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Организация
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Message from

Mr Pierre Sané,

Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO,
on the occasion of the

Ceremony dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the European Masters Degree
in Human Rights and Democratisation

Awarding of Diplomas of the academic year 2006/2007, and
Inauguration of the academic year 2007/2008

Venice, Italy, 23 September 2007

It is a special pleasure for me to send my warm greetings to the European Inter-University Centre (EIUC) and the European Master in Human Rights and Democratisation (E.MA), which celebrates today its 10th anniversary. Unfortunately, last moment urgent assignments have prevented me from addressing you today in person as I initially intended.

For already ten years, E.MA is making a valuable contribution to the advancement of human rights in Europe and in the world. The Programme applies an innovative approach that combines successfully two important objectives: to provide, on the one hand, a solid theoretical background and, on the other, a good understanding of practical requirements and difficulties encountered at the grassroots level. With its growing number of graduates, now about 800, E.MA has been fuelling with competent specialists various instances working in the field of human rights at the national, regional and universal levels, both in non-governmental and governmental sectors. The European Union and the Council of Europe, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNESCO are only a few of the intergovernmental organizations that have benefited from their services.

The positive experience accumulated by E.MA has inspired the creation of similar inter-university networks and education programmes in other regions – in particular those in Africa, based in Pretoria, in the Mediterranean, based in Malta, and in South-East Europe, based in Sarajevo.

The Honourable Mention of the 2006 UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education awarded to E.MA is an acknowledgement of the programme's quality and reputation.

The aims of UNESCO and E.MA converge to a great extent. For a number of years we have closely cooperated in promoting education, training and research in human rights and democratization. UNESCO receives every year one of the best E.MA graduates and we are grateful to these young people for the competence and energy that they bring to the UNESCO human rights programme.

In 2008, the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be commemorated. Despite tireless efforts of all those working for human rights, the hopes for a better future for all that inspired the adoption of this Declaration are not yet attained. Hundreds of millions cannot realize their basic rights, numerous problems of yesterday persist and await their solution while countless new challenges emerge. This is why Article 28 of the Declaration stipulating that

“Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.”

is still now as valid as it was sixty years ago.

The commemoration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration should therefore serve as an opportunity to double our efforts to ensure dignity and justice for all of us.

We consider the EIUC, E.MA and its graduates as privileged partners in our efforts to make the provisions of the Declaration a reality. We also count on EIUC and E.MA to make a significant and innovative contribution to the commemoration of this cornerstone instrument. UNESCO intends to take an active part in the commemorative events and initiatives focusing on the areas that it has a comparative advantage and expertise. In addition to the actions targeting the general public, the Organization considers the possibility of engaging in an assessment of the progress, as well as of the obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the rights within its fields of competence.

Let me congratulate the EIUC and E.MA on the occasion of this anniversary and assure you that we look forward to continuing and further developing our fruitful cooperation.

I also wish to the graduates of the academic year 2006/7, as well as the new students of the year 2007/8, all the success in the endeavours to make human rights a reality for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pierre Sané', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pierre Sané