Director General of UNESCO,
Rector of the UN University,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentleman,

I am very honored to be here today and to have the opportunity to listen.

Listening is becoming more and more important - for our interdependence is increasing - and we may have to learn much more about each other. Those with whom we were not in direct contact yesterday may be closer to us tomorrow.

The Secretary-General and I have focused on one specific meaning of the Dialogue among Civilizations. That is, a dialogue between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who perceive diversity as an element of betterment and growth. This we believe is the core.

The group of Eminent Persons chosen by the UN Secretary-General to offer a reflection on the implication of dialogue for the international system, will be presenting a short book later this year. It will contain no recommendations.

In fact, in the true spirit of dialogue, we thought to avoid even the use of the terms “must” or “should”. It will not preach or pontificate, it will rather try to identify those seeds we believe already exist in today’s reality that may be enhanced by an approach to international relations based on dialogue. Those seeds in our view would permit - if nurtured- to move from a paradigm of exclusion to one of inclusion.
The old paradigm, and to a certain extent one which still prevails, is one of governance through exclusion. A skill we may therefore have to develop in order to make the leap from this old paradigm, is how to manage diversity better. The management of diversity, with the aim of becoming more inclusive, is thus a practical objective of a dialogue.

For too long diversity was seen as a synonym of enmity, and for too long we have indulged in the convenience of having an enemy. In the old days when leaders were in trouble at home they invented an enemy outside. It is an old trick, yet it seems to be working even today.

We believe however, that through dialogue and listening to the “other” - this mentality of “us and them” may well be overcome by the recognition of our common destiny as a human species. Such a new paradigm is emerging and what we hope will be fostered is a mindset of inclusion both by necessity and by choice.

First, the paradigm of inclusion is arising out of necessity simply because of the global dimension of problems.

Second, a new paradigm is driven by choice, because in a border-less reality we benefit more from inclusion than from exclusion. Needless to say, we are moving more and more towards a system where we either win together or we lose together.

While the way of perceiving diversity as a threat still persists, and examples continue to emerge in different parts of the world, the necessity and choice of looking at diversity as an element of advancement and melioration are equally present in the emerging paradigm.

While there continue to be anti-immigration demonstrations and even violence throughout Europe (a manifestation of the old paradigm), European Union studies already show that thirty five million new adult immigrants to the European Union are a necessity for the economic prosperity of that region by 2025.
While the old paradigm still demonizes the enemy, the new paradigm is transforming the enemy into a competitor, an opponent, and a partner.

Dubiously, the many examples of violence which have erupted over the last ten years may well have been last-ditch attempts by those who feared the convergence of the new paradigm, and more specifically, the loss of a traditional enemy. Such leaders - were and still are - unable to manage and indeed to rule without the enemy.

In a way, the new paradigm requires a new kind of leader. His or her greatness will be the consequence of the positive values he or she offers, not of the negative they purport to fight.

The new leader’s vision is anchored in a society where participation is uninhibited and once remote voices are heard; where the door is open to new channels for that participation, and where new actors have a role.

This vision is one where institutions are not the remnants of the past but are open to be reshaped and remodeled in order to appraise a future not yet defined. It is a vision where ideas are not feared, but are welcomed and discussed. And finally, where a new balance between the dignity of each individual and the wisdom of traditions is found.

Perhaps the new paradigm allows for individuals to revere their public service as a temporary honor in a professional life rather than a permanent occupation, which lasts forever. It may entail leaders who will “resign their commissions” even when asked to stay. Most of all, the new paradigm invites leaders to value and uphold their institutional responsibility equal to that of their personal, and individual responsibility.

In other words, this is a new paradigm where both institutions and individuals will have roles and where neither will overshadow the other. For institutions do not think without individuals; they do not even exist without individuals, and likewise individuals can hardly achieve much without the structures provided by institutions.

In fact, it is a paradigm where each individual intrinsically becomes a leader.
The processes of globalization are giving birth to a new paradigm of global relations. As such, these are the elements that we believe are already appearing: equal footing; re-assessment of the “enemy”; dispersion of power; stake-holding; individual responsibility; and issue driven alignments.

It might be said that the current reality is a mosaic of the old and the new; a mingling of the paradigm that excludes and that which embraces an understanding of the new. Nonetheless, we should not lose hope; for this is how human societies evolve. The border between the old and the new and between yesterday and today is seldom precise.

Many will say that the new paradigm requires a fundamental change in human nature; others will say that the interests of states will never change; others yet will simply say that it has never happened. Accordingly, the latter might also say that it cannot be done. Perhaps, we should remind the skeptics that few would have predicted the changes of the last decade and a half.

Finally, I wish to impart that the success of the new paradigm resides with the young generation. Many will call them idealists; others will call them naïve. These hasty judgments, in fact, belong to those who are unable to free themselves from the old paradigm.

The last mistake I wish to commit is to dampen the aspirations of the young generation to achieve what we have failed to achieve. Sad is the nation whose young have no dreams - but sadder yet is the nation whose elders try to squelch the dreams of their youth.

I wish to thank you also - for listening.