelligence, is in fact a regressive culture. For the sake of protecting a national culture and a sense of identity, we must not refuse to engage in the intellectual and creative effort to give a real and modern sense to culture, adapted to the evolution of a nation, while remaining open to receiving and maintaining what is good in education, but refusing to associate with what in fact is contrary to the meaning of human value.

Today's mass media have become the organ of communications, which themselves have become a science; people discover the obligation of familiarizing themselves with this science as it changes and evolves. What about our children who find themselves in the very ambit of this science? As a counter to this influence, and in order to provide the network of family and scholastic education with the means that users need to access adequate training and teaching programs, we should focus on improving the quality of regional cultural products, in order to stimulate a taste in people for products that are produced close to home. This is by no means the same thing as encouraging people to retreat into isolationism, but rather an encouragement for them to take pride in their identification with a culture, education and roots. It is such pride that will liberate us from the many complexes that beset us and that especially beset those who demand universality in order to give themselves the appearance of grandeur in order to hide their inability of to be proud of what they are.

Then, during broadcasts of outside productions, whether, television, movies or video games, we must be able to clearly warn viewers that what they are watching is a translation and inform

them of the full sociological, educational and cultural context of the original country, so that we can provoke a debate of ideas. In the same vein, foreign audiovisual producers should be required to organize parallel debates aimed at assessing the value of these cultural exchanges in order to retain that which is best for the purposes of national education. Without this, by way of anonymous broadcast, we risk seeing the total destruction of critical thinking in people, because they are so bombarded by images or because they live under the influence of screen luminosity that induces passiveness. It is thus that their mind is totally programmed under the influence of products produced by a foreign mass culture.

It is also fundamental to call for the creation in all countries of research institutes that are able to issue informed opinions on the influence of audiovisual on society and the consequences for national cohesion and stability. It must be understood that those who use recourse to audiovisual for purposes of clandestine persuasion and market domination know no limits, moral or physical, to their invasion not only of our psyches, but also of our social and family structures. Hence, countries of intermediate or weak economies may not be sufficiently equipped to respond to popular demands, and will thus engender frustrations. Authorities will be accused of a lack of foresight and failure to meet the needs of the population, despite the fact that many of these needs have been created artificially. Such institutes in every country, as well as national audiovisual regulatory agencies, should all commit to some form of international congress, similar to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), to ensure that audiovisual technology is respectful of the legitimate limits set according to the needs and the means of nations. The correct perspective here is one of culture protection and advancement.

Other factors are linked to the physiological aspect. While waiting for such measures to be implemented or enforced, it is important to advise families of the importance of providing a good source of oxygen to the brain whenever any type of audiovisual device is being used. One should never remain

in a room deprived of proper ventilation. One should never sit directly in front of a screen without having a light source placed behind the viewer and another behind the device. There can readily be found on the market a thin plastic plate that can be placed in front of the screen to neutralize the somnolence effects and the increase in alpha waves. It is also important to stay at least three or four metres, if not five, away from the screen.

In the most general terms, this is what I believe to be necessary to at least limit the damage. But it is just as vital, and especially for the continued survival of countries, to know how to counter the invasion. The type of invasion we are referring to is one that is totally devoid of any kind of knowledge that will help us to modernize and evolve. This culture has no respect for the rules of stability and balance, whether of the individual or of society; it merely disseminates those interests that are tainted with poisoned objectives that aim at destabilizing societies in other countries in order to gain control over their mental structure to better consolidate their own political and economic forces.

As a researcher, what is important to me is the individual and society, through the family, parents, but especially through one's culture, origins and identity. No one has the right, and all those who labour in the field of social science will confirm this, to destroy the sense of belonging. Nor do we have the right, for the sake of globalization, to exclude individuals who no longer know the region, the country or the culture to which they belong.

As authorities in the area of education and family, you must act to ensure that television returns to the role originally assigned to it in the 1950s, which was to help parents and the school to educate and develop knowledge by opening the doors to a real world and lands that, until that time, were only accessible through travel. The human system has limited operating capacities that we should not abuse. Everything takes practice. We may by dint of effort succeed in helping our youth to face these technological challenges and to live life as it should be lived. This is why, despite all the benefits of television and of other media in general, we must demand of the

appropriate authorities the creation of structures which will allow parents and educators to voice their opinion on programming and the choice of television broadcasting. We cannot, for the sake of freedom of expression and for the right to create, allow a few individuals or organizations to wield such power without there being rules to protect ordinary citizens.

I think it is even time to create an international authority that will include national bodies that will be in charge of analyzing audiovisual content. These bodies will be entitled to some percentage of the fabulous profits earned by networks in order to help the nations that do not have the means to resist foreign programming to develop adequate national programs. I think it is just as important to create parent and educator committees that will be entitled to participate in consultations with producers and broadcasters for the benefit of children.

This is the direction that all future debate must take in order to limit the damages. It is absolutely essential to see an improvement in the quality of national audiovisual content. It is also essential to work relentlessly for the restoration of the sense of belonging in a spirit of collective progress and enrichment. We must give real hope to our youth instead of illusions or ephemeral hopes. Our youth must begin to understand life as it exists elsewhere. This comparative understanding should serve as a reference point, rather than as the basis for developing a complex or the motives for self-denigration or rejection of the country in which they live. The admiration or esteem for a people other than one's own should not leave traces on the intelligence, pride in one's self, or consideration or esteem for one's own country or region.

Education has a real challenge to face, which is to discover how to modernize the minds of our young people, to let them evolve, and to provide them with enough strength and resistance so that they can not only become competent citizens, but also be proud of their roots.

◆

# Forum on Citizenship Education



Seen here in the Education and Citizenship Forum:

the Executive Director of Multiculturalism and Human Rights, Mr. Jacques Paquette, Canadian Heritage

Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Quebec (Forum Chair),

and Ms. Malka, Representative for the Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal, Ms. Francine Sénécal

Ms. Mireille Appolon acted as rapporteur.



## *Synthesis of the Citizenship Education Forum*

*Mr. Jean Pierre Charbonneau, Member of the Quebec National Assembly, chaired the Forum on Education and Citizenship. Speakers were Ms. Francine Sénécal, Vice-President, Executive Council of the City of Montreal, Quebec, Canada and Mr. Jacques Paquette, Executive Director of the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Branch of Heritage Canada.*



**Ms Mireille Appolon**

President of the Association  
des Femmes Immigrantes  
de l'Outaouais,  
Rapporteur

This forum focused on the following two questions:

**Life in society implies both rights and responsibilities.**

**How can we learn to live together in greater harmony and gain better acquaintance with other people?**

**How should we treat the differing concepts of citizenship as they appear in various cultural contexts?**

**How can we build a shared and inclusive citizenship, based on our common denominators and in view of sustainable development?**

### **The Conferences**

The Chairman of the Forum introduced this address with a definition of citizenship, based on individual responsibility at three different levels:

- Responsibility of knowledge – citizens are bound to be knowledgeable and to be aware of the social group to which they belong
- Responsibility to participate in civil society
- Responsibility to choose – to decide and assume the duty of citizenship, political power

Following this address, Ms. Sénécal presented the position and the responsibility of the City of Montreal towards immigrants. As she explained, the city is responsible as host to immigrants to ensure their integration. In the introduction to her address, she gave various statistics that illustrate Montreal's position as the third port of entry for immigrants to Canada, after Vancouver and Toronto. She then spoke about the ethnic diversity of the municipal administration, for which the main challenge is the harmonious integration of immigrants. The determining factor for successful integration is citizenship education.

The city has developed integration policies based on the values of inclusion, equality, and accessibility to services for all citizens. Citizenship education is an increasingly important factor in municipal administration. The recent Montreal Summit put forward a series of measures aimed at the successful implementation of this policy. Consultation and cooperation mechanisms have been put in place and 6 avenues of intervention identified to encourage greater representation and involvement of all citizens, universal access to city services, and reinforcement of the cosmopolitan image of Montreal. In addition, integrated projects have been developed, including a municipal employee training program to sensitize city employees to the realities of ethnic diversity as well as a support project for initiatives originating in cultural and ethnic communities. The city has also created specific institutional structures and authorities for immigrant communities, such as the Office of Consultation, an ombudsman position, the Office of Intercultural Relations and the Intercultural Council. This municipal infrastructure is supported by a range of provincial mechanisms such as the Carrefour d'intégration (Integration Crossroads).

Last September, the City Council introduced a new organization model to facilitate the decentralization of various services in order to make them more accessible to the specific needs of cultural and ethnic communities.

Such structures have proved useful for the successful coordination of the projects and actions implemented by the city and have had a meaningful and positive impact on the increased appropriation of citizenship education activities structures by cultural communities.

Ms. Sénécal completed her address by restating the strategic vision of the City of Montreal, based on social inclusion, equality and accessibility. Municipal authorities are constantly seeking to increase immigrant involvement in municipal development.

Mr. Paquette, in the introduction to his address, restated the questions addressed to this Forum as they appeared in the program. His address dealt with three points:

- A short description of the evolution and development of migration to Canada
- The principles and policies of the government of Canada related to ethnic diversity
- The specific characteristics of Canada's approach to citizenship

In terms of the evolution and development of migration to Canada, Mr. Paquette cited a range of statistics demonstrating that:

- Canada as a country was developed by immigration,
- The migration flow will accelerate and increase over the next few years and will constitute the main source of population renewal

- The face of Canada will be modified over the next few years, such that the Canada of tomorrow will be very different from the Canada of today.

In terms of principles and policies, Mr. Paquette made reference to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as to the multiculturalism policies. The principles of identity, diversity, social justice, respect for fundamental Canadian values and citizen involvement are core values in Canadian society.

He pointed out some of the difficulties encountered when attempting to implement integration policies. Several studies have shown that Canadians do not all benefit from equal treatment. In support of his comments, he cited statistics on the civic involvement of immigrants indicating that some cultural communities are still subject to discrimination.

He then issued an invitation to all Canadians for greater awareness of the particular problems of racism and exclusion. It is for this reason that education has such a crucial role to play between immigrant communities and the host society. Parental immigration is another key factor in citizenship education.

In conclusion, he reconfirmed that Canada's approach is based on the will to establish a shared citizenship within the host society, based on the fundamental values of inclusion, equality, tolerance and full participation in civic life.

## The Debate

After thanking the speakers, Mr. Charbonneau highlighted some of the salient arguments that were addressed in the presentations:

- The Quebec approach does not endorse the multicultural policy promoted by the federal government,
- Citizens all have the same responsibilities, whether or not they are immigrants,
- We must be able to achieve better ways of working together, especially with regards to the organization of the common good
- We must improve governance of the country, which is best accomplished through citizenship education.

Many different questions were asked which served to clarify certain issues, by providing additional information and comments. Several suggestions were made with regards to citizenship education. The comments may be summarized as follows:

- Government actions to implement citizenship education are meant to benefit all citizens, whether or not they are of immigrant origin. It can take many forms – from civic education campaigns, conducted in partnership with various associations, focusing on specific themes and designed for all citizens – to the implementation of education programs in the public school system, to target students and offering them the opportunity to learn about democracy. There are however many more fields that still remain to be covered in order to improve our capacities as citizens. The Estates General on the Democratic Institutions of Quebec identified several of these fields.

All participants stated that the school and the neighbourhood were the most favourable environments for citizenship education. They are venues for learning where both parents and children get to know themselves better and learn to have greater respect for differences. Participants also emphasized the importance of establishing integration networks such as the various social and cultural associations that exist to help new immigrants to adapt and to better decode their new environments. Ethnic associations can position themselves as actors to facilitate the integration of immigrants into the community life of the host society.

They noted that youth have greater facility with ethnic and cultural diversity than their parents; this may be due both to their personal experience and their more frequent exposure to other cultures. Youth have very little problem co-existing with other cultures or races. Education programs that focus on ethno-cultural knowledge must also be tailored to the needs of each generation.

Participants noted the importance of sending welcome signals to all new comers. In all societies that value innovation, recognition of foreign degrees and professional experience is one way to send a positive signal of acceptance and esteem for expertise acquired in different lands.

Representation of cultural and ethnic communities must go beyond lip service; it must be truly reflected both in our public and our private institutions and organizations. Visible minorities must be adequately reflected in all institutions in order to send a positive signal to all immigrant communities that will encourage their involvement in civil society.

Mr. Charbonneau concluded the session, with a question on the capacity for absorption. How can we fulfil the needs for integration, while respecting the survival of the host society?



## Forum on Education and Citizenship

### The Obligation of Citizenship



Speaker :

**Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau**

Elected MNA for the Riding of Borduas  
Former Speaker of the  
National Assembly of Quebec,  
Former Minister of Canadian  
Inter-Governmental Affairs

Being a citizen means being part of a city, part of a society, part of the State, city and neighbourhood where we live. It means that we are part of the social and political system in which we live. It means that we are consciously aware, through solidarity and commitment, of our role and of the responsibility we have towards the community. Citizenship awareness and responsibility are derivatives of knowledge, practice, learning, and in other words, of a special form of education, known as citizenship education.

When we analyse citizen responsibility throughout the world, it seems that, in spite of the progress that has been achieved in terms of access to information and to education, levels of knowledge, understanding and awareness are still fairly low. It is obviously impossible for everyone to have a profound understanding of the full range of problems and challenges that society is faced with. There are too many and they are too complex. It is however possible for more people to have a greater awareness of local, regional, national and international issues. People must consider it as their obligation to take time and energy required to do this.

That's where citizenship education comes in. Its purpose isn't to acquire high levels of knowledge, but to gain interest and awareness of the major issues in our community.

Once citizen consciousness is awakened, citizen engagement becomes possible. It is the root of democracy and the "government of the people, by the

people and for the people" as Abraham Lincoln said. Throughout the world, a minority of citizens are committed to the social good. Is anything else possible?

One thing is certain. Greater citizen engagement is possible everywhere and especially engagement of better quality, if citizenship education becomes more widespread and firmly established. This doesn't mean that we have to promote a utopian form of total and direct democracy, in which all citizens participate in every decision that has to be made in the public interest. It means that we should seek to improve democratic life and social cohesion through efficient citizen empowerment that goes beyond a single vote for the government and its representatives. It means that we have to improve our democracies by promoting direct democracy, in varying degrees depending on the circumstances, and by giving more responsibility to the members of our communities. ♦



## Forum on Education and Citizenship



Speaker :

**Ms. Malka**

representing

**Ms. Francine Sénécal**

### Context

The municipal context is one of singular importance for the integration of new immigrants into the host culture. Municipal governments provide most of the basic services and it is in the municipal environment that basic skills are acquired, which help to ensure the cohesion of the social fabric.

Every discourse on citizenship education must make reference to the principles of justice, democracy, fundamental human rights, and respect for individual rights. These are salutary values that give perspective to all other social values. In the municipal environment, each and every one of these values is essential for citizenship education. Such values are assets or success factors for the integration of immigrants from diverse countries into the host culture. They represent the conditions that will allow us to achieve our efforts to live together!

### Montreal : A uniquely plural city

Montreal has 1.8 million inhabitants and there are 80 different ethno-cultural communities that co-exist in the metropolis. Montreal is a metropolis that was built on immigration: according to recent statistics taken from the federal census (Statistics Canada, 2001), Montreal represents one of the most important poles of urban attraction in Canada. Between 1991 and 2001, it attracted more than 215,100 newcomers. According to the same statistics, 458,300 of these newcomers stated that they belonged to a visible minority.

These statistics on the presence and the large proportion of ethno-cultural communities in Montreal (they represent at least 50% of its population) are undoubtedly the clearest indication of the capacity that municipal administration has shown in adapting accordingly, because these data themselves act as an official record of the immigration phenomenon. The biggest challenge for our administration is the development and management of services for immigrants, which goes to the very heart of the whole issue of immigrant integration. We are constantly

called on to review our strategies, and, where necessary, modify our programs and policies.

### The challenges of ethnic pluralism for the Municipal Administration

As members of the municipal administration, we are quite aware of the issues that have arisen from demographic phenomenon and we constantly seek to improve our knowledge on this subject. It is essential that we adapt our day to day business to the multi-ethnic realities that are characteristic of our territory.

The challenges of ethnic diversity have posed a major challenge for municipal reorganization initiatives, which first began in January 2002. We seek to manage ethno-cultural diversity, through recourse to the main themes that characterize the dynamic nature of our metropolis; economic development, social development, cultural development, representation of citizens who hail from ethno-cultural communities, etc.

### The challenges of citizenship education for Municipal Management

Cultural and ethnic diversity is certainly a source of enrichment for the City of Montreal. As citizens, this collective enrichment calls on our sense of mutual understanding, spirit of openness, sense of solidarity, and willingness to promote social peace and esteem for all citizens. There is an important parallel that can be established between our quest to achieve individual well being in the urban community of Montreal, our desire to reflect the cultural blending of the population, through the adaptation of our service provision, and our desire for the development and the preservation of the quality of life throughout the municipal territory.

The success factors involved for all of these things are closely intertwined: quest for individual well being, social peace and quality of life throughout the territory. The challenge facing the city administration is to be able to successfully integrate newcomers, but taking all these factors into consideration. The

integration work must be performed on a platform of action, of which the central focus is citizenship education. As we are convinced that the scale needed to measure the success of these efforts is found mainly in the municipal arena, we have decided to opt for the following orientations:

- Examine the issue of citizenship education from the perspective of social, family, economic, and cultural integration in order to properly assess the impacts and stakes;
- Promote the sharing of individual and collective experience with people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds;
- Reinforce dialogue among various groups of citizens who co-habit the same territory;
- Share experiences and learn from the way we manage diversity and overall practice at the municipal, community and institutional levels.

**Montreal, a metropolis founded on solidarity, inclusion and the quality of urban living**

Montreal is different from many other major cities in the world through its cultural openness to the world, its democratic life style and its spirit of equality. Social development in Montreal has progressed along four fundamental axes: the adaptability of its services, its training, its opposition to racial discrimination and intolerance, and the access it provides to equality. Social inclusion is an important factor in the city’s management of diversity. Another value that is central to municipal management is citizenship education.

In our communities, the question of identity is as important for groups who identify with specific locales in the city as it is for individuals who foster a sense of belonging and continuity with their socio-cultural origins. One relevant example comes from the municipal mergers that took place in 2001, which had an impact on the implementation of new structures that helped break down some of the territorial barriers that separated ethnically and culturally related minorities.

This is why citizenship education has become such an important factor for the management of ethnic diversity in Montreal. Likewise, training and increased knowledge of other people have become indispensable vectors of integration. The degree of sensitivity and the nature of the actions performed in the context of citizenship education have an impact not only on the future degree of civic involvement, but also on the fight against poverty and social exclusion. As it seeks to establish a successful citizenship education program, the City of Montreal is determined to help preserve the cultural identities of both individuals and groups.

**Montreal’s socio-cultural diversity policy**

The municipal administration launched a massive consultation process during the Summit, which was held June 4, 5 & 6, 2002. One of the major questions that the Summit sought to address was the issue of intercultural relations; the perspective from which this issue was examined was through the angle of “equality, accessibility and diversity”. The diversity of the Montreal social fabric was taken into full account at the Montreal Summit and was considered as a source of enrichment. The involvement of Montrealers of all origins in the consultation mechanisms and their participation at the decision-making levels was carefully reviewed.

**A) Montreal Summit: Workshop on “equality, accessibility and diversity”**

The position adopted at the Summit on “equality, accessibility and diversity” was very clear. Major policy orientations concerning intercultural and interracial relations were developed during this workshop. The main policy orientations developed, were among others:

Adoption of an inclusive approach, based on respect for human rights and efforts to close the rights gap;

Understanding of particular issues through a differential approach, based on gender, with particular attention given to the specific conditions of women;

- Recognition of the enrichment that ethno-cultural diversity brings to society and reflection of this reality

through the identification of issues and strategies. To this end, intercultural relations must cover the full range of rights and potential available to ethno-cultural communities allowing them full participation in the evolution of municipal life;

- Fight discrimination and promote harmonious intercultural relations through respect and understanding, in conformity with the proclamation of March 21 as “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”, which was adopted unanimously by city council;
- Take into account the problems that require specific human resources for certain groups, such as the youth, the elderly, the handicapped, visible minorities, gays, lesbians and others, in order to achieve full social inclusion and cohesiveness;
- Ensure authentic citizen participation, especially of the less fortunate members of society, in all decision making mechanisms.

In view of the great importance we give to intercultural relations in all our actions, we feel that it is essential to apply the principles of equality and accessibility to all municipal policies and programs. The recommendations that were made by the workshop on “equality, accessibility and diversity” fall into six categories:

- participation and representation of under-represented groups;
- universal accessibility;
- ethno-cultural diversity;
- support for the social and economic inclusion of visible minorities and of ethno-cultural communities;
- promotion of the cosmopolitan dimension of Montreal;
- gender equality for men and women in terms of access to services.

**B) Projects generated through the Montreal Summit**

The city administration endeavoured to act on the recommendations produced at

the Summit. It recently approved implementation of four integrated projects, namely:

- creation of a bank of candidates from under-represented groups for nomination to decision-making and advisory bodies in Montreal;
- planning and implementation of local action plans for intercultural relations;
- employee training on inter-culturalism;
- creation of a reference centre to support projects initiated by community organizations aimed principally at increased social and economic inclusion of marginalized individuals or groups in society.

### C) Montreal Summit: Workshop on “Representation and Consultation Mechanisms and Citizen Participation”

Citizens also expressed the desire to take ownership of their city, to reinforce their confidence in municipal democratic institutions and to be more involved as full-fledged democratic citizens, so as to ensure the recognition of Montreal for its participatory and representative democracy.

In view of these needs, citizens recommended:

The development of optimal conditions for the exercise of democracy;

The establishment of credible, transparent and effective consultative and public participation and follow-up mechanisms, at all levels of municipal administration.

The establishment of dedicated budget in support of democratic participation.

It is important to note that Montreal has developed an independent public consultation mechanism (Montreal Office of Public Consultation) as well as the office of ombudsman.

### D) Institutional Adaptation within the City of Montreal

Municipal administration has deployed efforts to adapt its services so that they correspond as closely as possible to the diverse needs of its multiethnic

population. Two important authorities have been established to this end throughout the territory of the urban community:

- **The Office of Intercultural Relations**, which has as mission to ensure the proper institutional coordination and orientation with respect to intercultural relations, to act as an advisory board to the Mayor’s office and other municipal departments and boroughs, and to develop and maintain good intergovernmental relations, including inter organizational relations in the realm of cultural relations;
- **The Montreal Intercultural Council**, which is a municipal body that was created under the *Act on Municipal Reorganization*. This Council has as mandate, among others, to advise and provide opinions to the City of Montreal and its Executive Committee with respect to services and policies to promote the integration of ethno-cultural communities into the political, economic, social and cultural life of the city.

### E) Social Integration of Immigrants

Our administration considers that it is essential for immigrants from ethno-cultural communities to develop a full sense of inclusion in the fabric of our society.

To this end, the municipal administration has deemed it an urgent priority for the city to adopt an integrated approach to meeting the employment, housing, education, essential service, professional development, and cultural needs of our ethno-cultural communities. In order to achieve this it will have to acquire the tools and the means that will facilitate the full involvement of ethno-cultural communities in the ongoing definition of the essential values in our society as well as their access to the decision making process of all our institutions.

Across the Island of Montreal, immigrants are welcomed and offered integration services through the integration crossroads centres established by the government of Quebec; there are four

such centres in Montreal. These centres serve as hubs from which a full range of services are available to new comers to the city.

### F) Citizenship Education in the Context of Ethno-Cultural Diversity

The City of Montreal provides ancillary services in partnership with the crossroads centres and other local partners. The underlying objective is to enhance immigrant integration into the French speaking culture of the urban community, in harmony with six major categories of intervention:

- Activities aimed at providing immigrants with better access to and familiarization with municipal services, available throughout the various boroughs;
- Activities designed to enhance the sense of belonging and greater involvement in various community or borough associations;
- Activities to support immigrant use of sports or recreational services available in municipal parks and community centres;
- Organization of activities and events designed to help immigrants gain familiarity with typical Quebec cultural productions, which are regularly showcased in the cultural centres, known as *Maisons de la culture* and other cultural spaces situated in various boroughs of the City of Montreal;
- Activities aimed at promoting literacy and increased familiarity with Quebec literature and publications, which are readily available from the municipal library network;
- Activities aimed at promoting involvement in cultural heritage works, environmental projects and municipal embellishment works.

### G) Immigrant Reception and Integration Action Plan

Since 2002, the City of Montreal and the Quebec Ministry for Citizen and Immigrant Relations reached an agreement for the establishment of an

Immigrant Reception and Integration Action Plan, which is part of the overall plan to increase the use of French in Quebec. This initiative is aimed at the systematic planning and coordination of efforts invested by both levels of government in the municipal boroughs, with regards to projects to be implemented. The action plan that has derived from this agreement is designed to enhance immigrant reception and integration into the French speaking life of the urban community.

Six levels of intervention have been identified as preferential in this action plan. Familiarization with the City of Montreal, participation in community life, sports and recreation, culture, libraries and reading, environment and municipal embellishment. Projects are conducted with local community organizations that have been identified throughout the boroughs of Montreal for the provision of the identified services.

The action plan has had quite an interesting impact on the involvement of municipal personnel, the closer identification of targeted clientele and stakeholder ownership of the projects in question. There are hundreds of municipal workers who work on these projects in partnership with external stakeholders representing over 200 organizations located throughout the City of Montreal and over 22,000 participants from 14 boroughs. All the stakeholders have demonstrated that it is always possible to create the winning conditions for successful immigrant reception and integration into the cultural, social and linguistic context of the host community.

This high level of success is a reflection not only of the partnership efforts that have been made with the various stakeholders involved in the process, but above all is an indicator of the involvement of hundreds of people, both municipal employees and local resource persons. It is also a good reflection of the constant readjustments that are made by project heads, with regards to previous experience.

We are beginning to see the impact of these integration projects, because the projects involving familiarization with the City of Montreal and ownership of municipal and immigrant services have a considerable positive social impact, which is borne out by the matching of Anglophone and Francophone efforts, leading to greater knowledge of French by non speakers and an improved knowledge of the language by those who had only the rudiments of French.

We have also witnessed specific projects that have led to successful related initiatives: we often receive requests from other municipalities, who would like to learn from our experience. Seeing as many of these integration activities are both succeeding and gaining greater formal recognition, and that four specific projects even exceeded their initial objectives, we hope that in the near future we can do extension work to reach other clienteles in other boroughs of the city.

#### **Montreal, A City where we all succeed together**

A strategic vision for social inclusion and the civic involvement of all citizens can only succeed if it takes into account the talents of all the members of the community, especially as they are relevant to specific areas of municipal jurisdiction: issues of urban community life, municipal security, social services, protection of the environment, public consultation, etc.

With regards to the specific issues that concern the City of Montreal and in consideration of the richness of our social fabric, which derives from the contributions of countless new comers as well as of long-standing established communities, we place great value on the importance of intercultural relations in all our activities. We consider it to be an utmost priority to implement the principles of equality and accessibility to all the programs and policies that are in force in the City of Montreal.

Our administration is constantly on the look-out for ways to increase the contributions of immigrants to the development of the City, especially in consideration of the new demographic

challenges that we are encountering in the workforce and our desire to ensure the ongoing economic vitality of the metropolis.

This specific and adaptive approach that is favoured by the City of Montreal as well as by its various stakeholders and partners, who seek to harmonize their efforts to provide full support to various communities, is aimed at ensuring the economic vitality of the City and of preventing the new ethno-cultural communities from turning into ghettos.

On September 5, 2003, the City Council adopted a new organization model that is designed to provide citizens with better services at lower costs, by ensuring that our administration remains fully citizen focused. The model is based on the decentralization of services and powers. Under the new organization model, the stakes that emerge from ethno-cultural diversity are taken into account in an even more integrated fashion. This model will help to ensure that Montreal remains a strong and vibrant City, which effectively responds to the needs of its citizens, while continuing to increase the competitive advantage of the city in the North American arena.

Montreal has all it needs to maintain its leadership position. It is a dynamic urban centre that is open to the world and whose influence extends to many corners of the world. In order to ensure sustainable development as well as the quality of life in the urban community, we shall continue to promote citizenship education. We will adopt integrated approaches that reflect the needs, diversity, the diverging and converging interests as well as the fair representation of all our population. We intend to build on our strengths and learn from our mistakes.

We will apply our best efforts, as an administration, to fully respect the principles of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and of the Quebec Charter of Rights in order to provide exemplary service to our citizens.

Let us build the future together...  
Montreal is ready! ♦

# General Plenary



The rapporteurs for the three remaining Forums were Ms. Monique Laboureur for Media Forum,

Professor Denise Normand-Guérette for Education Forum

and Ms. Mireille Appolon for Citizenship Education Forum



from left to right  
The rapporteurs were  
Dr. Yves Brissette for the Health Forum,

Me. Nicole Ladouceur for the Administration of Justice Forum,

Ms. Micheline Létourneau for Social Services Forum

The participants in the Plenary Session hear the reports from the Forums



## *Summary of Recommendations*

The various Forums that were organized around the theme of the congress, “*Building our future together; a unique endeavour for a plural society*”, provided the opportunity for the formulation of a series of recommendations that will allow contemporary society to meet the new challenges that arise from the context of cultural, ethnic and religious pluralism. These recommendations are related to the spheres of health, social services, education, justice administration, media and citizenship education. They are basically aimed at identifying ways of improving our health, education and justice systems and of understanding the importance of the media as a means of immigrant inclusion and shared citizenship. These recommendations also shed light on the roles that parents should assume and on the ways they can become increasingly involved, particularly in the context of a pluralist society. Below is the list of recommendations presented by each Forum during the congress.

### *1. Forum on Health*

The Forum highlighted different recommendations which reflect the great challenge of multiplicity that our societies are faced with today. These recommendations mostly concern our health system’s capacity to intervene, parent involvement and the concept of preventive approaches.

In order to improve our health care system’s capacity to intervene, the human dimension must always be included. In other words:

Consider the patient’s history by trying to understand his religious beliefs as well as his social and cultural practices. It will be easier to treat the person’s illness and to bring some kind psychological relief.

In order to promote this dimension, innovations must be introduced to the health care system. We therefore recommend:

Where necessary, train employees, in particular interpreters, to meet these new needs. These cultural interpreters have an important role to play when immigrants need consultation, especially where taboos are concerned.

Invite all the beneficiaries and communities to participate in the decision making process, locally and municipally.

As for parent involvement, the participants at this Forum recognize the important role they play in the process. We therefore suggest:

Encourage parents to be aware of health problems, through information, awareness and responsibility. They should be able to rely on listening, support and help networks, such as counsellors working in schools to make it easier for parents from different cultures to understand each other. In the countries that cannot afford this type of resource, it can be implemented at the neighbourhood level.

As for the concept of preventive approaches, we believe that: The approaches must reflect the multiplicity of patients. The participants recommend the following approaches:

The schools should offer resources to shield young immigrants from the psychological distress associated with solitude.

Develop preventive education to fight the racism and xenophobia directed towards parents.

## 2. Health Services Forum

The Forum raised the issue of improving the support given to parents and young people living in a plural society, by encouraging parents to participate in the process and to promote shared citizenship.

The participants made several recommendations to improve family and social services in different culture communities:

- Train social counsellors to help them acquire knowledge and capacities that will improve their intervention with members from different cultural communities.
- Ensure that social workers and psycho-educators have access to courses on different cultures, attitudes and family concepts, such as the importance of authority, during their community and university education.
- Encourage job creation for mediators and social counsellors from immigrant populations. The Montreal program for preventive intervention with Jamaican families should be taken as an example.
- Develop training courses for facilitators in social groups.
- Establish partnerships with governments, public institutions, private organisations and NGOs. By inviting different people to contribute their energy to a common project, money and efforts can be saved.
- Give communities and cultural associations a new role. These associations should have two roles, to provide training on immigrant culture and training on the host country's culture, through projects open to universal participation. These associations often organize activities for the preservation of their own culture but they often exclude the host country.
- Reach out beyond a person's cultural aspect, to give meaning to the humanity that lies beyond culture.
- Use massage therapy for children victims of violence. This Swedish method can help the child to relax, just as love and affection offer him security but he must also be given a sense of identity.

Taken into account the similarity of parental roles, regardless of their society of origin, in order to change government policies and social education. This common ground has great potential

to encourage social workers to work together. American research has revealed that the similarity of parental roles contribute to teenager development. According to this research, there are five roles:

- 1• Parent attachment, including empathy and the support given to teenagers
  - 2• Supervision and the limits imposed on teenagers
  - 3• Financial security and ensuring the needs of teenagers
  - 4• Guidance, family values and parental skills
  - 5• Being a role model, a counsellor, to teach by giving the right example.
- Offer support and after-school activities to children in community centres to complete their formal education and to promote their integration based on each group's needs.
  - Eliminate poverty through financial support. This is a major cause for the exclusion of immigrants.

As for the recommendations concerning the role of parents, the suggestions are to:

- Bring parents and parental organizations to work together to improve family and youth support.
- Maintain their role by helping them re-establish a dialogue and communication. In the very first earliest years of our children's lives, we must establish a human approach and teach them the value of democracy and freedom of expression.
- Create a university training program for facilitators in parental groups.
- Provide counselling for violent parents because several of them were themselves victims of physical abuse.

The Forum basically established that a plural society cannot be built without a dose of humanism. We must remember that we are all human beings, that we must give to ourselves and to our children a solid sense of identity in order to build a society that is equal to our humanistic ambitions.

### 3. Education Forum

The participants debated recommendations that involve several interdependent issues such as immigration, the place accorded to human beings, education, the role of parents and integration in the labour market.

With respect to immigration, the participants suggested that the host country should give financial compensation to the source country for persons who are already educated and trained prior to immigration. The source country would be entitled to receive an amount equal to the cost of the person's training.

As for the place of human beings, the recommendations were mostly aimed towards:

- Placing the human being at the heart of policies, programs and actions, through mutual respect, equality between people and nations and recognition of everyone's importance. We should:
- Teach all members of our society the value of freedom, to live freely and to respect human values.
- Promote citizenship to ensure the fulfillment of civil, political and social rights
- Encourage democratic and peaceful cohabitation in a multiethnic environment.

Because of the family's importance as the primary teacher of tolerance and cohabitation in a plural society, parents must participate in helping end the potential exclusion of which second generation immigrant children are often victims. The participants recommended to:

- Teach children to accept diversity and difference, through the importance of equality, respect for the opinion of others and involvement in public affairs. These notions will help children to promote common values in a plural context, based on social harmony.

In order to reinforce the role of the family and parental skills, it is important to:

- Use all means possible to educate parents and persuade them that their attitude has a direct influence on their children.
- Teach the parents about the codes, standards and attitudes of the host society, to help them participate and project a positive attitude to their children.
- Create programs to support parents. It is also important to give them the right tools to help them learn the language properly, in order for them to be able to help their children with their school work.
- Teach parents different approaches to education
- Help parents take a greater interest in the host society by letting them take part in the participative management of schools and by giving them the as much opportunity as possible to shape the future of their children and of society.

- Provide schools and parents the opportunity to cooperate by emphasizing the importance of cooperation in the education of young people. Since parents and schools are both agents of socialization, their contribution to the development of children as social beings is invaluable. This contribution will create a balance between the responses that schools and families give to the challenges we face as a plural society.
- Make sure parents are integrated into the labour market and that they understand the codes set by their host society.

With respect to education we should:

- Include the condition in teacher education that would encourage students to learn a second language, different religions and to acquire the proper skills to help them learn the language of their host country.
- Develop education programs that promote diversity rather than differences.
- Teach children about justice and how to avoid oppression and make sure that they assimilate the human values that allow us to accept the diversity of others and to consider the latter as human beings.
- Identify specific modalities of support throughout the entire school curriculum to fight against the perverse effects of systematic discrimination in educational institutions.

With respect to the labour market integration of immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds, the following recommendations were made during the debates:

- Reduce the invisible obstacles in the labour market and encourage the inclusion of immigrants, by imposing a quota for example, in professional training as well as in social and government functions. The objective is to give everyone equal access to the labour market. In order to do so, we must set some mechanisms for the social and professional inclusion of immigrants and ensure that these mechanisms take into account the training and skill acquired in their country. We should also offer them some kind of appreciation training to help them adapt their practice to the reality of the host society.

Help young immigrants succeed by giving them access to good intellectual and professional training.

The participants also generally suggested that we should:

- Create an international observatory to study the immigration trends and the social inclusion mechanisms set by the host countries.
- Try to find a balance between the values of the global society, based on the human race and the development of a national identity.
- Use positive discrimination as a mechanism for social inclusion.

## 4. *Forum on the Administration of Justice*

The Forum discussed the issue surrounding the administration of justice in today's multicultural and multiethnic society as well as the conciliation of individual and group rights. The participants presented the following recommendations:

- Create awareness and educate the stakeholders in the administration of justice. Thus we need to offer education not only on the administration of justice but also on a better understanding of the human dimension of solidarity and brotherhood.
- Increase awareness within the judicial system, because notions of authority, policing and law are not always understood in the same way immigrants, whose have experienced these things in the past in quite different a different way.
- Adapt the rules in situations where evidence is difficult to find.
- Give the proper tools to the stakeholders in the administration of justice to allow justice to be respected. The victim must trust that his complaint will be authorized and treated fairly under the rule of law.
- Insist on the duties and responsibilities we have toward others in a community. We must understand this reality and commit ourselves to it. People's rights can only be secured by the duty of others. In this frame of mind, we must especially teach young people about the importance of their personal commitment towards other citizens and towards the community which is essential for the preservation of our moral environment.
- Express the importance of the commitment of institutions and of our own commitment, in our work, family and personal life, through respect and the improvement of the law and morality which serves it.
- Make sure that balance is maintained in the judicial system, for the promotion of good relationships between all parties and for fair-minded dialogue, based on good will and devoid of all inequity.

The administration of justice should be founded on the expression of moral values like dignity and the respect of human beings. These values should be expressed and applied according to a rule of law and a social consensus which recognizes the diversity of cultures, beliefs and religions.

- Promote liberty, equality and brotherhood as values. These are necessary for the integrity of social patterns and democracy. Each person must promote these values, individually and collectively. Every institution in a society must also promote them. It is everyone's responsibility.
- Integrate different ethnicities and minority groups to a country's political system. This is not only necessary for stability in a multicultural society, but it also allows enriches us to share the experiences of all political and judicial classes.
- Make sure that victims can express their rights and that they do not endure any negative consequences for having expressed them.

The administration of justice should be adapted to the multicultural reality of society in order to reconcile individual and collective rights. The participants also suggested that positive discrimination should be used to give everyone equal opportunity. This notion is often used by legislators to favour people who are in an inferior position and to compensate them for the inequities they are faced with.



## 5. Forum on the Media

Because of the negative effect of the media on young people, parents, more than ever, have an important educational role. They should:

- Educate their education to choose the right media.
- Teach their children through dialogue to develop the critical attitude that will allow them to think for themselves and to avoid the one dimensional attitude that our media tends to a certain extent to promote. We should protect our children from the disinformation that can lead to racist connotations.
- Parents should supervise their children's education.

In order to do so, the participants recommended that:

- Parents should be responsible of their children's education.
- Help the parents and schools educate, develop knowledge and to open the doors to the world of reality.
- Improve the quality of regional cultural products for people, so that people may find interest in them.
- Found research institutes in all countries. Such institutions would study the influence of the audiovisual on our society and on the stability of national cohesion. These institutes should collaborate with national organisations responsible for audiovisual productions and establish an international congress, similar to the GATT, to turn the audiovisual into a platform that respects the regulations set in accordance with every nation's means and needs.
- Create an international body that would provide an umbrella for national organizations that analyze content and quality.

In order to do so we must:

- Regulate specific media supports, such as the Internet, because such supports are currently insufficiently regulated, especially when it comes to educating our youth.
- Demand that authorities create some kind of structure that would allow parents and educators to express their opinion on the choice of programs and television shows.
- Create a parent and educators committee that would hold consultations with the producers and broadcasters, for the benefit of children.

In order for the media to be an agent of inclusion in a plural society, we suggest that:

- The *Professional Federation of Quebec Journalists* should award bursaries, scholarships or internships to foreign journalists.
- The media should encourage intercultural exchanges.
- While the media must remain free, it must also abide by a strict code of ethics and should be supervised by some kind of Professional Corporation.

## 6. Forum on Citizenship Education

This Forum examined in detail how immigrants are integrated in the host society and it highlighted the importance of citizenship education for the integration of both youth and parents into the new society. In order to encourage on the one hand the civic involvement of ethno-cultural communities and on the other hand to awaken and stimulate interest in the importance of being informed of the major issues facing society, the participants made the following recommendations:

- Focus on citizenship education for parents as a way to promote mutual understanding, open-mindedness and the sense of solidarity between host society and society of origin. This is an important way of reinforcing dialogue and sharing experience between individuals or groups of different origin and cultural horizons.
- Ensure that government action aimed at citizenship education is designed for all members of society and not just citizens of immigrant origin. This action can be accomplished in different ways:
- Organization of civic education campaigns in partnership with various organizations and on specific themes.
- School education programs that target students and provide them with opportunities to learn more about democracy

Citizenship education implies not only civic involvement but also understanding the causes of poverty and social exclusion.

Participants also felt it way necessary to:

- Ensure the adaptability of programs geared to promoting ethno-cultural knowledge and education, in accordance with the behaviour patterns of various generations. In fact, children from immigrant families often have less difficulty with ethno-cultural diversity than their parents. They have much less difficulty in co-inhabiting with people of other races or culture.
- Recognition of the professional degrees and work experience acquired abroad. This would be an important signal of acceptance and a sign of appreciation for the expertise that immigrants have gained in foreign countries. It would be a clear expression of welcome into the host society, in which innovation is largely dependent on the contributions from immigrant populations.
- Ensure adequate reflection of immigrant contributions and presence in both the public and the private spheres of civil society. This would be another positive signal that can be sent to immigrant communities that would ensure their greater willingness to participate.
- Improve the quality of democratic life and social cohesion by ensuring access to effective power, over and beyond the right to vote for the elected representatives in society. This is an effective way to provide empowerment for all members of the community. ♦

# Closing of the Congress



At the Closing Session, seated the Head Table are the President of the Constitutionnal Council of Burkina Faso; His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, General Rapporteur for the conference

General Rapporteur for the Conference, Mr. P. Luc Dupont President of the SROH,

the President of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitouni;

the Deputy Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Hassan Malaki, (accompanied by an interpreter).



Ms. Micheline Ducray, General delegate, IFPE



From left to right: the president of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitouni, Parliamentary Assistant and Representative of the Minister of Education of Quebec, Ms. Francine Gaudet and the president of the SROH, Mr. Luc Dupont

## *Closing of the Congress*



Speaker :

**Ms. Francine Gaudet**

Parliamentary Assistant  
Representative of the Minister  
of Education

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank you for the privilege that you have given me to close the congress of the Société de recherche en orientation humaine (SROH), which has been hosted by the International Federation for Parent Education (IFPE).

This congress, in its very scope, has been a show case for the collective thinking of each and every one of our societies.

Our common concerns, which go beyond borders, brought us all here to “build together our future.” This “unique endeavour for a plural society” will serve as a relay or extension of the UNESCO Decade against Racism, which will soon come to an end. The world we all dream of, one that has been delivered from all hate and all prejudice must still be built.

Here lies the entire question. How do we build it, other than through education of our citizens, beginning from early childhood, and more specifically through citizenship education, without which we cannot even think about sustainable development? While a great deal has been accomplished in this domain, there is much that remains to be done. The challenges that lay ahead of us are no less important than those of a decade ago.

Globalization has led to the emergence of a new social fibre, which has been woven from the overlapping of cultures, values, traditions and religions and blended into a new unique and plural society. Our greatest challenge is to ensure that it remains on solid foundations, by establishing solidarity between the host society and its immigrant communities.

In Quebec, which has one of the lowest birth rates in the world and whose

population is rapidly aging, such communities are an important asset. By providing a new source of demographic capital, which will be the guarantee of its economic vitality, they will help to ensure that Quebec remains an enduring society. Their contribution to Quebec society is in this sense incalculable.

Modern society, as we know it today, must reinvent its social and economic foundations and forge a future based on common perspectives. Where should we start? Education can to a great extent answer this question, both citizenship education and education of the citizen. Schools must serve as the locus of integration for newcomers.

But how can education really succeed in this challenge and at the same time contribute to the elimination of all forms of exclusion? How can immigrants, in their capacity as parents, get involved in the success of their children’s education and socialization? This is the daily challenge facing our schools in a plural society.

Beyond their ethnic, cultural, or religious values, nothing is closer to parents’ hearts than their concern for the future of their children. This is undoubtedly one of the keys that unlock the road to reflection on some of our most cherished accomplishments: health, social services, administration of justice, citizenship education, and education itself. Such reflection is the cost to ensure that the children of today will become full-fledged citizens in the society of tomorrow.

This is precisely the reflection that inspired Quebec to launch the reform of its education system. The goal of the reform is to ensure that all students grow to become enlightened, responsible and independent citizens; citizens, whose world view is open to diversity and difference and whose identity is based on self respect and respect for others;

citizens who are empowered to act and ready to commit to democratic participation and the building of their own society.

To teach individuals from their earliest age to live together in a culture based on respect and openness requires that all social stakeholders, parents, teachers, school principals, local community members, and social partners, work to foster a common vision.

The Quebec education program provides incentive for partnership as well as a basis for coherent and consistent educational intervention. It not only prepares students by introducing them to disciplines such as arts, languages, mathematics, technologies, and social sciences that are indispensable for their understanding of the world and for their ability to contribute to its construction, but it also helps them acquire the personal and relational skills, that will help them to successfully navigate through the major problems that beset contemporary society. This is why the Ministry of Education has focused on the issues arising from the major social domains such as health, citizenship, consumerism, the environment and the media.

Knowledge of this type is essential in the life of all citizens. It is also essential to develop responsible attitudes, openness to diversity, respect for oneself and for others, active involvement in democratic life, which is acquired through in class real life simulations. Under current legislation, 15-17 year olds are given a seat on School Councils.

As of primary school, education focuses largely on the formation of citizenship, with the school representing a micro-society. By teaching everyone to how to live together, school prepares them for later life in society. This means learning how to become a citizen from ones earliest years.

Life in society includes both rights and duties: learning to live together through

better mutual understanding; learning how to handle multiple perspectives on citizenship, based on varying cultural horizons; knowing how to build the common denominators of shared and inclusive citizenship, in the context of sustainable development, which would be impossible without security.

Recent events have undoubtedly taught us greater respect for the fragility of balance in the world and thus increased the importance of citizenship education as the best way to establish this balance.

It is through citizenship education that we will be able to build a better world and facilitate the acquisition of enlightened judgement that allows all citizens to accurately gauge the issues that will condition the future of their children. This will lead to a world in which the openness to diversity will be the guarantee of equal rights and democratic life.

These are all good reasons for our common pursuit and quest to find the best ways to prepare our students for the future challenges of globalization. How exactly should this be done? Part of the answer is related to the internationalization of economy and culture, increased access to knowledge, the accelerated development of technology in all spheres of human knowledge, such as information and communication technologies.

By being exposed to the complexity of issues, students learn how to find the appropriate ethical and political solutions, not just the economical solutions to a problem. By preparing them for this task as young as possible, will increase their capacity to solve such problems as adults.

Others questions must be addressed to institutions, to students, and to their parents, such as for example, how educational science should deal with the diversity in the classroom. This approach will help to reduce the causes of misunderstandings that arise from the conflict of values between family and

school, especially in the case of children who are born in the host society. Another question that has to be addressed is how to treat the intercultural aspect in order to effectively intervene at the educational level or how to avoid the exclusion of immigrant children, while providing support to their parents?

Teaching in the multiethnic classrooms of 2003-2004 is a real challenge for teachers. They must seek to maintain the cohesive character of the group, while maintaining a stimulating atmosphere of learning. The cultural, linguistic and religious diversity that accompanies immigration is undoubtedly a source of enrichment for society and creates a more open society. By multiplying the opportunity for exchange among students is without a doubt a key factor in such enrichment and openness.

Teachers have a dual mission. On the one hand, they transmit the culture of the host society and on the other hand they are the first arbiters for the differences that arise from diverse cultural references. Both of these missions will help to still enlightenment, knowledge and a deeper sense of mutual understanding.

The efforts involve discovery, socialization, openness and adaptation to others. Education based on cooperation, which encourages students to express themselves through structural and group projects, will reinforce these efforts.

The school must also be ready to deal with the ethnic and cultural diversity of its teaching staff. It must take into consideration factors such as socio-economic class, age, learning profile, school accomplishments and individual motivation.

In a context of equal opportunity for all, where education is student centred, the school must be able to constantly adapt and take an innovative approach to education.

Upon arrival, immigrant students are supported by the Quebec education

system, which offers them instruction in the second language, which instruction also serves as an introduction to the new culture.

Linguistic integration is achieved simultaneously to social and educational integration. As parents play a primary role in the education of their children, they are our best allies in this triple process. They should never hesitate in sharing their educational values with us and we must give them proper heed.

Conflict however between private family life and public life at school is inevitable. The culture shock of values can often give rise to misunderstanding.

Differences might be related for example to the status and the role of men and women or to the prescriptions of religious belief.

Such situations are harmful to the bonds that unite family and school and will hence have repercussions on the success and the development of the child.

They may make the child uncomfortable and uneasy with respect to inherited values and the values of the new society. This is a delicate situation as it tests the allegiance of the student and may have a negative impact on his development.

The gap separating family and school values can be reduced by dialogue that defines mutual expectations. Each party should attempt to understand the reference framework of the other, which will help to build bridges that will reinforce the potential for the child's success and avoid the negative consequences for his development.

Prevention is always the best remedy. Although the school is open to diversity, it is nonetheless founded on democratic values, legal frameworks and rules that apply equally to all. Information regarding how the Quebec school system functions plays an important role for immigrant parents.

School councils also have an important role to play by increasing parents' awareness of diversity, as do teachers and teachers in training, who are sensitized to this during their teacher training at university.

Their major goals are to avoid all forms of discrimination, to prevent or defuse conflicts and to ensure that the classroom remains open to the various cultures that share a common space.

Despite our efforts, there are cases of exclusion. What can we do to prevent them? The principles of equal opportunity for all and of equity are the best assets that schools have to work with. We live in a plural society composed of culturally diverse populations. At school as well as in society, family names that are not French, English or First Nations are more and more frequent and are now becoming part of our cultural heritage.

Another asset that the school has is the program content. Program content leaves a lot of room for contributions from Quebec citizens of every origin.

Lastly, there is the strategy which involves hiring candidates from different cultural horizons, as an accurate reflection of the society, in which we live. These are the ways it works to combat exclusion.

As we have seen, Quebec schools, through their promotion of citizenship education and their openness to cultural diversity, have earned their rightful place in a plural society.

Schools have to be able to adapt to the ethnic diversity and intercultural dimensions of the classroom by taking into account the educational vision of immigrant parents.

It is in this way that the Quebec school system, which is one of society's flagships, along with health, the administration of justice, the media and social services, will continue to endure

and fully contribute to the emergence of a plural society.

This will be its contribution to the construction of the world delivered from all hate and prejudice that we all dream to see become a reality.

Thank you. ♦



## Closing of the Congress



Speaker :

**Mr. Moncef Guitouni**

President, International Federation for  
Parents Education (IFPE)

- **Mr. Luc Dupont,**  
**President of the SROH;**
- **Mr. Malaki, Deputy Minister**  
**of Education for the Islamic**  
**Republic of Iran;**
- **Ms. Francine Gaudet,**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

We have spent two fruitful days together listening to thought-provoking proposals and reflections. I thank you all for the efforts you spent in preparing for this congress. I know that, as participants, you gave the very best of yourselves, in sharing the ideas that will allow our various associations to develop better integration policies based on respect and equality of opportunity. I thank all the forum facilitators and speakers, especially those who have come from so far to be with us.

As we come to the close of our deliberations, what should we expect to accomplish? Among other things, we truly hope that our efforts will not have been in vain. We all hope to return with strengthened convictions about the work that remains in order to “implement these unique endeavours” and to ensure that they remain within human reach. These are not mere goods and services we hope to deliver. Some people may accuse us of being overly romantic or idealistic dreamers, who forget that projects such as these do not put bread

and butter on the table. But how can we hope to nourish our bodies without dignity or respect or the right to the conviction of being equal, based on the contributions we all make to the development of our country? All human beings have an identity, even though it may be more faintly perceived in some than in others. We not only all need dignity, but we also need to know that our dignity is perceived and respected by others.

When an immigrant leaves his country for another, he wants to believe that his dignity will remain intact, his personality respected, his efforts recognized, just as he himself recognizes that he has been welcomed in his new host country. He wants to see his dreams become reality. He believes that the best interests of his future lie in the new country, in which he will become a full-fledged citizen. He hopes to make an important contribution to his new community and help prepare the right environment for the future of his own heirs. He aspires to build a fitting heritage based on his deepest aspirations, which were the reason to leave behind family, country, culture, customs and even his profound attachment to a region or birthplace. We must never betray the trust of people who have invested their hopes in their new community, where they wish to live in peace, tranquility and security.

Globalization has opened up borders to a multiplicity of new products. Developed countries are often motivated by the desire of economic expansion coupled with access to lower cost manpower, which often comes in the form of immigrant labour. The submissiveness of such a class will not endure for ever. The second and third generations who have been exposed to different experiences in the host country have aspirations that are different from those of their parents. They are citizens born in the new country and have inherited its culture, despite the occasional reticence. They are so integrated into the new country that often they are no longer even familiar with the culture or language of the home of their ancestors. For economic reasons, very few of them ever have the opportunity to return to their country of origin. If they do return, it is usually only after many years of absence. In addition, mixed marriages often become the source of conflict and confrontations which tend to undermine the sense of identity or belonging, which are however so essential as anchor points that are essential for a stable social life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The subjects of our discussions over the past two days are of immense import for the stability of countries where immigration has become a necessity. Immigration is a source of demographic enrichment for developed countries. We must soon come to grips with the fact that both low birth rates and migration flows may be a source of risk that will compromise social equilibrium.

Building our common future is not an idle dream. It is an absolute reality, because a multiethnic and multicultural society needs a common unifying project that goes further than the ideals of freedom, democracy and economic prosperity. It must not fall into the pitfalls of economic exploitation, conservatism or class domination. We must ensure that social structures and dynamics are not confused with individual identity and social responsibility. We must take into account the importance of identity, while being aware of all these dimensions in our day to day doings and concerns.

The various orientations and directions that have been proposed during this congress are an honour to the assembly. We are reassured to know that they are in full support of the action and the mission of the Federation. We beseech all our partner organizations, associations, governments and international representatives to support us in our efforts, because the endeavour we are seeking to undertake is both great and perilous. Great because we are working to prepare our future generations and perilous, because there are so many ways we can err, if we forget to keep in mind our primary vision, which focuses on the interests of our children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me on behalf of the IFPE Bureau and Board of Directors, as well as on my own behalf, to state my gratitude and thanks to the Société de recherche en orientation humaine and its President, Mr. Luc Dupont, for having organized this conference.

I hope to see you all again at the next IFPE Conference but also in union of thought and action for the achievement of our common objective, which is to instil in our children of the second and third generations the sense that they belong, wherever they may be, and that they are entitled to live for and believe in the future.

Thank you! ♦

**Family and Culture Harmony**

Speaker :

**Mr. Hassan Malaki**

A member of the Education Board of University Of Allameh Tabataba'i and Deputy Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The congress of “Building Our common Future Together: A unique Endeavor for a plural Society”, has gathered distinguished scholars, researchers and eminent thinkers to discuss the issues which would help build a human society, create a healthy and progressive plural society and move towards a more desired and stronger one. I am pleased to join you in this scientific conference to contribute into such an important discussion. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank Professor Guitouni, and Mr. Dupont.

#### **Family in the stream of the global developments**

Without a doubt, the family is the most important institution, which has developed through time in accordance with the changes that have taken place throughout the history of the human being. It has been subject to quantitative transformation. As a result of these changes, new problems have occurred and new phenomena have emerged.

With regard to the family institution in Iran, it is believed that it is going through a “transition phase”. In the past, because of the absence of rapid changes, the Iranian family enjoyed more stability. Presently, however, the Iranian family is facing fundamental challenges, which are transforming the relationship between family members. As a result of these transformations, manners that are widely accepted as social rules, have not emerged in the social scene and this reason the behavior in the family frame is diverse.

Therefore, with regard to the age of marriage, choosing a partner, the place of the children in the family and the relationship between the family members and similar issues, the diversity of opinions and behaviours are visible.

The wide range of age in marriage in

Iran confirms this assertion. We can see that sometimes people get married in Iran around the age of biological maturity and other times takes place in around the age of thirty or even higher. Presently, according to the statistics published by the Supreme Assembly of Youth, there are 1.5 million overdue marriages in Iran, which implies an increasing move in marital age. Currently, it seems that the family institution in Iran, after long years of being dominated by traditions over the relationship between the couples, has entered a new phase. In this stage, the will of the people is manifested and the need for change has been accepted as a principle. An appropriate time for marriage is whenever people find appropriate approaches to it according to their own situation. Another evidence is the opening of an ever-increasing gap between the generations. The analysis of the relationship between the generations suggests that the values of the new generation are increasingly distancing itself from those of the previous generation. Therefore, without any doubt, the emotional environment of the families would witness immense changes under the influence of these conflicting values.

In other words, the changes resulted from the process of industrialization and urbanization has replaced the extended family system with a nuclear family system and this process continues in an ever-increasing speed.

Now we must answer this question that what kind of changes the family is facing on the global level.

One of the important indications that explains the susceptibility of the family very clearly in the previous years is the undesirable phenomenon of divorce and separation. With respect to the negative effects of divorce on family life, especially the children's, its consequences are evident enough, but the increase in the divorce rate on the

national as well as the international level, can be seen as an alarming factor.

The research shows that as the manifestations of the modern civilization in the urban lifestyle reaches its climax, it leaves its deep impressions on the institution of family and destabilizes its structure.

For this reason, it is necessary that an adaptation be created between the three sides of the triangle of human civilization, education and family. This adaptation must be designed in a way that the efforts on one institution in facing another is not neutralized nor should these institutions be put in parallel to result in repetition and waste of resources. Rather, they must be put in extension of one another and the direction of the accumulation of experiences.

Having this important assumption in mind, I emphasize that the family as a primary institution can help in bringing up individuals who would coexist in a pluralistic society. For this reason, on the basis of the conducted research, we are analysing the role of family in creating a social harmony. However, because this social harmony requires higher level social interactions, with a brief review of discussions on social interactions, I will point into the role of the family in the process of social harmony.

### **Social interactions**

From the point of view of social psychology and sociology, only a person who believes in social harmony, and is prepared to spend the required emotional energy for that, can create the ability in himself/herself to agree upon certain principles. And this would become possible by the means of his or her presence in the social platforms in the future.

From this perspective, the more an individual gains confidence in building emotional bridges, the higher commitment he develops, thus the climax of social harmony is manifested in the creativity of the individual.

Nevertheless, the promotion of the social interactions requires other elements such as paying attention to the education, the process of socialisation, reinforcements and rewards, which becomes meaningful in an important educational and social institution called family. In other words, the family is the starting point of that promotion which will be discussed here.

### **Family, the Starting Point of Harmony**

Although it seems that the role of the family in social and educational literature has always been overemphasized, it seems that this reminder and repetition is necessary and in proportion with the social conditions and changing social circumstances. It is necessary because a great portion with the social of theoretical writings in the field assert the reduction of the family's contribution. And it is required because laying the foundations of social order and behavioural harmony in the society is still strongly bound to educational methods of the family and the teachings of the family environment. This necessity is even stronger in the Western societies because of the growing number of new family structures such as single-parent families, which does not constitute a normal family according to old standards, since it can potentially lead the family to a crisis.

In answering to the question with regard to the role of the family in building social harmony, the researchers have come to remarkable findings. Among the answers is that one of the influential elements in building a united value system in the society is the family. And the important factor in formation of the social harmony or "societal interactions" is like a stream whose source starts from the family. And it is the family that prepares the ground for the mutual interaction of the children and carries the responsibility of educating the generations.

Although the family plays a role in social interactions and creating fertile ground for them, these interactions must be of a pluralistic nature so that they can result in multiplication of common values.

Now, one can ask whether, in the present condition, our families are aware of their own educational role and significance, or they have neglected them. Experience shows that as the financial role of the family in the society has increased, it has proportionately lost its educational influence. This transformation has resulted in ethical decadence and a tangible increase in the crime rate.

For this reason, in a sober reaction to the educational problems of the children, the family has no choice but to develop a clear picture from its educational role. Because by simply leaving the burden of the process of education on schools alone no progress will be gained and the result will be a defective and useless one. Examining other angles in which the family has significant role will portray a clearer picture. One of these areas is the relationship between the family and culture.

### **The Family and Culture**

The family is the foundation of the character and personality of the children. It is the family that creates certain goals in the child's mind about his future, teaches him/her the criteria for success and educates him/her about the dominant values in school. Through this process, the child gains access to notions through which he/she can understand the message of the dominant culture. However, for those who do not acquire such a cultural wealth through family, the school is the only means to teach them about that. Therefore, the family is a very important source in relation to the culture and can exacerbate cultural injustices.

The problem of children in school is rooted in the fact that they are faced with new elements that the family environment has not been able to provide them with. P. Bourdieu, a sociologist in the educational system in France, holds the opinion that cultural differences are far more important than other differences. In this regard, he asserts that outlooks, values and experiences gained in the family are among the influential factors in the success of students in

schools; and for this reason, in his opinion, the school is a tool to make permanent social models.

Indeed, the family can play an indispensable role in social education, creating an appropriate culture for a civil society and educating a moral citizenship that believes in the fundamentals of the human society. The research shows that until the age of twelve, the social growth of the children is exclusively limited to family circle (Shaykhi: 1378:68). Therefore, the main assumption of this discussion, which marks the starting point for educating an acceptable citizen, is closely connected to institution of the family. It is in the family environment that a child learns to be committed to the equality of human beings, respect the opinions of other people and participate in public affairs. In an Islamic society, these values together with Islamic values offer an invaluable experience.

Appreciating the vital role of the family in this sensitive phase of globalization is, indeed, the elevation of the education and awareness of the parents. It can be seen as their active participation in building culture in the family environment and the process of cultural harmony in the mainframe of human values and protection of local and national principles. It is in the family environment that we can gradually institutionalise the foundations of the realisation of a civil society. Eradication of the mentality of crime and despotism, elimination of the mentality of flattery, the promotion of tolerance, reduction of the patriarchal relations and preventing from its penetration into educational environment, elimination of crime, avoiding the use of personal influences, and the implementation of legal methods are considered as windows which can be seen as a practical approach for educating a citizen. With this perspective in mind, we can look at the renovation of the family structure in proportion to the internal needs of our society as well as global society as an immense duty. Under present conditions, civilization, which is considered the material dimension of culture, has initiated new methods in the path of progress for

humanity, which must be appreciated in the "Information Age". The combination of these developments has caused an imbalance in the existing relations and has created new conditions which must be asserted by timely and up-to-date measures. This is a responsibility that we must take seriously.

Undoubtedly, engaging in wise dialogues and looking for professional approaches can lead the social life towards the desired perfection.

Congress of "Building our common future together: a unique endeavor for a plural society" is a unique opportunity during which the scholars and custodians of education can open new perspectives for resolving the existing problems and preventing from future difficulties by examining theoretical formulas and practical steps. Approaches in which the emotional wealth of the family environment, an education based human values, and a civilization based on ethics, constitute its principal pillars.

Now one should address a fundamental question: What can be done in order to strengthen the role of the family in creating the culture of tolerance among the human race? In response to this question, I would like to propose some practical steps to be taken:

1. This important task must be initiated from the families. Children must learn the acceptance of the reality of diversity and variety. As the behaviour of every single member of the family shapes the child's personality, a family that has a tyrant father as its head, for example, which does not allow the freedom of expression to other members, cannot expect to bring up tolerant children. These children when they enter the society can only behave in a despotic way. Thus, we must use all the available means to educate the parents. We must convince them that their behaviour directly affects their children.
2. We must prepare the parents with regard to the methods of education. Besides their own behaviour, they

can transform the behaviour of their children by using appropriate educational methods.

3. In the school educational curriculum, we must teach children about justice and avoiding oppression, and assure that they understand these are human values which have been accepted by all thinkers and intellectuals of the human society. By teaching these values to children, they learn that they should not be self-centred in society, that they should accept that there are other individuals who have the right to live, and that they are not allowed to create a suffocating environment for others. We must teach every member of society to understand the value of freedom, and educate them as to how to live freely and respect human values.

We must educate them to accept that there is a strong relation between logical acceptance of diversity and variety in social life.

4. The dominance of a culture in society is an essential condition and the main requirement of strengthening the culture of pluralism. People, groups, institutions, and in fact the collective spirit dominating society influence the entire human society. How could it be possible that people, especially students, witness inhumane behaviours in society but accept the teacher's words? It is true that trainers and learned individuals can give directions to the society, but before that the general culture of the society has already shaped their personality. Therefore, the members of this conference should also establish contacts with the cultural executives on a larger scale. And by influencing them through propagation of human culture change the general atmosphere of the society.



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## Closing of the Congress



Speaker :

**Mr. Luc Dupont**

President, Société de Recherche en  
Orientation Humaine (SROH)

**Madame Minister, Madame Representative for the Executive Director of UNESCO, Mr. Deputy Minister of Education of Iran, Madame Representative for the Minister of Education of Quebec, Mr. President of the IFPE, honourable representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, and distinguished visitors to Canada, we have now come to the end of our congress.**

Three days of productive and insightful discussions and exchanges that have allowed us to demonstrate common denominators that transcend ethnic, cultural and religious dimensions. These three days were marked by a sense of urgency to find new directions, orientations and policies that will enable the emergence of a brighter vision of the future, greater coherence, increased inclusion and the establishment of the foundations for enduring solidarity.

In this perspective, our congress has provided us with the opportunity to focus on the unique role of parents, as motors of change, because of their roles as educators, models and support for youth and their potential to influence both public and private institutions.

As parents, we can act, but we must also be ready to demand more support, we must be heard and express ourselves, because of the fiduciary duty we have for the future of our children.

*Building our common future; a unique endeavour for a plural society* is both possible and necessary, nationally and internationally. Our work and deliberations during these days have provided us with ample opportunity to explore and discover new ways of cooperation among different parents' organizations throughout the world.

On behalf of all the members of the SROH and on behalf of all the participants, I wish to extend our profound thanks to the President of the IFPE, Mr. Moncef Guitouni, for this support and inspiration throughout the entire duration of this project.

I also wish to thank Canadian Heritage for its support and partnership that will allow this project to evolve into an enduring plan of action; I also wish to thank the Canadian Association of Colleges and Universities, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Quebec Ministry of International Affairs, the City of Montreal and the Royal Bank of Canada for their material assistance.

In addition to the support that has been provided by the public and private sectors, the SROH is very grateful for the contributions from the many volunteers, who devoted their evenings, their weekends and even their holidays to ensure the success of this major event. I especially wish to mention the exceptional support from our friends and supporters, including Yves Brissette; Ghislaine Picard-Mayer, Michel Pépin, Monique David, Agnès Guitouni, Frédérique Denault, Yvan Toupin, Mireille Apollon, Nadia Kichkina.

The relevance of the subjects discussed is only equalled by the quality of thought expressed. ♦



## Closing of the Congress



Speaker :

**His Excellency, Mr. Idrissa Traoré**

President,  
Constitutional Council,  
Burkina Faso

On October 27, 28 and 29, 2003, was held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, at the Guy-Favreau Conference Centre, the International Conference organized on behalf of the International Federation of Parent Education (IFPE), by the Société de recherche en orientation humaine (SROH) on the theme: *“Building our common future together: a unique endeavour for a plural society.”*

The morning of October 27, 2003 was devoted to the opening ceremonies, during which five addresses were given and one message was read.

Mr. Luc Dupont, President of the congress Organizing Committee was the first to speak and welcomed all the participants to the congress, expressing his wishes that they would enjoy both their stay in Montreal and fruitful discussions.

Mrs. Sénécal, Deputy chair of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal gave a weighty discourse on the multicultural character of the City of Montreal and the efforts it has deployed on this issue throughout the urban community: various forms of incentives, support for new populations in the host society, as well as measures aimed at promoting the involvement of all residents in the democratic, political, economic and social life of the city.

Mrs. Sénécal completed her remarks by thanking both congress organizers and the participants for their interest in these issues.

Mr. Moncef Guitouni, President of the IFPE, expressed his thanks to the Government of Canada, the Ministers in attendance, the invited guests and the conference attendees.

Mr. Guitouni gave resounding testimony to his predecessor, Mr. Jean Auba, former IFPE President and to Ms. Micheline Ducray, Delegate General of the Federation.

Mr. Guitouni next restated the objectives of the congress, which were formulated in the context of globalization in order to answer two questions: How will we manage to live together in a spirit of unity and solidarity? And how do we ensure that the economic space does not overwhelm the human dimension?

In response to these questions, Mr. Guitouni felt that the major challenges that contemporary societies will face will

be the effort to mobilize and unite people around a common goal as an incentive to live in greater harmony rather than to merely subsist as interchangeable mass consumers. It is time that we stop treating the many cultures and languages that characterize all of humanity with disdain.

By way of conclusion, Mr. Guitouni thanked Mr. Luc Dupont and his team for the tremendous work they did to organize the congress.

The Honourable Jacques Saada Member of Parliament and Deputy Whip for the Government of Canada, Representative of the Honourable Denis Coderre, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, gave an overview of the immigration situation in Canada, demonstrating how open our country is to immigration, especially since immigrants make up 17% of our population and that there are 43 MPs sitting in the House of Commons, who were born outside Canada.

The Honourable Saada outlined the success factors that are needed to ensure social cohesion and immigrant integration; it is essential that there be equitable sharing of responsibilities between the host society and the immigrant population, between the federal government and the provinces.

The Honourable Saada emphasized the importance of achieving the correct balance between individual and collective rights, which Canada is bound to take into account in order to humanize its citizenship program.

The Honourable Saada concluded his address by stating that Canada has all the means required to succeed in its multiculturalism policies.

Ms. Cécilia Baslavsky, Director of the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, Switzerland, transmitted greetings from the Executive Director of her organization to the congress participants. Mrs. Braslavsky went into great detail about the concept of nations as relatively closed entities that nonetheless seek to affirm their homogenous character.

Mr. Ibrahim Özdemir, Deputy Director General, Department for Foreign Affairs spoke on behalf of Huseyin Çelik, Minister of National Education, Turkey. He delivered a resounding plea of great relevance to the theme of the congress and pointed out his country's interest, as a country of emigration, to see the

establishment of a plural society in the host societies of so many countries in which his compatriots had sought domicile.

Mr. Luc Dupont, spoke next and read a message from Mr. Jean Auba to the congress; he praised the work of the IFPE and its President Mr. Guitouni, wishing that the congress would be a resounding success in Montreal.

On the afternoon of October 27, 2003 the Forums on Health and Social Services were held.

The Forum on Health, chaired by Mr. Jacques Rhéaume, Director of research and development centre of the Côte des Neiges CLSC in Montreal, Mr. Hubert Brin President of the Union nationale des associations familiales, France and M s . Latifa Bennani-Smirès, Member of Parliament and President of the association for the protection of the Moroccan Family.

The highlights of the address by Mr. Brin may be summarized in the following terms:

- The title of the Congress, a unique endeavour for a plural society, is problematic in France, because official French policy is for full integration into the Republic rather than distinctive community development; in France, integration is always equated with assimilation ;
- Different cultures can be tolerated on the condition that they limit their expression to the private sphere;
- It is essential to avoid stereotypes and political correctness;
- We must avoid the political facility of pitting children against their parents ;
- The integration contract must be based on rights and duties;

Conclusion, there is no compromise possible on the fundamental importance of public health.

Mrs. Latifa Benneni-Smirès focused on the human dimension required to enrich our service delivery systems. So-called conventional medicine must give due consideration to the patient's life experience, origin, religious beliefs, social and cultural customs, and among others, seek to discover both the particular facets of his illness as well as his physical and moral suffering, in order to properly treat him.

There was a well rounded date, punctuated with questions addressed to the speakers, testimonies and declarations that helped to shed light on a certain number of important concerns (such as the morning after pill), hopes (that we can get away from proning legislative solutions and seek rather to achieve consensus based on health related problem-solving) and certitudes, such as the need for parent involvement in health issues, which can be achieved by means of information, sensitization and empowerment.

Recommendations were also made about interpreter training for immigrants requiring assistance with health or benefit needs, among others.

The Forum on Social Services, chaired by Ms. Rae Simpson, Director of the Family Resource Centre, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, was facilitated by Ms. Lyliane Laloum, Director of the Parent Education Department of the Municipality of Rishon le Zion, Israel and by the Honourable Gordana Matkovic, Minister of Social Affairs in Serbia.

Speakers at this Forum quite correctly identified the problem raised by the issue of how to enhance family and youth support, in the context of increasing pluralism, and in such a way as to promote the emergence of shared citizenship goals. In other words, the topics of this Forum focused on the best way to reconcile individual and collective rights so that all persons entitled to social assistance, youth, women, handicapped individuals, members of ethnic minorities, war veterans, refugees and displaced persons can benefit from appropriate support and social integration into the host community. Appropriate measures in the area of employment and financial and social support social for underprivileged members of society and for families with children must be adopted. These measures will include education and health programs adapted to the needs of the targeted groups. This amounts to implementing a policy of positive discrimination positive. The Forum cited noteworthy examples of such measures in Israel, Canada, Serbia and the U.S.

It was agreed by general consensus that it is impossible to create a plural society without an appropriate injection of humanization.

The Forum concluded with the following recommendations:

- 1- We must remember our common humanity and instil in ourselves and in our children a solid identity for the development of a humanist society.

- 2- It is essential to integrate courses on multiculturalism into the training programs designed for social caseworkers.
- 3- We need to create proper training for social facilitators.

The morning of October 28, 2003 was devoted to the Education Forum and the Forum on the Administration of Justice.

The Forum on the Administration of Justice was chaired by Mr. Gerry Robinson, a member of the Immigration and Refugee Board, from Toronto, Canada. The Forum speakers were the Honourable Charles D. Gonthier Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Ottawa and His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, President of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso.

The Honourable Justice Gonthier began the deliberations with an address on law and morality, which centred on two themes: morality as the foundation of law and the effect of law on the moral environment.

The presentation of The Honourable Justice Gonthier was divided into three parts; in the first part he described the approach used in Canada's contemporary legal system to differentiate between law and morality. In this part, The Honourable Justice Gonthier emphasized the differences between law and morality, demonstrating that, in order to merit respect, law must be based on a moral foundation.

The second part of the presentation by The Honourable Justice Gonthier centred on three important themes: freedom and power, the individual and the community; the global village and regionalism.

- Theme of freedom and power; this theme led to the issue of how to reconcile rights and duties, which may be summarized as follows: rights provide the framework of control over certain government actions. In return, all citizens must be ready to carry out specific duties and obligations for the benefit of the entire community. Rights must be considered in relationship to the corresponding obligations and freedoms in relationship to corresponding responsibilities.
- Theme of the individual and the community; in the words of The Honourable Justice Gonthier, this debate seeks to provide an answer to the following question: are individuals only isolated atoms, who engage in

minimal exchange with their surroundings? In response, The Honourable Justice Gonthier maintained that although it is possible to view rights separately from concomitant duties to society, attention nonetheless must be focused on the inevitable interaction between individuals and the community in which they live.

- Theme of global village and regionalism; according to The Honourable Justice Gonthier, the notions of a global village and regionalism are gaining in importance and therefore give rise to the following questions: is global morality possible? Does morality transcend borders? According to The Honourable Justice Gonthier, since men do live in a global moral environment, they are bound to give consideration to international moral standards of tolerance. Such standards first appeared with the International Declaration of Human Rights.

In the third part of his presentation, The Honourable Justice Gonthier discussed the theme of brotherhood. In his view, brotherhood plays an important role in the overall scheme of human rights. Although such a role is not always immediately obvious, it is nonetheless inescapable. The notion of brotherhood coincides with numerous historical realities, which are a good illustration of the flexibility inherent in this value.

In the opinion of the speaker, brotherhood is based on four main values: inclusion, commitment and responsibility, justice and equality, and lastly, cooperation. It implies the quest of the common good by the pooling of collective resources.

According to the speaker, the notion of brotherhood is only very rarely directly cited in judicial decisions; but it is indirectly invoked in related notions such as solidarity, social condition, equality, social justice, and more especially in human dignity. In Canada, the notion of human dignity occupies an important place in the interpretations rendered by the Supreme Court in terms of the right to equality, which is guaranteed in the Constitution and in numerous national jurisdictions; in fact international jurisprudence has had considerable influence on national jurisdictions, as they develop the general principles of human rights.

The second presentation of the Forum on the Administration of Justice was given by His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré,

entitled: *Discrimination: law, justice and the principle of equal opportunity.*

The presentation by His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré was divided into three chapters. The first chapter presented the analysis and assessment of the notion of positive discrimination, the second outlined prohibited grounds of discrimination and the third was a summary of the conclusions developed from the first two chapters. The first chapter provided an overview and an assessment of positive discrimination, the second prohibited grounds of discrimination and the third set out a series of conclusions, inferred from the first two. It also outlined a number of proposals to improve the fight against discrimination.

In his first chapter, His Excellency Mr. Traoré described positive discrimination as the adoption of specific measures which will offset the real inequalities to which members of minority groups are very often subject.

His Excellency Mr. Traoré invoked the values of solidarity, brotherhood, human dignity and social equity as grounds justifying positive discrimination. He also pointed that despite certain reserves that have been expressed regarding this doctrine, positive discrimination has been enshrined in legislation and jurisprudence in most major fields, notably in the political, social, spiritual, cultural, religious, national and international spheres. His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré particularly emphasized the substantial number of international stakeholders who have spoken in favour of positive discrimination.

With respect to its scope, His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré stated that:

- 1- Positive discrimination has been invoked for purposes of achieving equal opportunity by legislators in order to offset the specific inequality facing women, allowing them to have greater access to public office.
- 2- Positive discrimination has also been invoked to provide direct recognition to specific communities and minority groups.

In the second chapter of his presentation, the president of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso began by defining prohibited grounds of discrimination. These are usually describes as any "distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, ancestry or national or ethnic origin whose effect is to destroy or endanger the recognition, entitlement or equal exercise of human

rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres or in any other sphere of public life."

His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré described how justice in both the national and international spheres has taken up the fight against discrimination, albeit with varying degrees of success, because the realm of justice is not always equal to the real acts of discrimination to which victims are actually exposed.

He cited by way of example the European Court of Justice in its goal to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms by the reversal of the burden of proof in detriment to the presumption of innocence, which is well entrenched in national jurisdictions. His Excellency Mr. Traoré emphasized in fact that the latter often place limits on the freedom to introduce evidence depending on how it has been produced and sometimes equate certain recordings that have been produced without the knowledge of the accused as thefts, which are inadmissible in law. His Excellency Mr. Traoré pointed out that many national jurisdictions even hinder the margin of manoeuvre available to victims of discrimination, by denying them certain procedural rights. This occurs most often in the area of social protection and education. The president of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso began also made reference to the negative attitudes of the police and prosecutors, particularly to their lack of willingness to investigate or authorize allegations of discrimination as well as to the fact that, even when there is a conviction, the sentences are not very dissuasive. However, in his opinion, many of these obstacles can be overcome and to achieve this he set out a catalogue of reforms.

The second Forum held on October 28, 2003 was devoted to education and was chaired by Ms. Cécilia Braslavsky, Director of the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, Switzerland. The speakers of for this forum were Ms. Elena Zamphir, Director General of international Relations and European Integration of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Research, Romania and Mr. Jacques Édouard Alexis, Former Prime Minister of Haiti and President of the Foundation Éducation et société, in the same country.

The two speakers based their addresses on the experience encountered in their own countries and recommended positive discrimination as a means of achieving greater social integration, both within and outside of immigrant source countries.

The debates focused on the following elements:

- immigration, response to real needs;
- the human being is at the centre of any actions contemplated;
- the role of parents;
- education;
- labour market integration;
- measures to be taken.

The debates also gave rise to specific recommendations;

1. In terms of immigration as a response to real needs, the recommendations were:
  - Host countries that attract well educated immigrants should provide some form of financial compensation to the source country.
  - Processing of national resources should be encouraged in source countries.
2. With respect to the role of the human being:
  - It was strongly recommended that human beings always be centred at the heart of all policies, actions and programs, reflecting an attitude of mutual respect.
3. As to the role of parents, the Forum recommended the development of parent support programs to foster and reinforce their parenting skills.
4. In terms of education, teacher training should include knowledge of a second language and the teaching of different religions, whereas as student curriculum should emphasize the enrichment that comes from the teaching of such a diversity of subjects.
5. In terms of labour market integration, recommendations called for the greater inclusion of immigrants (for example the establishment of a quota system) in professional training, social functions and government employment.
6. In overall fashion, there was a strong recommendation to create an international observatory to monitor, among other things, migration flows..

The afternoon of October 28, 2003 was devoted to two Forums, the first on media and the second on citizenship education.

The Forum on citizenship education was chaired by Mr. Jean Pierre Charbonneau, Member of the Quebec National Assembly, Quebec, Canada. The two speakers were Ms. Malka and Mr. Jacques Paquette, respectively the representative of the Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, Canada and Executive Director of the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Branch of Canadian Heritage.

The Chair of the Forum, Mr. Jean Pierre Charbonneau, gave the introduction to the Forum, and summarized its main objective, citizenship education. In his view, citizenship education is valid for the acquisition of knowledge, the development of greater civic awareness, and the awakening of the need in citizens to be well informed of the imperatives of community life. Mr. Charbonneau pointed out that once such a civic conscience is developed, citizen involvement will become a meaningful reality.

Ms. Malka outlined the mandate the City has adopted for welcoming and integrating immigrants. Immigrant integration represents a considerable challenge or the administration of the City of Montreal.

Ms. Sénécal described the integration policy adopted by the City of Montreal as well as the various projects and measures that involve training for municipal employees as a means of achieving this policy.

The second address, by Mr. Paquette, focused on three main points. He began by the review of the latest statistics related to immigration trends in Canada. He then explained the immigration principles and policies that have been adopted by the Government of Canada, with respect to ethnic diversity. He then described the main characteristics of Canada's approach to citizenship. In his opinion, citizenship education is essential to enhance understanding between the host society and the immigrant community; such understanding derives in a large measure from parental education.

The debate that followed among the various participants gave rise to the following recommendations:

- Government action related to citizenship education should target all citizens, not just those of recent arrival.
- Programs that are designed to impart ethno-cultural knowledge should be developed according to the behaviours specific to each generation.

- Recognition of foreign degrees and professional experience acquired by immigrants in the source country.

There should be adequate representation of ethno-cultural communities in both the private and the public sectors.

The Media Forum was chaired by Mr. Peter Desbarats, Professor Emeritus from the University of Western Ontario, Canada, and speakers were Mr. Moncef Guitouni, President of the IFPE and Mr. Philippe Bélisle former journalist and communications consultant in Canada.

The Chairman of the session outlined the nature of the debate, to take place in response to the following questions:

- Are the media accountable?
- Do the media have a role to play in education?
- Can the media act as a vehicle for democratic values in a racially, culturally and linguistically pluralist society?

During the course of the debate, it was admitted that the media can and must contribute to the building of a plural society. However, it was also recognized that the media are far away from this ideal. In fact, comments during the debate showed that media in fact have a rather negative impact. Immigrants do not see themselves reflected in the media. The media do not really engage in any kind of ethnic dialogue and the media content in many programs or shows that are broadcast tend to have a corrupting influence on youth. Often immigrant populations only merit attention from the media when they are involved in crime or misdemeanours; rarely do the media attempt to reflect their day to day encounters with obstacles to successful integration.

The role of parents was suggested as an element that might offer some counter weight to the negative effects of the media, but we have to be especially vigilant against the danger of one dimensional thought.

It was also shown that the media do not however have a universally negative impact, but that they can also play a very useful role, whence the importance of maintaining the freedom of the media. The debates also drew attention to the fact that new media such as the Internet are also an important venue for access to information, especially for youth. This domain may not only eventually require some kind of regulation, but we must also to ensure to maintain parent accountability.

The morning of October 29 was devoted to the closing ceremony of the congress. Six reports were read on the Forums of the preceding days as well as the general report on the congress; there were also addresses by the Deputy Minister of Education from Iran, the President of the Organizing Committee, the representative of the Minister of Education of Quebec as well as a closing address by the President of the IFPE.

The six Forum reports were given respectively by:

- Dr. Yves Brissette for the Health Forum
- Ms. Micheline Létourneau, for the Social Services Forum;
- Ms. Denise Normand-Guérette, for the Education Forum;
- Me. Nicole Ladouceur, for the Administration of Justice Forum;
- Ms. Monique Laboureur, for the Media Forum;
- And Ms. Mireille Appolon, for the Citizenship Forum.

All six reports were accepted and adopted by acclamation, thanks to their great clarity, exactitude and objectivity with regards to the debates. All reporters acquitted their tasks gracefully and skilfully.

The general report was given by His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Traoré, President of the Constitutional Council of Burkina Faso.

After a few minor corrections dealing with the correct names and qualifications of specific participants and a few clarifications that had to be made with regards to the observatory on integration, the report was adopted by acclamation. The closing ceremony began with the address by Dr. Hassan Malaki, Deputy Minister of Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Dr. Malaki praised the congress for having selected a theme of such relevance. In his words, there is a very close relationship between family and culture. Children must be taught how to be able to live together and it is the parents who are the first to impart this teaching. This implies that parents must have the proper understanding of what a plural society is and how people must conduct themselves in such a society in order to be able to transmit their values to their children. According to Dr. Malaki, both parents and children have to learn the importance of human values.

Dr. Malaki announced in conclusion to his address that following the example of the IFPE and SROH, Iran will host a congress

in 2006 on the theme: Civilization, education and family.

Dr. Malaki gave his hearty congratulations to the congress organizers and offered his warmest wished of friendship to all the participants at the Conference.

Mr. Luc Dupont, President of the Organizing Committee thanked all the participants for their contributions and reflexion and underlined the intention of the SROH to work in order to give a continuity of these work.

Ms. Francine Gaudet, parliamentary assistant and representative of the Minister of Education of Quebec, also addressed a few words to those present.

Ms. Gaudet began with a question: what is the best way to build a plural society? In response to this question, she stated that in her opinion, the very best way to build such a society is through citizenship education, which should really begin with early childhood. For Ms. Gaudet citizenship education implies the promotion of citizen involvement. This is why she emphasized the importance of the schools as a locus of integration for new arrivals to the community.

Ms. Gaudet identified all the stakeholders in citizenship education. It begins with the parents, who truly wish to see their children succeed in school. It also includes teachers, whose approach to education must take into account the new diversity in classrooms, especially in order to avoid any form of exclusion. Teachers therefore must bring an intercultural dimension to their teaching. Citizenship education also involves a number of social and administration partners, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the right personal and relational skills are acquired to facilitate the creation of a plural society.

Ms. Gaudet also outlined the importance of educational reform in Quebec, which focuses on the importance of creating a plural society. The main goal of this reform is to ensure that all students obtain the ability to become responsible, enlightened and independent citizens, who are instilled with a vision of diversity and whose identity is reinforced through the respect they hold for themselves and for others; in other words, citizens who recognize both their duties and their responsibilities.

Ms. Gaudet then went into details about the accomplishments that have been made in Quebec. One of the main accomplishments has been the teaching of a

second language that is offered to immigrants upon arrival. They are also given information about how the school system works. Teachers are also given extensive education and training about the issues of cultural diversity. The ultimate goal is to help parents become true allies of the school administration.

Ms. Gaudet also admitted that despite the progress that has been achieved in Quebec, there are still examples of exclusion. In her conclusion focused on two solutions, in addition to citizenship education: recourse to the principle of equality of opportunity for all as well as the principle of equal integration into the body of professions of persons of every origin.

The closing address was given by Mr. Guitouni, President of the IFPE. He began by thanking Dr. Malaki and Ms. Gaudet for their valuable closing remarks to the congress participants.

Mr. Guitouni gave echo to his opening remarks at the congress that emphasized the fact that immigration has to be recognized as a new social imperative. In his conclusion he pointed out the great importance, with respect to the creation of a plural society, of the psycho social concept and of the emotions and sentiments that youth experience through ruptures with their family and friends.

Mr. Guitouni congratulated all the congress organizers, especially Mr. Luc Dupont, for their faultless execution of the three day event. He also thanked the Quebec, Canadian and international authorities and sponsors who contributed to the financial, material and organizational success of the congress.

He reminded participants of the invitation that had been extended by Israel for the congress they are planning to hold in 2005. Mr. Guitouni also wished all attendees a safe return as he officially adjourned the Montreal congress. ♦



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