**Discours d’Ouverture – 1er décembre 2012**

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, dear students, dear friends

It is a great honour, but also a great moment for our University to welcome in the Faculty of Arts the first international day of medical Independence. Why is this event organized by the « Chaire UNESCO » of the Université de La Réunion ? I would like to remind you that the mission entrusted to our Chair was to promote Interculturality in the Indian Ocean Space et and develop the intercultural dialogue. We can wonder why our Chair has agreed to give the UNESCO mabem to such a scientific manifestation ?

1. The first reason is a thematical one. It was proposed by the organizers of this day of research because our theme today is part of one of the reflexions led by the United Nations which have among their major missions to promote Science, Education and Culture through UNESCO. As a matter of fact, the medical science has as one of its main goals the physical and mental well-being of human beings facing disease – that is one of the priorities of the United Nations as they consider that Health is a right for everyone. . . Every human being on the Earth, whatever his or her country of origin, his or her culture or religion must be in a situation to benefit from a Medical practice independent which puts Ethics in the center of its interventions. . . Let me remind you, as an example, that the UNESCO French National Committee which is in charge of al UNESCO Chaires in France dedicated a whole day of reflexion, May 20, 2011, to the topic of conflicts of interests among medical professions. On this occasion 4 workshops were led by representatives of medical professions, of the « Conseil de l’Ordre des Médecins », of various judicial experts, of the medical press, of magistrates and *institutions de veille*

were able to bring a number of different points of view on the relationships between people who need to be healed and thos who heal them, the evaluation of different medicines, the competence and independence of experts, the methods of resolution of conflicts, etc.

Today, we will endeavour to contribute to a reflexion which is widely shared throughout the whole world. This is enough to justify today’s meeting.

1. The second reason is that on our Reunionese land, on which a population rich with cultures coming from the whole world – they have come from Asia, Europe, Africa, Madagascar – we thinkk that a refelexion on medical independence is fully justified and takes a deep meaning. How is it possible to conciliate traditional cultures and religions with modern medical practice ? Has a medical doctor a right to consider he is above cultural and ritual practices ?
2. The third reason is that the UNESCO Chaire of our université could but support the initiative taken by Philippe DeChazourne and a group of medical doctors with him, to organize an international seminar on such a topic which is both very sensitive and responds to the most recent questioning. All of them have done their best to make this seminar a great success. If the UNESCO Chaire of l’Université de La Réunion focuses all its research on intercultural dialogue, it was impossible for us to ignore questions dealing with medical Ethics on which other UNESCO Chaires throughout the world concentrate their work.

As the Director of the Chaire UNESCO ans as the Deputy-Dean of our Arts Faculty, i would like to thnk all organizers of this seminar on Medical Independence. I can easily imagine the numerous difficulties of such an organization, which implies volunteer work from very busy medical doctors. The very fact that you succeeded in inviting prestigious guests in order to discuss our topic is in itself a major achievement. Thank you to all of you for bringing your own view in the hope that tomorrow medical care will retain its humain dimension and will not be corrupted by mercantile strategies. . .

S. Fuma