

Message to Camp Leaders

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How are you everyone? Thank you for your cooperation for EIC 2016. I am sure you have enjoyed this camp even though you had to work hard under the terribly hot climate. The charming smiles of the children in the camp will no doubt remain vividly in your mind and for these children you were the first brothers and sisters from abroad and they will remember you for life.

I returned home from France yesterday. Although I suffer from jet-lag, I ventured to come here today to thank you in person for your contribution and this time I want to convey a special message to you.

When the last world war ended in 1945, I was in the 6th grade of primary school. I was so happy and filled with joy that the war was over and peace would come. I believe the year 1945 was the most important year in the history of mankind because all the nations accepted to end the history of wars and conflicts. They decided to promote peace through dialogue and consultation on an equal basis with the respect to justice, universal values and fundamental human rights. It was the birth of the United Nations. The colonial rules ended and majorities of former colonies were liberated to become independent nations. In addition to the political or diplomatic domain which had been conventionally considered as the major key-holders for conflict resolution and peace building, many fields of importance to human life such as health, food and agriculture, education, science and culture, etc. were considered to play important roles as well to realize peace. Thus, specialized agencies were established under the system of the United Nations.

The first text of the UN document I saw was the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution: It states, "Since the wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

UNESCO admitted Japan as its member state in 1951 even before the United Nations and I was so impressed by its noble concept of attaining peace.

Education, especially primary education used to be considered as an integral part of national sovereignty and protected from outside intervention but UNESCO succeeded in liberating it from ego-centric protectionism by injecting the concept of human rights, peace and international understanding. UNESCO also started its worldwide action to achieve universal primary education and literacy in order to develop the literate world; the basis of democracy and peace. The international community has also contributed so much in the past 70 years to spread the concept of fundamental human rights and its application, to reduce the poverty gap and improve health and nutrition, to promote socio-economic and sustainable development.

My dream came true in 1961. I was appointed as a staff member of UNESCO and I served UNESCO for 31 long years. During my tenure of service in UNESCO, I was involved in the development of basic education and literacy in developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia. While a certain progress has been made, there are still 800 million illiterates at present, and they are concentrated in the regions suffering from poverty and conflicts and over 64% are women. There exist over 85 million children who do not attend schools. I had a dream to enable all children of the world to learn in school with big smiles and to make the world a totally literate society. My dream has not come true, which I regret very much. However, I am lucky at least to place myself in the big wave of the world movement towards peace and education for all.

Unfortunately, the world is now moving towards a different direction and facing a crisis, which menaces to neutralize the past efforts for peace, development and international cooperation. I feel so anguished with anger to see children so happily learning at schools being attacked by terrorists, often kidnaped or killed. They are being forced to become the agents of terrorism and many girls face a most inhuman life.

I was in France this summer and what I witnessed there was beyond my imagination. France has been considered a highly secure country.

Nonetheless, such cruel and merciless acts took place in places where many folks frequent such as cafés and restaurants, markets, dancing halls or fireworks festivals and there were many casualties. Furthermore, bombs were discovered in a parked car near the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris and surprisingly the criminals were all young women.

Waves of refugees, risking their lives in fully packed small boats cross the Mediterranean aspiring to settle in a new land where they hope to live a normal life with security. However, the situation is not promising.

New political forces of ultra-nationalism are emerging in Europe, which risk the loss of human bonds and mutual trust in a civil society.

Wars and conflicts were so far mostly between nations or between identifiable groups, such as ethnic or religious groups. But today, we suffer from the menace of unidentifiable groups or individuals. Neighbors who have lived a normal social life suddenly become terrorists with instructions from abroad through the Internet. Many youth from Europe and all over the world are deserting their families to join terrorist groups. The conventional police and judicial systems are outmoded to face this situation, because unless some of them resort to terrorist acts, police cannot place them in custody. The only solution seems to be to take maximum measures to prevent before such incidents occur. This requires a long and patient effort to reduce discrimination and gaps existing in society by improving the social structure and quality of life and to enhance education of minds to respect human life and to live together in peace. Namely to construct the defense of peace in the minds of all people, especially among the youth and children.

May I remind you to recall the Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO. I believe this noble concept is the basis for lasting peace, so important today.

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

Society where all people live without fear; strong bonds of human ties among citizens; rational reasoning not to run to radical acts based on prejudice or demagoguery; cooperation based on cool judgment to face invisible menaces. These situations call for the re-building of our

intellectuality and empathy among all people. In this connection, I strongly advocate the fundamental concept of UNESCO, i.e. Education for All = Construction of Defense of Peace in the Minds of All Men and Women. And the most urgent is the construction of the defense of peace in the minds of children and youth.

The ultimate goal of EIC is to construct the defense of peace in children's minds and indeed it has proved effective to carry out such mission. You are gathered here with different cultures and languages, different faiths and values, many lifestyles and interests, which are reflected in the daily life of the camp. This camp represents a multi-cultural life-space and the ideal mini-global society. Stories of your countries, families, schools and dreams of children are the important sources of learning in the camp, especially to help generate the dreams of the children for the future and to engage in dialogues to facilitate their determination to realize their own dreams. This is the first step to construct the defense of peace in their minds. However small it may be, EIC is the first step for children to learn how to live in the global society and to form their personalities and human qualities as global citizens. We are faced with the disparate need today to defend peace and to create a bright future and we will have to leave in the hand of these children the destiny of mankind. Please keep in mind EIC's ultimate goal and potentials.

My dear Camp Leaders! Please keep in mind the important lessons you learned in this camp and advance your steps to face the new challenges. Let us work together to advance EIC as the birthplace of re-creating a new culture of peace in the world. This responsibility is in our hands!