



NEW ZEALAND'S PLAN OF ACTION TO SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILISATIONS

FEBRUARY 2013 TO AUGUST 2014



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Preamble

This is the second update to *New Zealand's Plan of Action to Support the Alliance of Civilisations*.¹ This Plan of Action presents an updated list of New Zealand's activities that aim to meet the objectives of the Alliance of Civilisations (the Alliance or AoC). Further, this second update reaffirms the vision and key objectives of the first Plan of Action, and in doing so, reiterates New Zealand's commitment to the aspirations of the Alliance.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs is responsible for drafting and coordinating the Plan of Action because of its role as New Zealand's focal point for the Alliance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade continues to lead New Zealand's regional and international contributions. The Plan of Action designates a lead agency to each of the activities in the list; the Office of Ethnic Affairs consulted all of the agencies involved during the updating process.

The Plan of Action proceeds in four steps: the first presents background information on AoC including its primary mission, areas of activity and objectives; the second highlights New Zealand's involvement in the initiative, and situates the importance of this involvement in a local and regional context; the third delineates New Zealand's key objectives for the Plan of Action; and the fourth presents a detailed list of New Zealand's AoC activities.

¹ The original Plan of Action came into effect in December 2007 and was valid until June 2009. A review of the initiatives in the original Plan of Action was carried out in 2009. The *Update to New Zealand's Plan of Action to Support the Alliance of Civilisations* came into effect in May 2010 and was valid until November 2011.

1. The Focus of the Alliance of Civilisations

The Alliance of Civilisations was established in 2005 through the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. The Alliance is a global platform for intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Its primary mission is:

to forge collective political will and to mobilise concerted action aimed at improving cross-cultural understanding and cooperation among countries, peoples and communities. The Alliance develops its actions at both governmental and civil society level. It also works to counter forces that fuel polarisation and extremism.²

1.1 The Areas of Activity

The AoC High Level Report (2006) identified four priority areas to reduce cross-cultural tensions and build bridges between communities:

- **education** – intercultural competencies and skills will foster intercultural dialogue and combat cultural stereotypes and intolerance
- **youth** – young people are key agents for social change, economic growth, development and technological innovation
- **media** – all forms of media have the potential to create a positive narrative of cultural and religious diversity
- **migration** – inclusive and tolerant societies can better meet the challenges presented by migration and maximise the potential of diversity.

New Zealand's Plan of Action is consistent with these four themes.

1.2 The Objectives

The following five key objectives form the framework for the Alliance's activities:

- **Facilitating the global conversation** on intercultural and diversity issues
- **Promoting intercultural strategies** that integrate economic, social inclusion and cultural diversity policies
- **Preventing intercultural tensions**, combating stereotypes and discrimination
- **Supporting innovative grassroots initiatives** that contribute to intercultural dialogue and cooperation
- **Raising awareness and mobilising public support** for cultural diversity, tolerance and inclusion.

2. The Alliance of Civilisations and New Zealand

² For the information referenced on this page and further key information on the Alliance of Civilisations, see "Alliance of Civilisations Project Descriptions", <http://unaoc.org/docs/UNAOC%20Project%20Descriptions.pdf> (accessed December, 2012).

The New Zealand Government has regularly signalled its commitment to the aspirations of the Alliance of Civilisations. In May 2007, New Zealand hosted the first Asia-Pacific symposium (the first symposium of its kind in any region), which sought to consider the relevance of the AoC initiative to the Asia-Pacific region.³ Following this, New Zealand was one of the first nations to develop a Plan of Action and to join the Group of Friends network. New Zealand has also been represented at all four global forums, which were held in Madrid (2008), Istanbul (2009), Rio de Janeiro (2010), and Doha (2011).⁴

The objectives of the Alliance are congruent with New Zealand's efforts to counter radicalisation and extremism. The recent global financial crisis has highlighted the extent to which our world is interconnected; New Zealand is not immune to the effects of events and incidents that occur abroad. By supporting the Alliance in its regional and international contexts, New Zealand takes further steps towards minimising the impact of acts such as terrorism on its domestic landscape.

New Zealand is motivated to ensure the continuance of its strong human rights record and its reputation as a successful model of social harmony. Social cohesion relies on many factors, including; (1) building mutual trust and respect amongst all New Zealanders, (2) preventing the emergence of inter-communal tensions or intolerance, and (3) guarding against the emergence of extremism within any community. A collaborative effort by government, civil society and local communities is required to address problems such as prejudice and alienation when they arise. Without such concerted and collective action, diversity may become a source of intolerance, fear and even violence, instead of something to nurture and celebrate.

New Zealand also has an international reputation as a country that welcomes migrants and refugees, a quality that is contributing to New Zealand's increasing diversity. For example, between 2001 and 2006,⁵ the number of New Zealanders of an Asian ethnicity increased by 49 per cent (to 354,500), while those identifying as Pacific peoples increased by 15 per cent (to 266,000). During the same period, the number of New Zealanders identifying with Islam increased by 53 per cent (to 36,100), Hinduism by 62 per cent (to 64,400), and Sikhism by 83 per cent (to 9,500).

New Zealand's population is projected to become even more diverse in the future. In 2026, the number of New Zealanders of an Asian ethnicity is projected to

³ The symposium involved a broad cross-section of regional leaders and thinkers, including three members of the High Level Group who authored the AoC Report. Participants endorsed the relevance of the AoC to the diverse communities in the Asia-Pacific region and also supported the four areas of activity (education, youth, media and migration) that were identified by the AoC Report.

⁴ At the time of writing, there were firm plans in place for New Zealand to be represented at the fifth global forum, which will be held in Vienna in February, 2013.

⁵ The 2011 Census was postponed until 2013 due to the Christchurch earthquake on 22 February 2011.

increase from 400,000 to 790,000 and the number identifying as Pacific peoples is projected to increase from 300,000 to 480,000.⁶ This increasing diversity carries with it the need to foster intercultural dialogue, and the need to ensure that all sectors of society are able to participate in all facets of New Zealand life, as well as contribute to the country's economy and culture.

The importance of fostering intercultural dialogue applies to New Zealand in a regional context. The Asia-Pacific region is home to many major cultures, civilisations and religions. For the most part, the members of our wider neighbourhood live alongside each other in a mutually respectful and tolerant way. Nevertheless, there are moments of misunderstanding and discord. As we need to be attentive to developments in and between our own communities within New Zealand, we also need to build trust and understanding between different cultural and religious communities within our region.

New Zealand is dedicated to participating actively in regional bodies such as the East Asia Summit and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum.⁷ We also value highly our Dialogue relationship with ASEAN. New Zealand believes that enhanced interdependence – in economic and other ways - will be a powerful force for ensuring a peaceful and cohesive region.

To advance the goals of the Alliance, local and central government agencies, non-government organisations, community groups and wider New Zealand society all need to work together. When such cooperative work occurs, we are able to facilitate and maintain positive connections among communities, whether domestically or regionally.

⁶ New Zealand Statistics (2008). *National Ethnic Projections: 2006 (base) to 2026*. http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/estimates_and_projections/NationalEthnicPopulationProjections_HOTP06-26.aspx

⁷ ASEAN has ten member states; Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

3. Key Objectives for New Zealand

New Zealand's Plan of Action is based on the following objectives:

- **support the goals of the AoC**, including building, where appropriate, on the activities that formed the first Plan of Action;
- **implement activities in New Zealand to maintain New Zealand's social harmony**, and ensure minimisation of the impact of adverse international events, including economic events;
- **continue to work with partners in our region on practical projects** that further the goals of the AoC, and that promote peace and stability in Asia-Pacific;
- **continue to work closely with the AoC Secretariat**, including participation in the Group of Friends, to advance the AoC initiative globally.

The Plan of Action connects the domestic, regional and international activities that New Zealand is undertaking or participating in to achieve the objectives of the Alliance.

The Plan of Action highlights initiatives that:

- **promote understanding between diverse communities** through connecting people and organisations, and through encouraging civic, social and economic participation
- **reduce polarisation between communities** through joint pursuits and partnerships (including between Government and civil society) that help give impetus to innovative projects
- **minimise the impact of adverse social, cultural and economic events** on New Zealand's social harmony
- **build respect and understanding among cultures and empower voices of moderation and reconciliation** that help calm cultural and religious tensions between nations and peoples
- **provide access to information and resource materials** drawn from successful cooperative initiatives, which could be used by other institutions, organisations and individuals.

4. New Zealand's Activities

The following list of activities is organised into three categories; (1) *overarching projects*, which cover many initiatives, (2) *specific projects*, which particularly focus on achieving the goals of the Alliance, and (3) *New Zealand's regional contributions*, which are activities taking place in Asia-Pacific.

4.1 Overarching projects

New Zealand Diversity Action Programme (Human Rights Commission)

The New Zealand Diversity Action Programme is an initiative facilitated by the Human Rights Commission. The programme involves a range of activities, including the annual New Zealand Diversity Forum and four electronic information networks on media and diversity, religious diversity, refugee issues and language diversity.

New Zealand Settlement Strategy (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment)

The New Zealand Settlement Strategy (the Strategy) is a whole-of-government framework to achieve agreed settlement outcomes for migrants, refugees and their families. The Strategy assists migrants to settle quickly and contribute to the economy. The Strategy coordinates central and local government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups to achieve its seven objectives.⁸

There are regional settlement strategies for Auckland and Wellington, which provide regional responsiveness in support of the Settlement National Action Plan.

- *Auckland Settlement Action Plan* - The first Action Plan has been completed and a new Action Plan for the Auckland region is currently being developed. It will have three platforms for action: economic growth, a welcoming inclusive community and responsive mainstream services.
- *Wellington Regional Settlement Strategy* - The first Plan of Action was completed in June 2011. Following this, the governance group has refocused the strategy to support economic growth in the region, and identified three focus areas for the next phase of action; (1) migrant attraction, (2) migrant retention, and (3) settlement leadership. A refreshed action plan has been drafted to support these focus areas, and will be finalised in early 2013.

⁸ The Strategy's objectives are that newcomers to New Zealand can: feel welcomed, accepted, and respected; obtain employment appropriate to their skills; be supported to confidently communicate in English; access appropriate information and responsive services; maintain their cultural identities; feel safe; accept, respect, and contribute to the New Zealand way of life. Department of Labour, *Our Future Together: New Zealand Settlement Strategy*, 2004. Retrieved from: <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/F2D460BA-8A84-4073-8A12-84C2BE0B1BB8/0/Strategy.pdf>.

- *Settlement Support New Zealand* is a national support network designed to direct newcomers and their families to services they might need during their first years in New Zealand. These services are provided through a collaborative approach involving central government (through the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment), local authorities and non-government organisations in 18 locations around the country.

Settling In (Ministry of Social Development/ Family and Community Services)

Settling In focuses on ensuring that the social needs of migrant and refugee communities are understood and met to maximise settlement outcomes, promote social cohesion and support their contribution to their local communities and to New Zealand's society and economy. Led by Family and Community Services (a service of the Ministry of Social Development), the approach of Settling In is highly collaborative, involving a range of central government agencies, local government, business and community representatives in each location.

4.2 Specific projects

Building Bridges (the Office of Ethnic Affairs)

Building Bridges is a strategic programme that seeks to address issues faced by New Zealand's Muslim communities. Building Bridges aims to increase civic participation and foster leadership among the Muslim communities, as well as build positive relationships between Muslim communities and wider society.

Ethnic Diversity Management (the Office of Ethnic Affairs)

The Office of Ethnic Affairs provides practical advice on ethnic diversity management in two main ways; the Intercultural Awareness and Communication training programme, and a publication titled *Riding the Wave*.

The Intercultural Awareness and Communication training programme is designed to train participants in effective communication and relationships across cultures in the workplace.

Riding the Wave presents innovative strategies that help New Zealand organisations to integrate intercultural awareness and communication into every facet of their business. *Riding the Wave* provides a practical guide to managing diversity in the workplace in the following areas: leadership and management, human resources, recruitment and selection, retention and succession, employee empowerment, product and service design, and evaluation and monitoring.

EthnicA conferences (the Office of Ethnic Affairs)

The EthnicA conferences are held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, and bring together high calibre presentations,⁹ debates and workshops on ethnic diversity issues. The conferences aim to strengthen connections within ethnic communities and with mainstream New Zealand.

EPIC NZ conferences (the Office of Ethnic Affairs)

The EPIC (Ethnic People in Commerce) NZ conferences aim to develop (1) the capacity of ethnic small and medium sized businesses, (2) trade opportunities between Asia and New Zealand, and (3) connections between ethnic businesses, government and the wider business community.

Media Workshops for Ethnic Media and Ethnic Community Leaders (the Office of Ethnic Affairs)

The Office of Ethnic Affairs conducts various workshops with ethnic media, which aim to (1) help build capacity of ethnic media as small businesses, and (2) build connections and relationships between communities and ethnic media representatives.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs also conducts workshops that aim to build the capability of ethnic community leaders to respond to media. The workshops cover (1) responding to media calls and requests, (2) handling media interviews and how to get the best out of them, (3) becoming a media 'go to person', and (4) managing the media in challenging circumstances.

New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment)

The Government provides both pre- and post-arrival support for around 750 UNCHR¹⁰ mandated refugees. This includes an induction programme provided at Mangere Reception Centre in Auckland and funding for New Zealand Red Cross to deliver support services.

The Government has recently approved a New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy. Implementation will commence from July 2013. Government agencies will work together to achieve five goals that will contribute to achieving the vision for the New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy.

⁹ For example, the keynote address at the Auckland 2011 conference was given by Farah Pandith, the US Special Representative to Muslim Communities, and the keynote address at the Auckland and Hamilton 2012 conferences was given by Sir Ray Avery, scientist, businessman and philanthropist.

¹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The five goals are:

- *Self-sufficiency* – all working-age refugees are in paid work or are supported by a family member in paid work
- *Participation* – refugees actively participate in New Zealand life and have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand
- *Health and Wellbeing* – refugees and their families enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives
- *Education* – refugees' English language skills enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life
- *Housing* – refugees live independently of government housing assistance in homes that are safe, secure, healthy and affordable.

Strengthen the focus of education at school levels on faith, religions and cultures (Ministry of Education)

Being Part of Global Communities is a resource that examines the social sciences concept of being part of global communities and globalisation. The resource highlights the importance of understanding that today's world is interconnected and that New Zealand students participate in an internationalised community.¹¹

Establishment Funding for the New Zealand Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim Cultures (Tertiary Education Commission)

Two New Zealand universities have launched a partnership to develop opportunities to study Islam at tertiary level and promote and develop expertise in Islamic Studies. Between 2008-2012, Victoria University of Wellington and the University of Otago were granted NZ\$364,871 by the New Zealand Government to establish the National Centre for Islamic Studies. Through this partnership, both universities offer papers with Islamic content, and the Centre's funding has supported visits to these universities by scholars in Islamic Studies.

This body of work will raise the level of awareness and interest in the study of Islam in New Zealand.

¹¹ The New Zealand school curriculum guides the direction for teaching and learning in schools. Each school develops its own curriculum and teaching programmes based on the New Zealand school curriculum. Resources for educators are provided by private organisations and by the Ministry of Education.

4.3 New Zealand's regional contributions (Asia-Pacific)

Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

New Zealand is a co-sponsor of the Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue, along with Indonesia, Australia and the Philippines. The Dialogue brings together representatives of the major faith and community groups of 15 countries in the South East Asian and South Pacific region. The purpose of the dialogue is to promote trust and understanding among faith communities.

The sixth meeting was hosted by Indonesia and held in Semarang, Indonesia in March 2012, with the theme of 'Strengthening Collaborative Communities to Promote Regional Peace and Security.' The Semarang Dialogue had a practical focus, and faith delegates drafted an action plan which they undertook to implement in their home countries.

Youth Exchanges (Ministry of Youth Development)

The Ministry of Youth Development focuses its resources on providing youth development opportunities that promote active youth citizenship such as the Ship for World Youth Exchange Programme.¹² Young people (aged between 18-30 years) apply for placement on the exchange programme, which aims to broaden the perspectives of participants. Youth from Japan and around the world live on board the *Nippon Maru* for four weeks, where they study and discuss common issues from a global perspective and participate in other various activities that involve multi-cultural and multi-national exchange opportunities. In 2013, the Ministry of Youth Development will host a reciprocal visit from a Japanese delegation of young people studying Corporate Social Responsibility and the Environment.

Regional inter-cultural educational resources (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has developed a regional intercultural education resource called 'Know Your Neighbours'. The resource contains teaching and learning materials that help students to appreciate the commonalities and points of difference between their own and other cultures and faiths across Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. The resource is intended for use with young people (aged 13 to 18 years).

¹² This programme is funded by the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan.

Cross-cultural educational initiatives (Ministry of Education)

The Ministry of Education supports selected regional or bilateral cross-cultural educational initiatives in the region.

The Ministry of Education also supports regional or bilateral discussions that focus on the inclusion of cross-cultural material, civic knowledge and human rights issues within national education curricula, to support inclusive education systems that are well grounded in principles of good citizenship.

Scholarships (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade with national governments in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Pacific)

Scholarships are awarded in fields agreed with partner governments, where possible. For example, 'Leadership and Governance' are key scholarship priority sectors for Micronesia, so scholarships may be undertaken in fields that promote social science research, demography, social policy, indigenous studies, anthropology and strategic studies.

Academic exchange (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - led and funded by tertiary institutions)

The programme supports institutional linkages and academic exchanges in the region, including interfaith focused activities and religious studies scholars.

Annual graduate media scholarship (Asia New Zealand Foundation)

The Asia New Zealand Foundation offers several media scholarships to young New Zealand journalists to intern media outlets in Southeast Asia for 4-5 weeks (including Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines). The aim of these scholarships is to enhance New Zealand media knowledge of Southeast Asia, particularly in relation to security issues.

Regional Media Initiatives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

New Zealand has provided support to media-related non-government organisations in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, with a view to promoting more objective media reporting on ethnic and religious conflicts, and better relationships between media and civil society.

Appendix: Links to additional information

www.unaoc.org – the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations – for all Alliance documents, the original AoC Report, and the AoC Secretariat's Implementation Plans.

www.mfat.govt.nz – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade – for New Zealand's first National Plan of Action, and further information on New Zealand's role in the Alliance of Civilisations, the Asia-Pacific, and activities lead by the Ministry.

www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz – the Office of Ethnic Affairs – for further information on the Building Bridges programme, the Intercultural Awareness and Communication programme, media literacy activities, and New Zealand's ethnic communities.

www.msd.govt.nz – the Ministry of Social Development – for further information on youth activities (Ministry of Youth Development), and the Settling In programme with migrants and refugees.

www.mbie.govt.nz – the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment – for further information on the New Zealand Settlement Strategy, New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy, and other initiatives for migrants and refugees.

www.minedu.govt.nz – the Ministry of Education – for further information on the New Zealand curriculum and education system, and resources for educators.

www.hrc.co.nz/diversity – the Human Rights Commission – for further information about the New Zealand Diversity Action Plan.