



Millennium Goals of Culture?

international conference

16th-17th October 2008, Villa Decius, Kraków

Humanity has few respected spokesmen, no universal leadership, no payroll, no budget and no army, and its main forum, the United Nations, is seldom united – Nina Witoszek-Fitzpatrick

The Millennium Development Goals established and agreed at the United Nations Summit in 2000 are an attempt at a joint and in a sense universal solution of the problems that the world is facing, namely: hunger and extreme poverty, lack of universal education at primary level, gender equality and women empowerment, high child mortality, contagious diseases, and lack of protection of the natural environment. This millennial story is based on confidence that civilizations are by their very nature able to mobilize self-correcting mechanisms, to produce anti-bodies to fight the deleterious effects of their own growth¹. It makes the implementation of the Development Goals a challenge of a comprehensive type both in political and economic matters, and in civilisational and humanist dimensions. Although successful completion of the Goals is significantly dependent on the determination and the political will of governments and institutions – the ones offering support and the ones receiving it – such a success is not limited solely to the vast financial outlay of the international community but includes also broadly understood cultural factors. As any activity or action addressed to the international community, this daring project should include a cultural component, as it is culture – being the product resultant of the internal ties within communities, and the communities' relationships with the outside world – that is the vehicle of historical memory and these values and future aspirations that to a great degree determine the efficiency of undertaken actions.

60 years ago, on 10th December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the document of fundamental importance for human rights, namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following its legacy, we believe that they are inalienable rights of every human being and choose to ignore the fact that our humanist attitude making the human the highest value and the source of any and all other values may not be universal at all. The law that is the foundation of liberal governments protects the individual's liberty, yet at the same time it may be a threat to the values inherent to cultures that took root in realms other than European civilisation, as Unni Wikan rightly states². The conundrum of human rights and cultural rights seems hard to solve.

Civilisation is a joint project created by its participants, and the human factor is the *sine-qua-non* condition for its development. Actions in support of the dialogue between civilisations on the one hand, and peaceful coexistence and cooperation of communities, religions, and cultures on the other are undertaken by international institutions, governments, individuals, and NGOs. And often indeed does it turn out that it is the passion and effort of the smallest and lowest ones that is of exceptional importance and impact, and that in fact this is a drop that eventually breaks up the rock.

The conference will be an attempt at presenting the activities of international institutions responsible for the introduction of the Millennium Goals, and shall define the scope and methods of work of the international community, enter the debate on the conflict between culture and law, and eventually present initiatives in support of the Millennium Goals and dialogue between cultures.

¹ Professor Nina Witoszek Fitzpatrick, *New York lecture for UN Forum, May 2007.*

² Professor Unni Wikan, *Generous Betrayal: Politics of Culture in the New Europe*, The University of Chicago Press, 2002.



Draft Programme

16th October

9.30 Conference inauguration

Prof. Aleksander Koj, President of the Board of the Villa Decius Association
Danuta Glondys, Director of the Villa Decius Association

9.45 Opening lecture

HE Prof. Szewach Weiss

10.30 Session – A Humanistic Dimension of the UN Millennium Development Goals

From policy statements to practice and capacity
Development traps
International institutions for humanity

Anne Willem Bijleveld, Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation

Anastasia Crickley, OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination

Hywel Ceri Jones, European Policy Centre

Chair: Tim Williams, Media Diversity Institute

12.00 Coffee break

12.30 Session – Limits and Deficiencies of International Solidarity

From humanistic challenge to economy-driven policy
The price of relative peace
Missions impossible and continental failures

Lt. Gen. Mieczysław Bieniek, Adviser to the Polish Minister of National Defence
Werner Blatter, UNHCR's Chief of Mission in Bosnia and Hercegovina 1990-2002

Alaxandr Milinkievich, Leader of the united democratic forces of Belarus

Chair: Janina Paradowska, Polityka Weekly

14.00 Lunch break

Special events

15.00 Presentation of a film on Sergio Vieira de Mello Laureates

Maciej Chłopicki and Marcin Mamoń, film directors

15.30 Ceremony of presenting the Sergio Vieira de Mello Prize

16.00 Press conference

Accompanying events



16.15 Opening of the exhibition: Tanzania and Millennium Development Goals. Subjective tale

17.00 British Council workshops Intercultural Navigators for NGO representatives



17th October 2008

10.00 Session – Tolerance versus Humanism

The paradox of diversity

Culture and conflict

Law versus culture

Prof. Jesper Svartvik, Lund University

Prof. Michael Daxner, University of Berlin

Birgit Hatlehol, Norwegian journalist

Prof. Üstün Ergüder, Istanbul Policy Center

Chair: Dr. Kathinka Dittrich van Weringh, Independent cultural adviser

11.30 Coffee break

12.00 Session – Synergic Models of thought and action

Alliance of civilisations or is UN still needed?

Intercultural navigators

Partnerships and cumulative effects of joined actions

Jo-Anne Bishop, ODIHR Warszawa

HE Fêbé Potgieter-Gqubule, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Poland

Ewa Puzdrowska, British Council

Chair: Dr. Jerzy Marek Nowakowski, Polish Open University's Eastern Centre

13.30 Closing of the conference

14.00 Lunch

Conference language: Polish, English

Conference Interpreting: Piotr Krasnowolski, Magdalena Skoć