

## **“Scholastic Communities and Democracy: The Role of Ethics in International Education”**

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### **Introduction**

Αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, αγαπητά μέλη της κοινότητας του Διεθνούς Baccalaureat, αγαπητοί φίλοι, είναι μεγάλη μου τιμή να προσφωνώ μπροστά σας στην Αθήνα, μια πόλη στην οποία όλοι μας οφείλουμε πολλά

Five years of studying ancient Greek have given me a great love and a fascination for the Greek language, but regrettably no ability to speak Modern Greek. I am therefore reverting to English, one of the official languages of the IBO, and for the time being, the common language used in international exchanges. One hundred years ago, in the world of diplomacy, it would have been French, several hundred years ago, it would have been Latin all over the Western world, and 2000 years ago, it was Greek all around the Mediterranean.

First and foremost, I want to give homage to our host, the city of Athens. This city saw the birth of democracy and was the home of Plato and Aristotle, the two most important thinkers to have influenced the three monotheist religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam and who, with their respective foundation of the Academy and the Lyceum, lay down the foundation of knowledge and education for the progress of human civilization. It is in ancient Athens, 25 centuries ago, that political freedom gave birth to democracy, and freedom of speech gave birth to philosophy and the ancient humanism in which modern day secular humanism finds its roots.

It is indeed to the Greek world, and to the city of Athens in particular, that we owe some of the most important features of the world we live in today. This is why, in homage to this city, and also because it is a very timely theme and for the IBO in particular, for this conference about community that I have chosen to speak to you today about “Scholastic communities and democracy: the role of ethics in international education”. I intend to speak about the birth of schools, democracy, politics and ethics in ancient Greece, how the concept of education has evolved over the past 200 years before encouraging you to continue discussions about the need for the IBO, as a community affecting learning communities around the world, to train young generations in ethical thinking in order to protect the inhabitants and the environment of our planet.

Although you see that we have a power point above our heads, this is not a power point presentation. In many ways I am not trying to make a point, or to develop a powerful point, even if I have personal views on the subject of what the teaching of ethical thinking means for an organization like the IBO. Instead I hope to trigger conversations and even debates about what this means for the organization so that we all participate in the shaping of a democratic consensus about the values which are important to us. We have agreed on the mission statement, we have also embraced the learner profile and schools are free to choose to

belong or not to belong to the IB community, and a debate on ethics has to be ongoing if we want it to play a real role in the fabric of our world community.

So the power point will either be used to guide you in where you are in my presentation, or to display quotes. I could have, and I thought about, using wonderful slides of the magnificent monuments surrounding us, but I prefer to let you explore them on your own, if you have the time, and for now, to let ourselves just be guided with words.

Words on whose interpretation we have such a difficult time agreeing, especially for a multilingual audience for whom the same words often have very different meanings and conjure different images. It was this thought that led me to choose my title for today as I wanted to add from the start a note of ambiguity to my presentation. I did choose the word scholastic in the title to begin the interrogation. What about scholastic communities? what are they? In my choice of the word scholastic, I am not using the noun referring to the teaching of philosophy in the Middle Ages but the adjective about what pertains to schools. For some it may sound pedantic, one meaning of the term in English, but definitely not in French or Italian, for others it may mean nothing (the word scholastic doesn't exist in the American Dictionary of the English Language nor in the Webster New World Dictionary), but for me, having grown up in Rome, it reminds me of a beautiful image of St Scholastica given to me to commemorate the communion of a school friend, as well as of the many portraits or statues that one finds in churches of the sister of St Benedict, Scholastica (480-543), whose name meant: "she who has leisure to devote to study". More than anything she always reminds me that study was related to leisure, something I was hard pressed to believe as a child, a very ambiguous concept at the time. School was work for me, hard work, not fun, but, I have to add, due to my family circumstances, I always considered a privilege.

But let Scholastica, a Greek name, lead us on the path of what our schools communities owe to the community we are in: Athens.

## I. The Greek Legacy

Let's go back 2500 years ago, in 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens, and to some of the key concepts that emanated there and which have had such an influence on the world we live in today.

### 1. Schools

The Greek word *skholê*, meaning "free time, leisure" is the time that a person who was not constrained to work could dedicate to studious leisure. Through the Latin word *schola*, it became the ancestor for the word school in many languages: Schule, école, escuela, scuola... Other names refer to institutions of learning in ancient Greece, names of places where education took place, like the Gymnasium, which was not only a place of athletic activities but also of intellectual pursuits, the Lyceum or the Academy, all places of learning whose names have come down to us. The Academy in Athens was created by Plato to promote the teachings of his master Socrates and educate future leaders, which needed to go beyond the teaching of literature, music and the martial arts given to the common citizen. An early instruction (until age 18) was to be followed by instruction in pure mathematics (including arithmetic, plane geometry, solid geometry, astronomy and harmonics) to learn to think in abstract terms and finally dialectic to examine the aspects of reality in search for truth

and learn to argue logically. This was the crowning of the education of a ruling citizen, and would lead him to achieve real knowledge and ultimately goodness. The education for future rulers required that they be bright and moral, as well as honest, courageous and willing to work. This training was to last until they reached 35, at which time they would have become philosophers. Then, they could enter secondary roles in military and political life for at least 15 years before being able to rule the state and know what is best for the community. This was obviously the vision Socrates had for an ideal education, and the one his disciple Plato further developed in the Platonic Academy of Athens, where intellectual life continued to strive until its closure, in 529 CE. Ironically, it is that same year, in 529 CE, that St Benedict, brother of St Scholastica, founded the first Benedictine abbey in Monte Cassino. From then on, intellectual life in the West migrated to the monasteries, where Scholasticism, which was very much influenced by the writings of Plato and Aristotle, saved from destruction, like many other Greek writings, by the Islamic and Jewish scholars, blossomed and culminated in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

When the Platonic Academy in Athens was destroyed by Emperor Justinian, the city had long lost the form of government she gave its name to: democracy

## 2. Democracy

The conjunction of two Greek words, *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule) defines the political system that started in the city-state of Athens and is presently the most current form of government in nation-states, even if it bears in some cases little resemblance with what we assume to be democracy: liberal democracy. The United States is considered the first liberal democracy, which evolved from representative democracy whose roots can be found in the Roman Republic but other forms of representative democracy over the centuries existed in various parts of the world, including India and the Americas. In ancient Athens, democracy was a direct democracy, a type of democracy where every citizen votes on all major policy

decision. It flourished in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, under Pericles, underwent many vicissitudes and ended with the conquest of Athens by Alexander the Great. Athenian democracy was only for the citizens; slaves, women and resident aliens (the metics from the Greek *metoikos*) were not granted citizenship. Probably no more than 1/10 of the population of Athens was participating in political life, but those who participated, participated fully. The Cynic philosophers disputed the restrictions on citizenship and the fact that it was a privilege. The most famous of them, Diogenes, a contemporary of Plato, refused those conventions and when asked where he came from replied: "I am a citizen of the world", *kosmopolitēs*, coining for us the word cosmopolitan. A citizen of the world (which for the ancient Greeks was *cosmos*, the universe), a word that applies to so many of the members of our IB community, a cosmopolitan community dedicated to education. But contrary to the Cynics, we don't reject the "*polis*" we live in, we embrace it while also embracing the "*cosmopolis*" we are an integral part of.

But back to Aristotle, who believed education was to be controlled by the state and have as a main objective the training of the citizen, who had to be educated in all manners of politics, and who is, with Plato, one of the fathers of Politics.

### 3. Politics

The word politics is derived from the Greek noun *polis* for “city-state”, and the adjective *politikos*, “pertaining to the city”. While politics is generally related to government, today any polity like a corporation, a church or a school, where there is a dominance hierarchy structure, is governed by politics.

The two most influential treatises on politics in antiquity are the work of Plato, the “Republic” and of Aristotle, “Politics”.

In the Republic, Plato analyses how a good city should be ruled and describes various forms of government. Aristotle’s word for politics was *politikê*, short for *politike episteme*, political science, a science belonging to practical science, the science of good action as it is concerned with the happiness of the citizens. For Aristotle, practical science (used to make useful or beautiful objects) is one of the three branches of science, the other two being contemplative science (physics and metaphysics) and practical science.

Plato envisioned a city where the well being of the citizens was based on a homogeneous constituency, while Aristotle on the other hand recognized the value of diversity and believed that unity could be achieved through differences, a concept essential to our contemporary times. For him, a unity based on differences was much stronger than a unity based on homogeneity and therefore he advocated the view that the strength of democracy was going to come from uniting differences. The pre-requisite to this theory was to have equality among the citizens holding different views and to allow them to express them freely through rules established for a civic discourse.

The history of political philosophy from Plato until the present day makes clear that modern political philosophy is still faced with the basic problems that have been defined by the Greeks. To this day, Aristotle’s “Politics” remains very influential in its thought provoking approach to the ever present concerns about political philosophy, and their strong emphasis on the role of ethics in politics and on the importance of a morally educated citizenry.

### 4. Ethics

A Greek noun again, *êthê* meaning customs and a Greek adjective *ethicos*, meaning arising from habit, gave birth to the word “Ethics”, which is the branch of philosophy concerned with what is morally good and bad and the development of criteria, rules and judgements about what is good and right.

Aristotle, who authored the *Nichomachean Ethics*, believed the study of ethics was necessary in order to improve our lives. In his view as well as in the views of his teacher, Plato, the supreme goal in life was a good life. The two of them regarded ethical virtues as a mix of complex emotional, social and rational skills. The study of ethics was meant to improve our lives, and therefore was primarily concerned with our well being.

In Aristotle's views, the methodology of ethical study, whose subject is good action, must respect the fact that, in this field, generalizations cannot always be accepted. Like Socrates and Plato before him, he considered virtues to be essential to a well-lived life. Plato especially emphasized four virtues, named later *cardinal virtues*: wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. Aristotle agreed with him, but rejected his insistence on training in the sciences and metaphysics for a complete understanding of our good. He believed that in order to live well, we needed, besides virtue, the right appreciation for good things, like friendship, pleasure, honour and wealth. His advice was to acquire, through good upbringing and habits, the capacity to distinguish, in each specific instance and through the use of reason, the right course of action. Practical wisdom could not only be acquired by learning general rules. It was necessary to develop by practicing the emotional, social and rational skills necessary to decide what would be the most suitable course of action in view of different circumstances. Virtues are good habits; they need to be acquired to regulate our emotions.

Aristotle had the privilege to put his theories on education into practice by being called by Philip of Macedonia to become the tutor of his young son Alexander. And I don't need to tell you that it is to Alexander the Great that we owe the creation of the Hellenistic empire, which spread the values of Greek humanism from the shores of the Mediterranean to the heart of Asia. What a compliment to Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, for whom the purpose of education was to educate rulers, to have been the teacher of the greatest ruler of antiquity!

## II. The Purpose of Education

In antiquity, education was reserved to the upper class, to the leisured ones, and in the following centuries, with the exception of Charlemagne who, in 800 AD, opened schools to all, nobles and peasant alike, education was the privilege of members of the religious orders or a privileged few. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education took on a new dimension, a revolutionary one. Ancient education systems, that had existed in many different forms, for centuries, even for millennia, all around the world, became part of this movement that was going to revolutionize education and extend vastly the reach of its benefits.

As a result of the American and French revolutions and the democratic and nationalists movements that followed around the world, as well as a consequence of the industrial revolution, the concept of mass schooling began to take shape. This concept started in Europe first and aimed at the education of the citizen, to promote attitudes and behaviors consistent with the political systems but also the skills needed to develop the human and economic capital of the nations. Mass schooling was then adopted worldwide, especially after the demise of colonial regimes. It became a sine qua non condition of any modern democratic society where schools were created to socialize and educate children and prepare them to become productive citizens of their respective nations. Schools were meant as the crucible of new national identities, as the tool to establish modern looking nation states that often not only neglected but also negated regional identities. Patois or dialects and minority languages were ignored or forbidden in order to forge a uniform national identity. Schools were meant to pass on the national heritage. Not only did schools play a major role in cementing national identities, but they were also an agent of social change meant for the collective good regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity or language, which meant serving the hierarchy of the labor market and being a tool of social promotion.

While education over the past century was seen as key to achieving an informed citizenry and as a mechanism to distributing human capital inside national borders, with a high correlation between the level of education and eventual professions, mass schooling succeeded to achieve mass literacy. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, children were fully enrolled in elementary education in wealthier nations. Poorer nations followed suit in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the many exceptions we know of, but the intention and the drive were present in nearly every nation.

With a delay of 20 or 30 years, secondary education was added to primary education and today, everywhere in the world, we see a substantial growth of higher education promoted by local governments and international agencies.

Today, while there are distinctive national specificities, on the whole, education systems show more similarities than differences. The differences are more at the level of practice than at policy level. Principles of education are closely related worldwide.

Governments have the political and fiduciary control over the national and regional education system of their respective countries. A very significant part of national budgets go to education all over the world and education, everywhere, is considered a national priority.

As far as the majority of educators are concerned, their education system is a symbol of their own national identity and therefore they only think about education inside of their own national boundaries. The French are a good example: le baccalauréat is as much a symbol of the Republic than its motto of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité. I have to say that this nationalistic view of education is slowly changing and that inside of the European Union, many joint projects are being developed between countries.

While there are differences in instruction, focus or quality, between different schools systems, they all share the same goal: to prepare young people for their duties as citizens, to give them a profession and to serve as an agent of upward mobility. Still all over the world, to this day, family background and meritocracy come in the way of upward mobility, despite governments' efforts to promote equal access to education. The successes and failures of mass schooling is a conversation in and of itself.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is now introducing another revolution in education, a revolution that is forcing schools to look beyond their national borders. Education, while still serving national interests, has now become more and more a global enterprise. The requests and tensions on national systems are not only coming from inside the nations, but increasingly from the outside, from the global forces of the marketplace and the media. By now, education systems only tied to the formation of nation-state citizens, workers, and consumers are becoming obsolete. Schools are addressing in their own ways the academic, cultural, economic and political issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and its globalization phenomena.

Now the lofty ideals that created mass education and access for all in all nations have to address the challenges that a much enlarged and interlinked world present to them. Education systems have to work cooperatively to develop productive citizens with national

and global responsibilities, with a national identity as well as a cosmopolitan one. Citizens who are able to move fluidly between languages and cultures and engage with questions of power and justice at their local, state, and transnational level.

According to Rung Kaewang, Secretary General of Thailand Office of the National Education Commission (2001),

“Education in the globalization age should therefore be the balanced integration between global knowledge and indigenous knowledge”.

This approach was already described 20 years ago by one of the former Director Generals of the International Baccalaureate, Roger Peel:

“The honesty of the IB stems from the fact that we require all students to relate first to their own national identity - their own language, literature, history and cultural heritage, no matter where in the world this may be. Beyond that we ask that they identify with the corresponding traditions of others. It is not expected that they adopt alien points of view, merely that they are exposed to them and encouraged to respond intelligently.”

This challenge of a high order is one that the International Baccalaureate Organization has taken on for nearly 50 years. The IBO first served international schools around the world educating the children of international executives, diplomats and local cosmopolitan elites. More recently, state schools in various countries of the world have approached the IBO to offer its rigorous academic programs to local students and help prepare them for the global world in which we live. While in some international schools, international mindedness was often effortless, or taken for granted as just being a part of the school context, in the national schools, with a diverse or homogeneous population, the IB has had to find ways to encourage effortful, mindful and conscious modes of thought to promote not only tolerance but a celebration of cultural differences to prepare its students to successfully navigate the multicultural world they live in and to become productive global citizens.

And this is where the IBO has had to develop programs more and more inclusive of international perspectives, and is still working hard to do so. The IB has been on the forefront of moving away from rigid institutionalization of disciplines and developing critical thinkers, constantly challenging teachers and students to examine their underlying assumptions and beliefs. Here are the seven attributes that Howard Gardner sees as being prerequisite for preparing students for this century:

- Understanding of the global systems
- Capacity to think analytically and creatively across disciplines
- Ability to tackle problems and issues that do not respect disciplinary boundaries
- Knowledge of and ability to interact civilly and productively with individuals from quite different cultural backgrounds – both within one’s own society and across the planet

- Knowledge of and respect for one's own cultural tradition(s)
- Fostering of hybrid or blended identities
- Fostering of tolerance

Howard Gardner, in *Globalization*, 2004

I want to reflect with you on the kind of ethics that students will need to share in the global context they live in, and how they will acquire the values that will allow them to function productively and happily in the times ahead of them, to have not only the knowledge but also the values that will give meaning to their lives. I strongly believe, as did the Greeks 25 centuries ago, that the business of education is to educate good citizens.

Several years ago, I came upon the writings of an American, Rushworth M. Kidder, the founder of the Institute of Global Ethics, who has published several books on ethics, including interviews on the topic of shared global ethics from people around the world, and produces a weekly newsletter on ethical issues.

School teachers, because they have such an influence on young minds, are some of the people he worries about the most. As an example, he describes “a school committee meeting where someone proposes that we teach character and ethics. And no sooner is that said than somebody else in the back of the room stands up and says, ‘But whose ethics will you teach?’ It’s a question intended to squelch further discussion. What is behind it is this notion that there is no ethical commonality—and that, if you dare to teach ethics, you are imposing your values on my child, and I won’t have it!” Accordingly, in the western world, many educators have resorted to a values neutral education, refuse to defend a particular point of view and are rarely willing to take a moral stand. When Kidder states:

“Ethics is not a luxury or an option. It is essential to our survival”

I agree with him. And to the question: “whose ethics?” I will reply that if you have a good knowledge and understanding of other cultures, there is no doubt that you will be able to identify common moral elements among them and that it is our duty as educators to teach students the ability to make ethical decisions, decisions they can live with according to their own moral values.

And this leads me to the third part of this presentation to the role of ethics in international education.

### III. The role of Ethics in International Education

Going back to our previous discussions about the meaning of words, what does *ethic* mean for us? Dictionaries generally explain ethics as the difference between right and wrong. Think about this, if this would be only the case, then it would be easy. For most of us, making a choice between right and wrong, should be a quick choice, we would choose to do right. When it becomes a real challenge, an ethical dilemma, it is when we have to make a choice between right versus *right*.



The family has a major role in educating children in how to live. I would like to refer you to the writings of John Rawls and his distinction between a political conception of ethics and what he calls “a comprehensive doctrine”, which deals with rules of conduct and what is worth pursuing in life including the type of character individuals should cultivate. For example, your choice of religion is part of the comprehensive doctrine, as are many other personal choices about which groups you choose to identify with. This “comprehensive doctrine” belongs more to the realm of the individual or the family, but living in society requires that there be some kinds of behaviors, not shared by all, but definitely accepted by all and this is where the role of the schools and educators comes into play. Public schools receive massive subsidies from the state in order to educate future citizens. In many countries, private schools also receive subsidies from the state for the same reason, therefore I would argue yes, as ethical views impact behavior, and citizens’ behavior impact the state, the state has a duty to protect itself and its citizens by educating them in matters of political ethics to provide, again according to Rawls, rules of conduct and form of associations needed for a pluralistic society to function.

As an organization, the International Baccalaureate is an independent organization and an organization of choice. No school has to take on our programmes, and if they do, they choose to embrace our values and to abide by them. If they don’t, they don’t need to belong to our communities of schools. We strongly believe that IB students should be taught not only their shared citizenship but also their shared humanity with all individuals regardless of their citizenship. We do fully embrace patriotism as well as cosmopolitanism and we believe that the teaching of ethics is an integral part of our mission.

Therefore, we can be very clear about our goal in the teaching of ethics: we fully respect, support and encourage the aim of the schools, which offer our programmes to educate young people as citizens of their respective countries but we also promote the development of internationally minded young people who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet and help to create a better and more peaceful world. The IB at its best fosters a learning environment that supports active thinking and intellectual engagement by encouraging its students to understand situations from the vantage point of others, see themselves through the eyes of others, and to wonder about the validity of what they encounter. IB students should be asked to reflect on complex issues, to analyse them in the light of their own experiences and questions and to come to understand, by themselves and in collaboration with others, the type of person they ought to be, what traditions they are willing to endorse and what values they are willing to choose when faced with conflicting ones.

Choosing to be a member of the IB community means for the school that they will teach the widest range of cultural differences compatible with teaching the rights and responsibilities outlined in the UN declaration of human rights and also teaching their students the clear difference between their individual rights and having concerns for the rights of every individual. I would like to quote John Dewey for you here:

“There is an individualism in democracy...but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism; it is an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal, not an individualism of lawlessness”

While in some countries the democratic process has focused too much on individual rights, I am fully aware that for many countries it is still very difficult to forge a democratic citizenry from historically fragmented societies, with legally entrenched separatism and nationalism but teaching the ethics that go along the attributes of the IB learner profile can only help these countries to overcome their differences and our world to become a better and more peaceful world. Global justice can only be achieved through the effectiveness of people acting as citizens of their respective countries. This is why it is essential that IB students be taught simultaneously their duties as citizens and the responsibilities as inhabitants of this planet, if they want to play an active role in shaping their future and the future of their children.

Going back to Aristotle, it will only be possible to help our students understand how to go about making ethical decisions by giving them a good upbringing and develop in them the necessary habits through and understand that generalizations cannot always be accepted in this domain. We are not there as educators to tell our students what to think but how to think and how to act. Especially in our schools, where the aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people, we will be faced with conflicting comprehensive doctrines, not one of which can be demonstrated to be superior to the other, and this is why we have developed the learner profile to serve as a guide line for behavior. Although we do promote democracy in our school polity, our role is not to tell our students what to think politically, but to allow them to have the necessary tools to think through different political systems and to cultivate in them a concern for human beings and the environment, whatever their respective nationality along side with a sense of civic responsibility.

From Aristotle to Piaget, there is strong evidence that democracy and difference can work together as long as discussions happen in accordance to rules of civil discourse. Interest in the wider social world and citizen participation are extremely important for intellectual and moral development. These are gained through perspective taking, reciprocity, acceptance of conflict as a normal part of life, and the capacity to perceive differences and commonalities both between and within social groups. If only confronted with a hierarchical environment where there is no equality and where there are no discussions and arguments with others, young people won't be able to accomplish the cognitive and emotional work that is required to understand how other people think and feel. Morality cannot exist without empathy, as morality is only possible if one takes into account the fundamental complexities and ambiguities of human existence. Morality and responsibility can also not exist without the possibility of a choice. Our role as educators is to help our students to learn how to go about making choices. It is also to teach them that it is often unclear what the "best" decision is and therefore teach them that they need to be able to live and cope with moral uncertainty. This moral uncertainty has to be grounded into values they can take with them. Ethics do operate in a realm of ambiguity that follows intuition instead of legislation and encompasses moral duty, social responsibility and proper behavior. Ethics deal with what lies between law and free choice, the free choice where our actions impact only ourselves.

I could not speak about ethics without quoting the prominent 19<sup>th</sup> century British jurist, Lord Moulton, who defined ethics as the obedience to the unenforceable. For him, ethics involved the unenforceable canons of a culture, its core values, its abiding principles and commonly held attitudes and conventions that lie outside of the law. So what are ethics for our students who are living in a world where they have not only to deal with the laws of their own country

but with the laws of the countries they live in, and with people in their own countries and other countries who belong to different cultures and don't share the same core values, principles and conventions? How can we help them become ethically sophisticated decision makers and caring human beings?

This can only be accomplished by including the teaching of Western and non-Western traditions not only inside the regular curriculum, but also in the student community service. All great thinkers have recognized that one learns best by experience. Service learning, which is an integral part of the IB programmes should be an important tool in the teaching of how to think about ethical decision making and how to act upon it. In addition to the Western thinkers we have already mentioned, we should be incorporating the efforts made by non Western traditions to deal with the issue, including for example the African Chart of Mande, the Buddhist notion of attachment, the notion of power from Lao Tzu involving the forces of Yin and Yang, the Bhagavad Gita that conveys the important message that one should see oneself in the other and that the insistence of the individual self is an illusion that blocks the path to enlightenment. We should also look for the commonalities between values and attitudes shared by all cultures, like the Golden Rule that you can find in all main religious faiths and in the majority of cultures: Don't do to others what you would not have them do to you. People around the world generally share this Golden Rule and this includes Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Taoists, Zoroastrians... and there are many more, like fairness, freedom, love, respect, tolerance, truth... that can be shared by people around the planet.

The theme of values, ethical or moral values, has been a recurrent theme in international gatherings of educators and politicians and is prominently included in Article I of the 1990 World Declaration on Education for All

***World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs***

#### **EDUCATION FOR ALL: THE PURPOSE**

**Jomtien, Thailand, 1990**

#### **ARTICLE I - MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS**

3. Another and no less fundamental aim of educational development is the transmission and enrichment of common cultural and moral values. It is in these values that the individual and society find their identity and worth.

The Acts of a 1992 conference on *Education facing the crisis of values* is a good example to find discussions from people from all around the world addressing the issues of values. And none of them is asking whose values are we teaching. They all understand that in our shared humanity, we also share common values that are essential for our world to prosper.

Professor Wininga, from Burkina Faso, and a professor of Philosophy stresses

“the virtues of mutual understanding, tolerance, respect and love for others by demonstrating that mankind is inexhaustibly varied and that, just as physical and psychological differences do not prevent us from recognizing one another as member of the same family, group or

country, cultural differences should not prevent us from recognizing one another as members of the same human family, all destined to live together”

Professor Rajput (New Dehli, India) wishes for teachers to have “the ability to inspire students sincerely to seek moral and ethical values”. For him, “the development of a society is intrinsically linked to the growth of the humanistic values and the extent to which these values are respected. Education is still the most important method of passing on these values”

*Acts of Education facing the crisis of values, 1992,*

organized by Unesco, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,

the European Academy of Sciences, Arts and the Humanities

and the Association Descartes

### **Conclusion**

I wish for all educators involved in the International Baccalaureate programmes, to have this ability to inspire students to seek moral and ethical values. My speech has been much too long, but it was difficult for an archaeologist not to dig down into the past. I could not resist, when given the topic of this conference “The IB school as a community and in a community”, rendering homage to Athens, the community that is hosting us, and to the heritage this city has given to the world. We in this room are a community, a community of learners and together we recognize that there are many visions of the world, and that not one can claim to be the ultimate answer. We can learn from all, even if we don’t want to embrace them. My strongest wish is that the IB will reach its access goal described to you yesterday by our director general so that many more students can benefit from an education that promote critical thinking, perspective taking, citizen engagement, an education that will help them develop an internal moral compass and give them not only hope but a sense that they can be positive contributors to the great human adventure we are part of. This internal moral compass that will guide them will be this understanding of ethics that we hope an IB education will have given them and where they will also have learned that “people with their differences can also be right”. Their moral compass should be able to tell them when some different views cannot be embraced. I would like to end with a quote from U Thant, 3<sup>rd</sup> secretary general of the UN, who said:

“As a Buddhist, I was trained to be tolerant of everything except intolerance”