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ABSTRACT

This report, given at a special meeting held in Tehran, summarizes general debate concerning the present situation of children's literature, the outlook on children's books, the content of children's books (the role of cultural traditions and illustrations), the preparation of children's books, the reinforcement of cooperation among nations, and the adoption of the report of the meeting. Included are a list of participants and the address delivered by the Empress of Iran, Farah Pahlevi. (JM)

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**CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
IN THE SERVICE OF
INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING
AND PEACEFUL CO-OPERATION**



ORGANIZED BY THE
INSTITUTE FOR THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS
IN COOPERATION WITH UNESCO AND THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO IN IRAN

15-21 MAY 1975 , TEHRAN

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN THE SERVICE OF
INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND PEACEFUL CO-OPERATION

Tehran, 15-21 May 1975

REPORT

Opening

The meeting on Children's Literature in the Service of International Understanding and Peaceful Co-operation sponsored by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, Tehran, in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO in Iran and UNESCO, was held at the Central Children's Library, Tehran from May 15 to 21, 1975. The meeting was attended by participants from Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, U.K., France, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, U.S.A., and U.S.S.R. (see appendix A.)

UNESCO was represented by Mr. Jean Millerioux, Chief of the Division of Book Promotion and Development. Mr. Fereydoon Ardalan, Secretary General, National Commission for UNESCO in Iran also participated. The meeting was inaugurated with a message from Her Majesty Shahanu Farah Pahlavi, the Empress of Iran, read out by Mr. Alam, Minister of the Imperial Court. The message said, "The meeting of this assembly is a suitable opportunity for experts from abroad and from Iran through friendship and exchange of ideas to examine situations and reach solutions for existing problems. For, in order to prevent cultural isolation an acute need is now felt most urgently for cooperation and understanding on an intellectual level, a precondition necessary for the welfare and the strong bonds of the societies of tomorrow.

It is gratifying that UNESCO by observing the International Book Year and also by its assistance to various book councils and other similar bodies, is mindful of the value and necessity for such cooperation on an international level, to the extent that it makes particular efforts to translate into fact the high ideals of man for the promotion of culture throughout the world." (for complete message see appendix B.)

A message from the Director General of UNESCO Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, was read out. Wishing the conference success, he recalled that International Book Year had emphasized the necessity of undertaking a world wide

concerted effort to promote books for children, and stressed the fact that there was a great need for books in many developing countries.

(for complete message see appendix C.)

Mrs. Lily Amir Arjomand Managing Director of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, said in her address, "During these times the people of the world more than ever before have the need for efforts and cooperation in an environment characterized by understanding and unanimity. Assembling at this meeting is a worthy response to this intellectual need. Humanity has been brought together from the remotest regions of the world through access to mass-media. It is unfortunate that the nations of the world are still living in a state of dispersion and isolation. This meeting is convened with the ideal to consolidate the bonds of understanding and unity amongst the younger generation and to create a harmonious and prosperous society for tomorrow."

Mr. Fereydoun Ardalan, Secretary General of National Commission for UNESCO in Iran welcomed the participants, and expressed the confidence that this meeting would contribute towards an effective solution to the present problem.

The proceedings of the meeting were opened on Friday, May 16. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. General Debate
 - a. The present situation of children's literature and the problems involved
 - b. The future outlook on children's books
4. Content of children's books
 - a. Text: The role of cultural traditions
 - b. Illustrations
5. Preparation of children's books
6. Ways and means to reinforce cooperation between nations and peoples
7. Adoption of the report of the meeting

The following were named as officers:

Chairman: Miss. Virginia Havilland (U.S.A.)

Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Carla Poesio (Italy)

Mrs. Carmen Bravo-Villansante (Spain)
Dr. Dusan Roll (Czechoslovakia)
Rapporteurs: Mrs. Janine Despinette (France)
Mrs. Mohini Rao (India)

b. a. The present situation of children's literature and the problems involved

The main observation made by various participants were as follows:

Production

The Tunisian delegate brought up the problem of alien cultural domination through books in countries which have recently gained their independence and where teaching in schools is still done in two languages. Such domination results in a linguistic imbalance which is not conducive to the development of the national literary productions. It also has economic repercussion as it involves heavy expenditure in foreign currencies to import books and periodicals. Consequently it is very important to achieve a linguistic balance by encouraging book production in the national language. Canada agrees with Tunisia as they have a similar problem of alien cultural domination which inhibits national publishing industry particularly in the field of children's books.

Some delegates said that publishers had an active role to play in finding suitable writers. Some countries have instituted national competitions for writers to provide encouragement to them. One delegate said that in her country efforts were being made to interest the various artistic groups and the mass-media in the production of books for children.

Mrs. Lily Amir Arjomand said that they in Iran considered it their duty to develop a sense of aesthetics in children through artistically produced books, and that art education through books was one of their aims. She further said that all the efforts and money should be invested within the country to develop indigenous books. Import of books could be only a later part of the program.

It was also suggested by some delegates that authors should be drawn from all stratas of society. The delegate from Tunisia announced the interesting fact that since his country had been male dominated, 87.5% writers of children's books were men and only 12.5% were women. He felt that now was the time for women to play a more important role in this field.

It was also mentioned that in multilingual countries with a high

Population like India, the main concern was to bring down the cost of books with sacrificing the quality. An effort was being made by publishers to overcome the problem through a co-publication program. The same idea was expressed by the delegate from Senegal.

It was interesting to note that while some countries were concerned with the question of producing more books the delegate from Japan pointed out that their children were flooded with information to such an extent that they were becoming less and less responsive to them. She felt that too much reading was depriving the child of a sense of wonder.

The points emerged from the exchange of views on the subject were that the level of development of children's books differed greatly in countries and that their needs were diverse. It was however agreed that each country should provide more and better books to children in a way most suitable to their own conditions.

Translations

Differing views were expressed on the question of translating books from other countries for children. While some participants felt that translations from other languages did not always fit into the cultural pattern of a country and often inhibited local writers from creating original books, some others felt equally strongly that translations enriched one's literature and enabled children to know about other countries and cultures. In countries with languages of limited diffusion, translations are very necessary and form a high percentage of books produced, e.g. it is 60% in Czechoslovakia.

One delegate emphasized that there were two aspects of translations with the object of knowing other countries. One was to have informative books about the countries and the other to have books of artistic value, like a book of poetry, or picture books, through which a child could develop a feel for the country through his artistic sensibility.

It is important for a translator not only to have knowledge of his own culture but also of the needs of the children of his country to be able to translate for them successfully. Translators should be selected very carefully as they are the link between that country and his readers. In this connection it was recommended that international bibliographies should be published regularly.

The participant from Canada gave interesting and useful information. Canada is beginning to publish children's books with text in two languages. Although this is only a beginning, there is great potential for bilingual books.

The delegate from Japan said that the importance of translation should not be underestimated. He said some of the good artists in his country were inspired by the fine picture books from U.S.A. and other countries. Had it not been for the stimulus provided by these picture books, these artists would not have been drawn to children's books.

Distribution

It was felt that the question of distribution was even more important than production, specially in countries where books had to reach remote rural areas and where the means of communications were inadequate. In some countries, despite great need and demand, books did not reach the readers because of poor distribution channels.

Mrs. Lily Amir Arjomand informed that Iran was making a great effort to ensure that books reached remote areas of the country. Although sometimes they have to transport books by tractors or even on horseback, they are now developing a system of mobile libraries fully equipped with audio visual materials. In certain areas where people speak a dialect, books in Farsi are delivered and introduced by people well versed in that particular dialect. For example young men and women serving in the Army of Knowledge are specially trained in dealing with books for children.

The important role of libraries, particularly of school libraries was discussed in detail. It was reported that in some countries like U.S.A., U.K., and Australia a very high percentage of books produced were distributed through libraries. In some countries bulk purchase of books was made by the State for distribution to libraries.

Discussion groups were organized in book shops between children, authors, illustrators and publishers etc. One delegate said that in his country an interesting attempt was made to encourage young people to go to book shops and get the booksellers recognize children as their customers. Children were asked to portray the booksellers.

It was also suggested that information about what was being done in the field of book promotion could be exchanged between countries by means of

slides especially prepared for this purpose.

Another very effective way of promoting book reading habit was through book exhibitions in libraries and schools etc.

A unique British institution is the Federation of Children's Book Groups. This is run on a part-time, unpaid basis, by a group of volunteers, mostly mothers, who are concerned with bringing better books to children. They organized meetings on a regional basis, run small bookshops under license and have now begun a mail-order service for people who are unable to buy the books they want from their local bookshops or live far away from a shop.

The delegate from Japan said that school libraries in his country, after twenty years of existence, have proved to be a failure because the teachers were not prepared to use library materials and the teaching method was such that they needed no libraries. He said that their public libraries were developing rapidly now and in one city in Tokyo the mayor believed that it was the responsibility of the city authorities to provide the citizens with books like water, gas or electricity.

It was, however, generally agreed that diffusion of books was of the highest importance and this should be done through all possible means, particularly through a network of libraries.

3. Future outlook on children's literature

Some of the participants present said that the scope of literature today was not limited to the written word only. It also included that which is presented through audio-visual media. In other words, specialists and creators must realize that reading today means the "reading" of both printed and non-printed materials, including pictures, posters, television program, and films etc.

To believe that only the reading of literature can stimulate creativity in children is an outdated and dangerous attitude.

It was said that the development of children's literature in a country was related to the present situation. Participants of some developing countries said that for a brighter future, for children's literature it was important that children's writers and artists receive more encouragement by way of better remuneration and recognition.

The new role of women in society has also created new values. In the development of education women should have more opportunity for writing.

Participants from these countries felt strongly that although translations from other languages were important, the future of their children's literature lay in the growth of their national children's literature.

The participant from U.S.S.R. suggested that some countries could get together and establish an international publishing house which would publish good, cheap books in all languages of the world.

It was agreed that paperbacks could be one means of reaching more children. There was difference of opinion in regard to the quality of the production of paperbacks including paper and illustrations.

It was suggested that each country should have one central national body to promote books and the reading habit composed of various professional groups as well as individuals. One such example is the Centre Recherche Information Litterature Jeunesse in France.

4. Content of children's books

a. Text: The role of cultural traditions

The working paper presented by the UNESCO Secretariat said, "Books for All- - - a programme of Action" the UNESCO pamphlet (published in 1973) has a special section on the promotion of international understanding and peaceful cooperation. This program of action was formulated in the light of experiences gained during International Book Year with which nearly all the Member States of UNESCO and many other international non-governmental organizations were actively associated, with the help of an international committee of experts. The preliminary paragraphs explaining the reasons for the action proposed under the heading "International Understanding and Peaceful Cooperation" read in parts as follows:

"Books are a means of communicating spiritual values and in so doing are a powerful factor in bringing people together. They aid in the mutual understanding of cultures and when men know each other better, cooperation among nations is furthered.

"Books can thus lay the basis for a lasting peace by diffusing the ideals of justice and respect of the rights of man which are its foundation. The content of books requires particular care in publications for children, since it is necessary to instil from childhood the attitudes conducive to international understanding. While promoting awareness of national cultural values, it is of equal concern that chauvinism should not replace

national pride or insularity impede that international cooperation so essential for construction of a better world."

There was a lively discussion on the content of children's books which brought several points into focus. One of them was on folktales. It was agreed that folktales have been and still are one of the best kind of literature for children. They can be an excellent way to introduce one culture to children in other parts of the world and also can be a rich source of materials for creative writing for children. However, as some participants pointed out, not all of the folktales are suitable for children. Therefore they should be carefully selected so that they do not nurture a negative attitude towards life.

Another topic of discussion was about creative writing. The delegate from Spain believed that the author should be allowed the freedom of creation. A creative writer does not always write for a goal. She also said that in her country children's writers were mostly women. She felt that men should make greater contribution.

One delegate from the U.S.A. emphasized that it was important to discuss about books to be used in a country where they did not have enough books. She drew attention to the fact that in certain parts of world, children did not even know what a book was.

She also pointed out that writers, like any other creative artists, need lots of encouragement and feedback from the readers. Another point she stressed was the need for books for very young children with little or no text.

Some participants expressed their concern about the oral tradition which is fast disappearing and urged that every effort should be made to preserve it.

A delegate from France also said that the living values of oral tradition must not be rejected. We should go so far as to recommend that these oral values be transcribed in order to preserve them for our society. Once these oral traditions have been authentically recorded, they can serve as the basis for contemporary artistic and literary expressions. We should, however, reject traditions which encourage hatred, fanaticism and destruction.

The delegate from Italy said that when giving folktales and fairy tales to children, we should also propose to them new keys of reading. In ancient times magic was the means of achieving goals, such as better social

conditions, the triumph of justice and self realization. She said that the latter was a very old idea but a very modern achievement. The modern young reader must ask what is magic today? Is it technology, class conflict or a new conception of religion?

It was also said that understanding and respect for other cultures could develop only through a scientific outlook. Scientific knowledge had helped to remove cultural barriers, and had brought us closer to the one world concept. Children's literature in developing countries today should help children develop a more scientific outlook, but at the same time it should not suffer from emotional lack. It was dangerous to let children enter adult life with warped ideas and a confused value system.

It was also said that children should be able to relate the literature they read to present times. That it was important to create literature which brought happiness to family life, love for peace, and understanding between peoples was another view point expressed.

It was strongly felt by some others that an author should be free to create. He should not be hampered by setting goals before him.

4. b. Illustration

A French delegate said that a book as an object can take many forms; it can be printed on all kinds of papers, it can be made beautiful or ugly by the use of many colors. Then it is the publisher whose conception of aesthetics decides whether or not the artistic presentation will be traditional, with its influences of the 18th and 19th century, or be so-called "avant-garde" art which is based on graphic research. This research is linked with the contemporary technology of printing and the mass media.

Another delegate stated that so many of the picture books today try to be graphically superb rather than to be enjoyed and understood by children. Her experiences with various groups of children taught her that children have certain needs to be met by books, as psychologists, sociologists and pedagogists also point out. It is good for a picture book to be graphically beautiful, but it must not be forgotten that a picture book is for children, and therefore ought to have those qualities that satisfy their needs. Another delegate said that illustrations of children's books is a kind of art education.

The delegate from Brazil thought it important that writers and il-

Lustrators should have a thorough understanding of each other's work.

Another delégate stressed the importance of making inexpensive picture books available to a large number of children. Producing such books may mean using just black and white illustrations. But black and white illustrations can be as powerful and expressive as colored ones, and enjoyed by children very much. This point was strenghtened by another participant who added that some of the most successful picture books were done in black and white.

The Czech delegate pointed out that we must not only consider the artistic creation in relation to the text but we must also evaluate it as art in itself. We must pay attention to the effect of creative illustrations on the evolution of art. In his creation the illustrator must have the freedom to develop not only the language of the text but he must also consider his own creativity and apply it to the overall design of the book. The effect of the book thus becomes more powerful as it encourages the reader to create his own fantasy as a result of his reaction not only to the text but also to the illustrations. Modern illustrations in addition to their basic function, take the child towards an understanding of modern art.

The Bulgarian delegate stated that illustration should even be given priority to the text, since children always look at pictures before reading the text.

The Swiss delegate introduced an opinion held in Europe about illustrating folktales. According to it, a fairy tale for small children (Folk marchen), as opposed to folktale for older children (Sagen, Legenden, etc.), should not be illustrated at all, or at least in an unobtrusive way, because the illustrations may prevent children from developing their own inner images. The less illustrated a fairy tale is the better, he said.

Janine Despinette of France quoted Paul Klee, "L'Art ne reproduit pas le visible il rend visible". But books of various age groups need to be illustrated in different manners by those who know the job. Putting dreams human emotions, gestures and feelings into visible form is the most difficult part of illustration, and should therefore be dealt with extreme care.

5. Preparation of children's books

The chairman suggested that since this was mainly a technical question and the time was limited, Agenda 6 which was of greater importance could

be taken up for discussion.

6. Ways and means to reinforce cooperation between nations and peoples

Supplementing the information contained in paras 32 to 38 the working paper, the UNESCO representative explained in detail the functioning of this intergovernmental organization, which includes at present 136 Member States.

The General Conference approves every two years the program and Budget of UNESCO, which is prepared in draft form by the Director General, in consultation with the governments and National Commissions of Member States and a limited number of international non-governmental organization (NGO'S) classified in category A (that is to say, having relations of information, consultation and cooperation with UNESCO).

In 1972, after having examined an interim report on International Book Year (IBY), the General Conference invited the world community to pursue the initiatives undertaken during IBY to achieve within the framework of a long-term program of action the following aims:

- (1) use of books in the service of education, international understanding and peaceful cooperation
- (2) encouragement of authorship and translations, with due regard to copyright
- (3) production and distribution of books, including the development of libraries;
- (4) promotion of the reading habit

With view to guiding Member States and interested organizations in implementing the long-term program, UNESCO published in 1973 a brochure entitled "Books for All" which contains indications of steps that might be taken. These suggestions, grouped under each of four themes, are presented in highly condensed form as a check list of points for possible action.

The place given in this brochure to the promotion of books for children is relatively modest. This can be explained by the fact that the General Conference had necessarily incomplete information on the results of Book Year when the 17th session was held in November 1972. It was only after a full assessment of these results that the importance attached by the world community to the promotion of books for children became evident.

In 1974, at its 18th session, the general conference was fully informed of the remarkable developments which had taken place in this field. In the resolution adopted unanimously on book promotion and development

(Resolution 18 C/4.141) the General Conference approved the efforts being made in 1975-76 to promote books for children, and in particular the support being given to regional programs for the low-cost collective publications of books for children.

In the same resolution the General Conference also invited the Director General to submit to the 19th sessions (1976) proposals for the revision of the long-term programs in the light of experience.

A good opportunity is therefore offered to introduce into the program new elements relating to the promotion of books for children. Hence the importance of the conclusions and suggestions which are made at meetings like the one now being held in Tehran.

Those interested in books for children have several ways to bring home their wishes. At national level, they can get in touch with National Commission for UNESCO or with the National Committees of their professional associations with a view to convincing respective government to submit adequate proposals when they are consulted on the Draft program and Budget of UNESCO for the next biennium. They can also act through a NGO'S like the International Board on Books for Young people (IBBY), at present classified under category B. Finally, they can also convey their views to the International Book Committee, established in 1973, by the main NGO'S dealing with books (authors, translators, publishers, librarians, booksellers, readers etc.) as a follow up to the support Committee for International Book Year.

In this connection, the UNESCO representative informed the meeting that the Bureau of the International Book Committee, which met at UNESCO headquarters in April, had decided that the president of IBBY should be invited to attend the forthcoming sessions of the committee. This session will be held in Moscow, September 2 - 7, on the invitation of the U.S.S.R. authorities, and the promotion of books for children will be a separate item on the agenda.

Proposal by Iran

the delegate from Iran made the following proposal for the consideration of the meeting:

- (1) Participants were requested to provide a folktale of their respective countries based on the theme of peaceful cooperation and friendship.

The stories should be approximately 1000-2000 words long. Each story must represent the national and cultural characteristics of that nation. The stories should accentuate the themes of friendship and cooperation and must be devoid of racial and religious prejudices. It is preferable that the stories should not have been previously published and illustrated in books.

This collection of stories, received from various countries would be translated into Farsi, illustrated by Iranian artists and published by the Institute. To enable the artists to draw authentic illustrations, participants were requested to send photographs or sketches on which the illustrations could be based. If any country wished to publish this collection in its own national language, the text and the illustrations would be put at its disposal.

(2) The second proposal was to publish a collection of stories written by children of different countries. It was suggested that participants should try and get stories by children and send them to the Institute. These stories also would be suitably illustrated by the local artists. Mrs. Lily Amir Arjomand expressed the hope that this would be a very successful publication.

It was hoped that IBBY would try and get the cooperation of countries which were not present at this meeting to send stories for the collection of folktales as well as the collection of writings by children.

(3) The third proposal was made by Iran in connecting with paragraph 4083 of the work Plan relating to the resolution adapted in 1974 by the General Conference of UNESCO, at its eighteenth session on book promotion and development (Res. 18c/4.141, in UNESCO document 18c/5 approved). This paragraph, included on the initiative of Iran, stated that "UNESCO will cooperate in establishing in Iran a national centre of regional scope for the promotion of books for children, the creation of which will be discussed at the Tehran meeting."

The proposal made by Mrs. Lily Amir Arjomand concerned the establishment of a documentation center on children's literature. This center would be located in Tehran. Children's books, manuscripts, illustrations and other related material from all over the world would be collected for the benefit of research workers the world over. If anyone from any country wished to have the translation of some material for the purpose of research, it could be provided.

It was also suggested that the Institute might consider developing an international centre for children's films as they were doing an exceptionally good work in that field.

The UNESCO representative noted with great satisfaction the proposals made by the delegate from Iran. He said that UNESCO would use all the means in its power to contribute to the implementation of the new activities planned by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. UNESCO could in particular give the largest possible publicity to the objectives and activities of the International Center for Documentation and Research, once it is created, facilitate the cooperation of the center with the national, regional and international institutes participating in UNESCO's long term program of action being carried out under the motto "Books for ALL", and provide the center with any information which would help facilitate the gathering of the texts for children to be published in international collections.

The Iranian authorities should notify due course the Director General of UNESCO of the establishment of the International Center referred to above.

7. Adoption of the report

At the end of the Meeting, the participants unanimously approved the report and adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

The participants attending the International Meeting of Specialists on "Children's Literature in the Service of International Understanding and Peaceful Cooperation", held in Teheran, 15-21 May 1975,
Having examined the Working Paper prepared by the Unesco Secretariat, in agreement with the organizers of the Meeting,
Having heard the reports of delegates on the present situation of, and future outlook for children's literature in their respective countries,
Convinced that it is essential, in the interest of international understanding and peaceful cooperation, that the largest possible number of children be

provided with books of quality which will enable them to appreciate the cultural riches of other countries of the world,

Considering that international co-publications using a common set of illustrations and printed in large quantities offer the possibility of substantially reducing production costs,

Determined to make use of all available means to reinforce cooperation between both nations and peoples in this field,

1. Warmly support the initiative taken by the Tehran Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults to publish, at as early a date as possible, an international collection of folktales for children, and also a collection of stories with contributions from children in all countries of the world. These collections will first be published in Farsi, and the rights to use the text and illustrations will be offered to interested publishers in all countries, along with the corresponding films;
2. Agree to dispatch to the Institute, as soon as possible, one or more folktales promoting attitudes of friendship and cooperation, typical of their respective countries, and, preferably, chosen from among unpublished manuscripts or works in the public domain;
3. Invite the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) to request its national branches in countries represented at the Tehran meeting to procure such texts for the Institute;
4. Take note with deep satisfaction of the intention expressed by the Managing Director of the Institute to establish, within the Institute's own framework, an International Centre for Documentation and Research on Children's Literature, whose objects would include:
 - assembling from all over the world texts such as folktales, legends, adventure stories, humorous stories, etc... selected for their literary quality and particularly suited to children;
 - encouraging research and the exchange of experience in the technical and artistic aspects of the conception, creation, design, illustration and production of books for children, that is in the language of graphic communication;
 - making its experience and the results of its studies available to

participating countries with a view to encouraging the production of children's books of high quality, in both text and illustrations, suitable for use in libraries and schools;

5. Express the hope that the International Centre for Documentation and research, the creation of which they wholeheartedly support, will shortly be set up in Tehran,
6. Invite Unesco to contribute to the fullest extent, within its means, to the development of the International Centre, and particularly:
 - a) to give the widest publicity to the objectives and activities of the Centre, once it is established;
 - b) to facilitate cooperation between the Centre and the national, regional and international institutions participating in Unesco's long-term programme of action under the slogan "Books for All";
 - c) to provide the Centre with any information which might facilitate the gathering of texts suitable for publication in the international collections of tales and stories for children.
7. Express their deep gratitude to the Iranian authorities, the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and the Iranian National Commission for Unesco for the generous hospitality extended to them during their stay in Iran.

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HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY
FARAH PAHLAVI
THE EMPRESS OF IRAN'S
MESSAGE TO THE
INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
IN THE SERVICE OF
INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND PEACEFUL CO-OPERATION
15-21 MAY, 1975, TEHRAN

The international meeting on "Children's Literature in the Service of International Understanding and Peaceful Co-operation," organized by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults in cooperation with the National Commission for Unesco in Iran and Unesco provides a desirable opportunity to express once more, our own conviction as well as those of all participants of this meeting, that a strong link exists between books and the socio-cultural nourishment of human groups; and is also an expression of the belief that such growth by itself leads human beings, more than ever before, to be aware of their heavy responsibilities as regards their environment. Also that such nourishment will encourage thought about the wider issues of the world we live in with its distinctive features. In this manner humanity will endeavour to bind relationships which are strengthened by mutual respect, cultural ties, and, in the last analysis for the defence of peace and humanitarian values.

It goes without saying that the enquiring and achievement-conscious mind of children and young adults is a fertile ground

for success in endeavours of this kind. Naturally the results of these accomplishments depend very largely on the deliberations made by experts of your status who endeavour to find ways and means to mould, with the utmost care for excellence, the minds and personalities of children and young adults, equipping them for accepting their future responsibilities.

You, the participants of this meeting, who have assembled in our country from all over the world, are undoubtedly enriched by your own cultures. You pursue various ways of life peculiar to your own socio-economic traditions. You are in agreement that the purpose of art and literature, especially literature meant for children and young adults, is for the promotion of peace and justice and, further, a help to nourish the potentials for developing parents of the world of tomorrow.

This is so because art and literature are both the means for transmission of culture and spiritual values. They are strong tools in identifying outstanding characteristics of human-beings. Once human-beings, and in particular children and young adults throughout the world, become better familiarized with one another, stronger bonds of understanding will be created among the nations of the world; respect for cultures of nations will replace fear from the might governments.

The social revolution of Iran among its other achievements embraces free education. Apart from implementing various schemes for establishing educational centers for different age groups, this revolution attaches special importance to the development of children and young adults. The Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults that is acting as your host came into being ten years ago with the object of meeting the needs mentioned above. During the period of its fruitful

life. the Institute has established more than one hundred well-equipped libraries for children and young adults, both in the capital and other cities in Iran. Also mobile libraries provide two thousand villages with books, and some ninety books have been produced and published by the Institute.

The meeting of this assembly is a suitable opportunity for experts from abroad and from Iran through friendship and exchange of ideas to examine situations and reach solutions for existing problems. For, in order to prevent cultural isolation, an acute need is now felt most urgently for cooperation and understanding on an international level, a pre-condition necessary for the welfare and the strong bonds of the societies of tomorrow.

It is gratifying that the United Nations Educational, Scientific Organization by observing the international book year, and also by its assistance to various book councils and other similar bodies, is mindful of the value and the necessity for such cooperation on an international level, to the extent that it makes particular efforts to translate into fact the high ideals of man for the promotion of culture throughout the world.

We are looking forward to the success of this meeting for reaching the high ideals of international understanding and peace, the outgrowth of which is the attainment of results both theoretical and practical.