

**Association of Former UNESCO Staff members (AFUS)**  
**Memory & Future Club**

**Reinvigorating Multilateralism**

An interview with Lakhdar Brahimi, Algerian politician and diplomat, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General.

Brian Urquhart, a British diplomat and former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, who recently passed away at the age of 101, explained that the United Nations had been conceived in the midst of World War II to combat the apology of war, exterminations based on racist ideologies, the economic slump and violence of the 1930s and to overcome the failure of the League of Nations, but that it was born in 1945 in a transformed world where the balance of power had radically changed.

Nevertheless, after the war, the United Nations was the source of a flourishing of international institutions, including UNESCO, and of fundamental texts for international relations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which remains a beacon for humanity. But soon the Cold War, the upheavals of decolonization and regional conflicts would multiply tensions and hinder to some extent the progress of this cooperation.

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, it seemed that the time had finally come to establish a regulated international order, combining peace based on respect for human rights, self-determination, the rule of law between and within countries, economic development and environmental protection. This "new world order" was soon to be swept away by the headwinds of unbridled globalization, under the effect of historical experiences and divergent, even conflicting, political and civilizational projects, of new technologies that could contribute to the dissemination of ideas and knowledge, but also undermine democratic systems and serve authoritarian regimes, disorganize entire sectors of economic activity, disrupt social and political life, and destabilize international life. When it comes to addressing international challenges such as climate change and mass migration, cybercrime and emerging pandemics, poverty and growing inequalities, global governance institutions, often mired in a web of red tape and antagonism between different interests, struggle to find effective solutions that inspire trust and public support.

"Today we have too many multilateral problems and not enough multilateral solutions," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in September 2020. Calling for a stronger and more inclusive multilateralism, which builds "on civil society, cities, businesses, communities and youth," he also welcomed the Declaration of Support adopted by the UN General Assembly on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Organization, as well as the commitment of member states to "reinvigorate multilateralism ».

On this subject, **Georges Kutukdjian**, President of the Association of Former UNESCO Staff Members (AAFU) talks to **Lakhdar Brahimi**, former Representative of the UN Secretary General, who led numerous observation and conciliation missions in countries in conflict, including Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.



**Lakhdar Brahimi**, a politician and diplomat, represented Algeria at the League of Arab States in Cairo and then in the United Kingdom from 1971 to 1979. He was a diplomatic adviser in Egypt and Sudan from 1982 to 1984 and became Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States between 1984 and 1991. In 1989, as Special Envoy of the Tripartite Committee of the League of Arab States for Lebanon, Brahimi negotiated in Taef, Saudi Arabia, an agreement that ended seventeen years of civil war. Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1991 to 1993, he was Rapporteur of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992.

In 1993, he began a second career at the United Nations as Special Representative of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali, first in South Africa, where he led the United Nations Observer Mission until the elections that brought Nelson Mandela to power in 1994, and then in Haiti between 1994 and 1996, during which time he also led mediation missions in Nigeria, Cameroon, Burundi and Sudan. In Afghanistan, from 1997 to 1999, he led the group of experts that drafted the report on UN peace operations, known as the "Brahimi Report" (2000). In 2010, he received the Special Jury Prize of the Fondation Chirac for Conflict Prevention for his reconciliation work in Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2012, he accepted to succeed Kofi Annan as UN international mediator in the Syrian civil conflict, a mission he will carry out until 2014.

Lakhdar Brahimi is a visiting professor at the Paris Institute of Political Studies and Cornell University (USA), and a member of three research centers: the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Frederik De Klerk's Global Leadership Foundation (GLF), and the Global Elders, a group of international leaders founded by Nelson Mandela in 2007 to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts around the world.



**Georges Kutukdjian**, anthropologist and philosopher, joined UNESCO in 1972, where he was successively Head of the Coordination and Evaluation Unit of the Social and Human Sciences Sector (1974-1982) and Head of the Human Rights and Peace Education Programme (1983), before taking charge of the bioethics programme in 1992 as Secretary-General of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC). In 1995, he was Executive Secretary of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) and upon his retirement, he was the Director (D-2) of the Division of Human Sciences, Philosophy and

Ethics of Science and Technology. From 2002 to 2003, he was Rapporteur of the Working Group on the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data and became Co-Chair of the Ethics Committee of the World Academy of Biotechnology and member of the Scientific Committee of the International Society of Bioethics (SIBI, until 2018). From 2006 to 2008, he was the Managing Editor of the UNESCO World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue. Since 2012, he has been a member of the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) and since 2018 Vice-President of the Sub-Commission in charge of "Racism, Discrimination and Tolerance". Dean of Mediators at UNESCO from 2005 to 2019, he has chaired the Association of Former UNESCO Staff Members (AFUS) since 2004.