The variety of the world is not only more available, it is nearly inescapable. Human difference is more proximate - and more intense. What was once beyond our view is now at our side - and, indeed, to use the popular expression, "in our face." ... The challenge of diversity is now a global challenge - and how we address it will have global consequences. [2]

My conviction that the strengthening of institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention. In fact all three are intimately related.... The actions to enhance pluralism have to be matched in the developing world by programmes to alleviate poverty because, left alone, poverty will provide a context for special interests to pursue their goals in aggressive terms. [1]

Pluralist societies are not accidents of history. They are a product of enlightened education and continuous investment by governments and all of civil society in recognizing and celebrating the diversity of the world’s peoples. [4]

Even in the poorest and most isolated communities, we have found that decades, if not centuries, of angry conflict can be turned around by giving people reasons to work together toward a better future - in other words, by giving them reasons to hope. And when hope takes root, then a new level of tolerance is possible, though it may have been unknown for years, and years, and years. [3]

Whether it be in Central Europe, the Great Lakes region in Africa, or in Afghanistan - to cite just one example from three different continents - one of the common denominators has been the attempt by communal groups, be they ethnic, religious, or tribal groups, to impose themselves on others. All such attempts are based on the principle of eradicating the cultural basis that provides group identity. Without cultural identity, social cohesion gradually dissolves and human groups lose their necessary point of reference to relate with each other, and with other groups. [1]

[1] Prince Claus Fund Conference on Culture and Development, Concluding Address (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) 7 September 2002
[4] Keynote Address to the Annual Conference of German Ambassadors (Berlin, Germany) 6 September 2004