



CHAIR NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT UNESCO CHAPTER



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. ERNESTO VILLEGAS, MINISTER OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER FOR CULTURE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIR OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

Paris, 03 April 2018

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of the Member States of the NAM,
Esteemed Madame. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I have the honor of conveying to you a solidary greeting from the President of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro Moros, to all the sisters and brothers of the Non-Aligned Movement, UNESCO Chapter, present at this meeting.
2. With this meeting we comply with the assumed commitment to achieve the reactivation of the NAM in UNESCO, and to seek that this important group should have the desired impact within this Organization. To the extent that we can meet and work in greater harmony amongst each other, we will be able to leave our intended mark in the Organization and we will get closer to fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.
3. We are in the house where the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity was adopted in 2001, which resulted in the 2005 Convention. Let us remember that among its main objectives is the need to raise awareness on the importance of intercultural dialogue, diversity, and inclusion, as well as improving understanding and cooperation between different cultures.
4. In addition, less than six months ago, in this very same room, we adopted on December 12, 2017 the Declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement, UNESCO chapter, on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, in which we reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as cultural diversity, recognizing these as sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humanity.



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5. Respect for cultural diversity, tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation are key principles in guaranteeing the peace and security of the peoples of the world, and not as justifications for a new ideological and political confrontation.
6. The commitment to the promotion of cultural diversity is not an idea that can be left in vain, we need to understand that it concerns a struggle that continues in force for the recognition of the identities and rights of peoples, it is a struggle against "assimilationism", against the false idea that universality is synonymous with uniformity. It is a question of combating the discourse of colonialist power, accustomed to justifying the construction of hierarchical, asymmetric, and exclusionary relationships among peoples.
7. As indicated by the Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza, this past February 27 in Geneva: "In reclaiming their indigenous cultural values, countries and regions participate in the collective effort to create a new, more just, diverse, and plural order on the planet."
8. Let us recall what has already been established in Article 4 of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which states that "The defence 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."
9. Como lo señala el Sociólogo Mexicano Rivas Herreras (2011) "las corrientes multiculturales, de orientación ultraliberal, encontrarán un punto de asidero en la consolidación del individualismo posesivo", pero la realidad es otra, la modernidad capitalista, al uniformar lo diverso, clausura la existencia del mundo multicultural, pluricultural e intercultural, negándole su legitimidad.
10. As Mexican Sociologist Rivas Herreras¹ (2011) points out, "multicultural currents, with an ultraliberal orientation, will find a point of support in the consolidation of possessive individualism"², but the reality is another: capitalist modernity, in

¹ Patricio Rivas Herrera, Sociologist of Mexico's Universidad Nacional Autónoma. He holds a Doctorate in Philosophy of History from the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ILA RAN). He worked as International Adviser of the Ministry of Culture of Ecuador in 2010.

² Rivas Herrera, P. (2011). Genealogía de la Diversidad Cultural como poder constituyente, *Revista de Investigación en Cultura y Desarrollo*. Consulted January 25, 2018. <https://dugi-doc.udg.edu/bitstream/handle/10256/4030/Walekeru-Num1-p20.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



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homogenizing what is diverse, shuts down the existence of our multicultural, pluricultural, and intercultural world, denying it its legitimacy.

11. As stated by Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild³, of the Cree Nation of Canada, in his speech to the United Nations Human Rights Council on the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

“in 1948 Indigenous Peoples were not included in the Universal Declaration. We were not considered to have equal rights as everyone else. Indeed we were not considered as human nor as peoples. (p. 373).⁴

12. In the same way, the philosophies and cultural traditions of peoples were subjected to colonization, and non-western traditions were marginalized in the elaboration of the “Universal” Declaration. For this reason, as indicated by Professor Gómez Isa⁵ (2011) “human rights should be reconceptualized as multicultural if we want them to become a common authentic language of humanity. If that is not the case, and if they are conceived as universal as has been done until now, human rights will always be an instrument in the clash of civilizations as conceived by Samuel Huntington, that is to say, in the struggle of the West against everyone else.” (p. 270)⁶.

³ The Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild, is a First Nation person of the Cree Nation of Canada, and was the first First Nation person of Alberta to obtain a law degree. He is the founder of the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development. Additionally, he was member of the first Indigenous Delegation to participate in the United Nations. He coordinated the Working Group to consolidate the draft statement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

⁴ Charters, C., & Stavenhagen, R. (2009). When Indigenous Peoples Win, the Whole World Wins. In C. Charters, & R. Stavenhagen (Eds.), *Making the Declaration Work: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (pp. 372-375). Retrieved from <http://www.internationalfund.org/documents/MakingtheDeclarationWork.pdf>

⁵ Felipe Gómez Isa is Professor of International Public Law and Researcher at the Pedro Arrupe Institute of Human Rights in the University of Deusto.

⁶ Gómez Isa, F. (2011). Diversidad cultural y derechos humanos desde los referentes cosmovisionales de los pueblos indígenas. *Anuario Español de Derecho Internacional*, 27, 267-373. Retrieved from <https://www.unav.edu/publicaciones/revistas/index.php/anuario-esp-dcho-internacional/article/view/2558>



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Esteemed colleagues,

13. In face of the unilateral coercive measures imposed on some countries of the South, with the building of walls, and both explicit and silent invasions, or the denial of the right to exist of peoples like those of Palestine, Venezuela advocates in favor of the preservation, the promotion, and the strengthening of solidarity, inclusive multilateralism, reminding that all unilateral sanctions are illegal.
14. We must emphasize that what is being proposed is intercultural dialogue: the meeting of cultures, based on humanism, to confront international violence in all its forms.
15. We are always talking about the search for peace, because peace is not simply the absence of conflict; in fact, it implies a series of realities and values such as solidarity, respect, justice, and equality. Can we speak of peace when a hegemonic power imposes its own conception of the world, always under the precept of cultural superiority? Can we even talk about peace when this hegemonic power kidnaps and bets on the failure of this Organization through, for example, the withholding of contributions payments to UNESCO? ...
16. Lo que seguirá siendo cierto, es que no importa las medidas coercitivas, las intenciones de imposición que algunos pretenden perpetuar; el Movimiento de Países No Alineados, desde la solidaridad, el dialogo, la tolerancia y el respeto actuará para verdaderamente lograr la consolidación de la paz.
17. What will remain true is that the coercive measures, the intentions of imposition that some intend to perpetuate, do not matter; the Non-Aligned Movement, through solidarity, dialogue, tolerance, and respect will act in order to truly achieve the consolidation of peace.
18. Es el momento de que hagamos entender que el mundo no marcha hacia la uniformidad de la especie humana en brazos del consumo, sino hacia una multiplicación de derechos, necesidades y demandas que amplifican la noción de diversidad hacia territorios como lo ambiental, la paz, la relación entre regiones culturalmente diferentes a escala mundial, los modelos de desarrollo económicos, los usos de la ciencia y la tecnología y la relación fértil entre diversidad cultural y universalismo, entre otros muchos asuntos.



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19. It is the moment for us to make others understand that the world is not moving towards the uniformity of the human species in the arms of consumption, but towards a multiplication of rights, needs, and demands that amplify the notion of diversity towards areas such as the environment, peace, the relationship between culturally different regions on a global scale, models of economic development, the uses of science and technology, and the fertile relationship between cultural diversity and universalism, among many other issues.
20. Es hora que se admita, la globalización o la “neocolonización” no funcionó, es un esquema criminal y fallido, evidente por la cantidad de conflictos presentes en las distintas partes del mundo, por los índices de pobreza, entre otros aspectos. Estamos en un momento de cambio de época y del surgimiento de un nuevo orden mundial, nuevas potencias emergen en el mundo y se multiplican las voces de países soberanos.
21. It is time to admit, that globalization or "neocolonization" did not work, it is a criminal and failed scheme, evidenced by the amount of conflicts present in different parts of the world, by poverty rates, among other aspects. We are facing a change of era and the emergence of a new world order, new powers are emerging in the world and the voices of sovereign countries are multiplying.

Esteemed Ambassadors, Friends,

22. We trust that this plenary meeting, and the reactivation of the UNESCO chapter of the NAM, will allow us to advance in accordance with the objectives of the Culture of Peace held by this Organization. As Comandante Hugo Chávez pointed out, "we respect all the peoples of the world. We want harmony and universal peace, to end the era of empires that attack the most vulnerable." With the work of all, we are sure that the NAM will contribute to the recovery of UNESCO's pioneering and universal role.

Thank you very much.