

Lisbon, March 6, 2006

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE

International Drama/theatre and Education Association (IDEA)

International Society for Education through Art (InSEA)

International Society for Music Education (ISME)

This is an historic moment in international arts education. After six years of preparatory meetings, IDEA, InSEA and ISME have now united to define an integrated strategy that responds to a critical moment in human history: social fragmentation, a dominant global culture of competition, endemic urban and ecological violence, and the marginalization of key educational and cultural languages of transformation.

In a visionary agenda in the aftermath of the World War II, UNESCO recognized the unique role that arts education can play in the creation of a culture of peace, international understanding, social cohesion and sustainable development. However, at that time, few could have anticipated the socio-cultural needs that would be generated by the accelerated technological change during the intervening decades; and today few can imagine the impact and challenges of technological convergence in the immediate future.

We believe that today's knowledge-based, post-industrial societies require citizens with confident flexible intelligences, creative verbal and non-verbal communication skills, abilities to think critically and imaginatively, intercultural understandings and an empathic commitment to cultural diversity.

Research increasingly shows that these personal attributes are acquired through the process of learning and applying artistic languages. We welcome decisions by governments throughout the world to place educational reform and cultural development at the heart of their agendas. However, we know that there is not always the political and professional will to integrate the arts into an effective 'education for all', as vital instruments for learning human rights, responsible citizenship and inclusive democracy.

Drawing membership from more than 90 countries, our global alliance of arts education organisations involves leading practitioners and promotes innovative practices in arts education internationally. Through our national affiliations and individual memberships, we draw on the experiences of more than one million dedicated and courageous teachers, artists/performers, researchers, scholars, community leaders, administrators and policy makers who themselves are in touch with formal and informal educational communities throughout the world.

Our three organisations are uniquely positioned to advance professional practices and policies in the visual arts, music and theatre/drama education. We provide

effective channels for international communication and the exchange of policy and pedagogical resources;

national, regional and world forums which debate and disseminate innovative educational theories and practices;

conceptual and professional structures to preserve tangible and intangible artistic cultures (particularly in the developing world), that are threatened by globalization

models of intercultural analysis that explore aspects of traditional and new media and enable diverse pedagogies to be demonstrated and exchanged

research into pedagogies for personal and social transformation; and

critical investigation into the educational, socio-economic and cultural impacts of the arts.

Together, we will advocate new and appropriate paradigms of education which both transmit and transform culture through the humanizing languages of the arts that are founded on the principles of cooperation, not competition. For more than half a century, our associations have contributed significantly to the development of curricula and teaching approaches. We are now ready to respond proactively to the diverse social and cultural needs of our world. In response to the urgent crises of our times, we embrace the challenge to make our exceptional resources available to governments and educational communities across the globe.

In the visual arts, critical and reflective pedagogies and new means of artistic production offer students opportunities to explore their multicultural, multi-technological visual worlds. Through the performing arts, educators are transforming classrooms into theatres of creative dialogue, equipping young people to enact solutions to contemporary social needs and challenges. In music education, the new technologies provide astonishing opportunities to develop intercultural awareness and collaborative production.

Collectively the arts offer young people unique opportunities to understand and create their own cultural and personal identities. They stimulate interdisciplinary study and participatory decision-making, and motivate young people to engage in active learning and creative questioning.

2Our three organisations have formed an alliance for strategic action based on principled and sustained dialogue. Our primary aim is to accelerate the implementation of arts education policies internationally. We want to collaborate with all governments, networks, educational institutions, communities and individuals who share our vision.

We challenge UNESCO to fulfill the responsibilities of its founding mandate by joining us to make arts education central to a world agenda for sustainable human development and social transformation.

Viseu, Portugal
March 4, 2006