

LSE IDEAS public lecture

Strengthening Global Governance for the 21st Century

Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO

London School of Economics and Political Science
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Professor Michael Cox, Head of the Programme for Transatlantic Relations, Co-Director of the LSE IDEAS,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here.

I wish to thank Professor Michael Cox for this invitation.

I can hardly think of a better place to explore global governance than the *London School of Economics and Political Science*, with its history of close ties with the League of Nations and the United Nations.

The LSE embodies what I see as the ethical role of all higher education.

This is to create and share knowledge for the good of all.

“Rerum cognoscere causas.”

“To know the causes of things.”

I would just add one line to the motto of LSE...

“To know the causes of things ... in order to change them.”

Few universities have so shaped the way we understand the world.

Few universities have so influenced debates and policy, in this country, in countries across the world.

How many Noble Laureates are associated with the LSE... how many great thinkers and actors have walked these halls, as students, as professors.

The study of international relations was pioneered here, by Philip Noel-Baker, by Hedley Bull, by Martin Wight.

The world's first department of International Studies opened here in 1927, and LSE hosted the first major studies of the League of Nations, of the principles of multilateral cooperation.

In 1945, London hosted another 'first' – with the creation of UNESCO...

UNESCO was created in London, seventy-one years ago, at the Institute for Civil Engineering, presided by Ms Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education.

The idea of creating such an organisation emerged in 1942, when the United Kingdom organised regular *Conferences of Allied Ministers of Education*.

I always find this inspiring.

These Conferences gathered ministers from governments-in-exile and countries under occupation... at a time when the war was far from won.

Nonetheless, despite everything, in the very midst of conflict, the United Kingdom was promoting cooperation in education as a force for lasting peace.

UNESCO's Constitution opens with memorable lines:

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."

This is partly inspired by Prime Minister Clement Atlee, long associated with the LSE.

In new times, in a new century, I believe this vision has never rung so true.

'Hard power' is not enough for peace – we need 'soft power' also...education, freedom of expression, intercultural dialogue...

Professor Michael Cox, in an article in 2012, you wrote:

"We live not just in 'interesting times', but in extraordinary times."

I agree fully.

These are times of extraordinary change.

Globalization, deepening exchanges and a technological revolution are opening vast new opportunities for trade, for cooperation and dialogue.

At the same time, we live in an increasingly fragmented world.

Climate change is affecting all societies.

Poverty remains deep, revealing sharp inequalities in and between countries.

Conflicts are enduring, tearing at the fabric of societies, causing humanitarian tragedies, spreading violence and hatred.

We have seen devastating terrorist attacks in Paris, in Brussels, in Tunisia, in Indonesia, in Turkey, in Iraq.

We see violent extremism challenging societies everywhere.

Humanity's cultural heritage and diversity are attacked.

World Heritage sites are destroyed to eradicate the message of tolerance and dialogue they embody.

Minorities are threatened.

And the world is facing the most important refugee and displacement crisis of our time.

An estimated 1.5 billion people today live in regions affected by conflict.

.... 40 per cent of them are young people.

.... 28 million young girls and boys are out of school.

... 73 million young people are unemployed.

Now, more than ever before, freedom is under threat.

... freedom of speech.

... freedom of movement.

... freedom of choice.

At the same time, the family of States continues to grow -- along with the list of fragile countries, where weak institutions, conflict and poverty create volatile blends.

This comes at a time when the role of non-State actors has never been so important – including human rights organisations, and also organised crime.

In this context, the very notion of power is changing.

As Moisés Naím put it:

“Power is easier to get, harder to use – and easier to lose.”

I think we should be clear.

The world is not safe when extreme poverty remains so deeply prevalent.

The future is not secure when so many people lack access to education and health.

Societies are not sustainable when women still do not enjoy equal rights, when young people are desperate.

We talk about global governance, but we should speak about our cities and neighbourhoods, where we must learn to live together again.

I believe this setting raises, indeed, hard questions.

Questions about the relevance of institutions created in another century.

Questions about the ability of the international system to tackle threats that seem perversely designed to resist collective public action.

We hear analysts speak of a 'G-zero world,' without global leadership...

We hear international organisations compared to dinosaurs, at best, able to do just 'good enough'...

People point to continuing conflict and humanitarian tragedy in Syria, throwing a shadow over international peace and security – and the conflicts in Africa, which have produced largest waves of refugees and displacement.

I take these claims, but I think we need to look at global governance from the right angle, in light of the rising demand I see everywhere for global action.

I think the right angle is that of individual women and men, their quest for rights and dignity, their struggle for empowerment.

The right angle is that of the women I met in Kabul last May.

Some were older... others were young and had babies and toddlers with them.

They were all taking UNESCO literacy classes, and they shared with me their thirst for learning, to enhance hygiene, to negotiate on the marketplace, to make a living, with the support of their husbands.

The right angle is that of the children and young parents I met at the Baharka Camp, near Erbil, Iraq, when they gave me drawings of the dreams they had for a better future.

Drawings of homes.

Drawings of schools.

From this angle, the demand for rights and dignity, for peace, is boundless today.

From this angle, for women and men everywhere, the complexity of challenges calls for more diplomacy, more multilateralism – and the United Nations is responding.

Take the historic agreements of 2015.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* builds on the Millennium Development Goals, and embodies a new, global, transformative agenda for people, prosperity, peace and the planet, for the next 15 years.

Unlike the MDGs, almost imposed on Member States, the 2030 Agenda is owned by countries, elaborated with their participation.

It is interesting to recall that 2015 marked the 200th anniversary of the Congress of Vienna, which laid to rest the turbulence that followed the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars.

1815...two hundred years have past...

... the contrast could not be greater with last year's agreements... in terms of the number and nature of actors... in terms of scale... in terms of ambitions.

I believe the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement must be seen as very different and new forms of multilateral action that are universal and comprehensive.

These agreements were reached, because they were led in a process owned by all States, because they were conducted on the principle of inclusion, allowing all voices to be heard, from civil society to the private sector.

Inclusion. Openness. Ownership.

These agreements were struck thanks to diplomacy, thanks to the will of Governments, thanks to the leadership of the United Nations, and I wish to highlight the vital role of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon here.

All this shows the thirst that exists for multilateral diplomacy today -- the United Nations remains the only platform where new ideas can be transformed into norms, where new agendas for collective action can be framed on a universal basis.

I see this as the new multilateralism of the 21st century – it is complex, it is multi-layered, it crosses all borders, it reaches beyond governments -- and this is precisely why it *can succeed*.

The challenge, now, is to make it work.

Clearly, and I speak as Director-General of a specialised agency, this requires adaptation by the United Nations – this requires new thinking, new partnerships, a new openness with civil society.

In this regard, I see several areas for global action.

The first is the renewed commitment by all to the core goal of the United Nations Charter - “*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.*”

This same objective stands at the heart of the UNESCO Constitution.

I believe this calls for a new focus on prevention and mediation.

We need a stronger culture of prevention across all parts of the United Nations system, for stronger early warning, stronger monitoring capabilities, notably of human rights.

At a time when globalization is pushing identities to the frontline, this means advancing new forms of dialogue and 'living together' in ever-more diverse societies.

This is a key part of UNESCO's work, to act for intercultural dialogue, to make the most of diversity, while strengthening respect for human rights and dignity.

Let us take the rising challenge of violent extremism, which I see as a new global struggle for the hearts and minds... especially *young* hearts and minds...

I believe we all agree, violent extremists are not born -- they are made, they are fuelled.

This is a process we must disarm, by tackling a threat that is driven by exclusive visions of the world, based on false interpretations of history and faith, spinning on hatred.

I am convinced this must start on the benches of schools, through new forms of education, through media literacy, through new opportunities for youth.

Violent extremism can be *countered* by 'hard power' – but it must be *prevented* through the 'soft power' of education, culture, human rights.

This is UNESCO's contribution to the United Nations Secretary-General's *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, and the *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*.

This was my message to the *Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism* last year, invited by the United States President Barack Obama.

This is why UNESCO is acting to teach the history of the Holocaust and other genocides, to fight hatred, discrimination and anti-Semitism today.

One year ago, UNESCO held the first *High-Level Conference on Education to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism*, bringing ministers of education together from across the world.

This year, we launched the *Teacher's Guide on Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation*.

In September, we held the *International Conference on the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education*, with the *Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development*, in New Delhi, to explore UNESCO's draft *Guide for Policy-Makers on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education*.

This is prevention – this is peacebuilding, and it starts in classrooms.

This must also include nurturing the Internet for human rights and peace, to counter hate propaganda, seeking to lure and radicalise.

Last year, UNESCO held the first *International Conference on Youth and the Internet – Fighting Radicalisation and Extremism* -- we will hold a second conference at the end of this month in Canada.

We must bolster media literacy skills for young people, to give them tools to make the most of the Internet for peace.

This goal underpins the #Unite4Heritage campaign I launched in Baghdad last year, to counter hate propaganda, to engage young women and men in protecting humanity's heritage.

Violent extremists promote fear and division.

We must respond with skills and competences for critical thinking, opportunities for civic engagement, competences for intercultural dialogue.

Violent extremists preach exclusion and hatred.

We must teach human rights, tolerance and solidarity.

I see this as the new frontline today, in conflict situations, in refugee camps, in societies across the world.

I believe we need also a new focus on building resilient societies.

I see this as the core objective of the 2030 Agenda.

The key is inclusion.

Exclusion breeds hatred and violence, weakening societies, leaving them unable to build on the potential of all citizens.

Inclusion and equal opportunities make societies stronger, more united, more resilient.

This is why the 2030 Agenda is such a shift, because it is founded on education, on skills, to empower every man and woman...especially girls.

This is how people can adapt to the unexpected, plan ahead and recover from crisis.

This vision guides UNESCO's *Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project*, supported by the European Union, across the Mediterranean, to nurture the civic engagement of young women and men.

This is why UNESCO is investing in education for young Internally Displaced Persons and refugees in Iraq, in Syria, in Lebanon, in Jordan -- we simply cannot afford to lose a generation in this region.

I believe this calls for a new approach to peacebuilding, to answering the question of how we can sustain peace and not just keep it.

Let me commend, in this respect, the *2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, led by H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi, and the *2015 Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations*, led by H.E. José Ramos-Horta.

Peace operations today must work to prevent conflicts and halt their recurrence, lay the ground for rebuilding and reconciliation, for long-term development.

Peace support operations must be built into political and mediation strategies – they must be well-resourced, with targeted mandates, clear exit planning, implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, with women taking a much bigger part.

We must connect the dots between humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts -- this was at the heart of the *World Humanitarian Summit* in Istanbul.

Education and culture must be built deeply into a single chain of action, from humanitarian efforts and peacebuilding to long-term development support — there must be a single continuum of coherent, effective action.

I was in Afghanistan last May and saw for myself the links between peace and development, between inclusion and sustainability.

UNESCO is leading the largest education programme in the history of the country, targeting 600,000 citizens, as well as members of the Afghan Police, and this is vital for peace.

With President Ghani, we launched a new *Fund for Cultural Diversity*, to harness heritage and culture for nation-building, to foster belonging and social inclusion, to teach the wealth that is this country's diversity, because this is a foundation for peace over the long term.

In Mali, this is why I advocated for the protection of cultural heritage to be integrated into the stabilization operation.

With local communities, UNESCO has rebuilt the mausoleums of Timbuktu, destroyed by violent extremists in 2012 – we did so, because this is essential to peacebuilding, to rebuilding the social fabric, and the same ideas guide our work elsewhere.

I went with President Francois Hollande, ten days after Timbuktu was freed, and promised to rebuild the mausoleums – I returned two years later, to inaugurate the

rebuilt structures and saw the power of culture to renew hope and lay the ground for peace – this also is global governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yes, these are tough times for global governance... given the scale and complexity of challenges facing all societies...

But there are green shoots of optimism...

We have crafted new frameworks for multilateral action.

Now we must make them work – and, for this, I believe inclusion, openness and ownership must be our guiding principles.

I see these as hallmarks for a new multilateralism.

This is also why Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda is so significant, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, effective accountable and inclusive institutions.

These are foundations for effective and just global governance.

The world is changing – this wisdom remains.

Taking this forward requires ideas – it requires adaption and critical thinking, for sharper policy.

This university has always been a place for such debate.

In the words of Karl Popper, long-time professor at LSE:

“It is not his possession of knowledge, of irrefutable truth, that makes the man of science, but his persistent and recklessly critical quest for truth.”

I believe the same persistence, the same “recklessly critical” quest is required to keep improving global governance.

This task can never be finished once and for all -- it is, rather, a process of constant adjustment, constant refinement, constant debate and questioning.

In this spirit, I thank you for the opportunity to explore these questions with you today.