

Second

ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS FORUM

6-7 April 2009 – Istanbul, Turkey



Published by:
Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat
866 UN Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10017
USA
www.unaoc.org

Design and Layout:
Hedie Joulaee

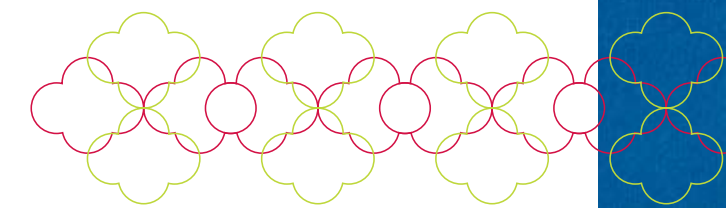
Photos:
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Printed in the United States by AGS Custom Graphics

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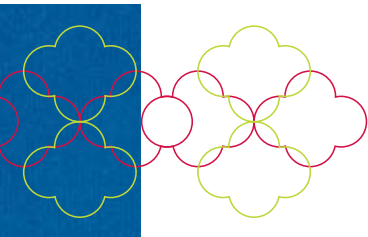
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FOREWORD

The Second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, generously hosted by the Turkish Government in the magnificent city of Istanbul, was a success for many different reasons. Two points deserve particular mention:

Firstly, this year we asked our closest partners – particularly international organizations which form part of our Group of Friends community and civil society groups – to assume joint ownership of the Forum. We invited them to co-organize working sessions, to engage with us in joint projects to be presented at the Forum, and to make common commitments. We wanted them to have a strong stake in the Forum and I am happy to say that we succeeded, thanks to our common efforts!

Moreover, the second Forum successfully reflected what we have achieved during the journey from Madrid to Istanbul: the tasks carried out to implement our 2007-2009 Action Plan and the progress made in achieving the Madrid outcomes.

The Istanbul Forum met four main objectives:

- Providing a platform for an open, inclusive and global dialogue among a wide range of players involved in promoting good governance of cultural diversity and intercultural understanding and cooperation. These players include political leaders, heads of international and multilateral bodies, religious leaders, as well as representatives of the corporate sector, the media, youth and civil society.
- Showcasing the Alliance as a platform for dialogue that delivers.
- Presenting the Alliance as a global matchmaker by connecting innovative, groundbreaking grassroots initiatives with policy makers and potential funders who can help scale up these projects and give them global prominence.
- Highlighting the political leverage of the Alliance, by showcasing the strong commitment of its members to turn its political objectives into "glocal" deliverables.

In addition to generating new ideas and areas of action, the 2009 Alliance Forum saw the launch of a number of key projects and strategic partnerships. The reader will find in the following pages greater information on the contents of the discussions, on the current status of the commitments made a year ago in Madrid and on new initiatives presented and launched for the first time in Istanbul.

Regarding the way forward, Istanbul has already provided a number of clear indications of the priorities that will guide our work in the run-up to the Rio Forum of the Alliance in 2010. Let me highlight five of them:

- Enlarging the global scope of the Alliance and streamlining and consolidating National Plans and Regional Strategies for intercultural dialogue.
- Making education and youth top priority areas of action for the Alliance.
- Strengthening the role played by civil society and the private sector in addressing cultural diversity issues and developing closer cooperation at all levels.
- Developing joint projects at local, regional and international level, especially through city diplomacy initiatives aimed at promoting better intercultural understanding and preventing mounting tensions and the rise of extremism.
- Reinforcing the voice of the Alliance within the international community, and making it a reliable, fully operational soft-power tool for a global partnership for peace.

In Istanbul many participants expressed concern that the severe economic and financial crisis that has stricken the world may carry with it risks of increased hostility towards the "other", often perceived as the cause of all evils or at least as an obstacle to solutions. Moreover, others insist that the persistence of conflicts of a political nature puts strong limitations to the Alliance's outreach.

We must have realistic expectations about the Alliance and work to turn its goals into achieve-

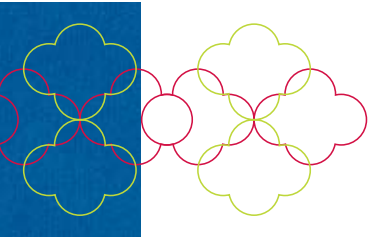


ments. The Alliance is there to help prevent divides, to promote good governance of cultural diversity and build more inclusive societies - societies based on equality, dignity and respect for human rights, within a more balanced world.

There are signs around us that dialogue, together with a multilateral and multi-stakeholder approach, may get a welcome boost. I have been impressed by the intensity of the many action-oriented discussions that developed during the two days of the Forum in various formats and from different perspectives. I believe that the Alliance has the power to mobilize high level, high profile commitments in support of innovative cross-cultural projects and dialogue that generate greater intercultural understanding. I believe that the Alliance is in a key position to galvanize support by governments (particularly GoF members) as well as by the corporate sector, international organizations and civil society, with a view to developing a number of joint initiatives. I also believe that the Alliance of Civilizations is a unique example of the way in which the United Nations can adapt to emerging challenges.

To help feed future reflections on the way forward, I prepared and presented to the Forum a collection of texts containing my ideas and insights about the challenge of managing cultural diversity in a world of increasingly diverse societies. It sheds light on some of the key issues related to the Alliance of Civilizations' mandate, including the role of religion in supporting intercultural dialogue and reconciliation, the challenge of integrating minorities, the need to promote democracy, pluralism and inclusive societies, as well as the central role of human rights in fostering respect for cultural diversity. I called it "The Road from Madrid to Istanbul and Beyond". Let us move forward, because emergencies will not wait. And let's keep united and firm in our conviction that we can change the world.

Jorge Sampaio
UN High Representative for the
Alliance of Civilizations



INTRODUCTION

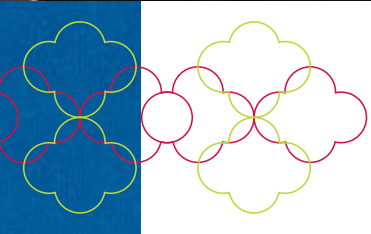
The Second Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations mobilized a wide range of committed partners, including governments, international organizations, media, civil society, youth and religious leaders. From 6-7 April 2009, nearly 2,000 participants – among them several Heads of Government, over 50 ministers, as well as policy-makers, foundations, media and grassroots leaders from around the world – convened at the Cirağan Palace Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey, to forge new partnerships, generate ideas aimed at building trust and cooperation among diverse communities and advance the Alliance of Civilizations' goals. The Forum also served as an opportunity to take stock of initiatives developed by the Alliance, to showcase practical projects in collaboration with civil society and corporate partners and to launch new programs.

The Alliance of Civilizations promotes “a dialogue that delivers”, a dialogue supported and prolonged by concrete action, with an impact on citizens' lives. It is therefore only natural that the report should start with a review of the practical outcomes of the Forum: progress made in the

implementation of existing projects, launching of new programs, conclusion of new partnership agreements, fresh developments in national and regional initiatives designed to achieve the collective goals. The report then focuses on the deliberations of the Group of Friends, which supports the Alliance, looking at the main themes of interest for ministers and heads of international organizations and the way focal points in national administrations and partner institutions organize their work. It further introduces the major innovation of the Istanbul Forum - the Marketplace of Ideas - and presents at some length how the youth have been uniquely involved in that major event.

Against that background of achievements, institutional developments and innovative practices, the report then sheds light on the many lively debates, which took place from dawn to dusk, from exchanges between top political leaders to multifaceted working sessions involving representatives of all stakeholders in the Alliance's process. It offers a summary of the main points at issue and conclusions as well as a selection of quotes.





OUTCOMES OF THE FORUM

Existing Projects: Progress and Future Directions

The Forum provided participants with an insider's look into the work of the Alliance of Civilizations, with progress reports on its main activities and achievements since the Madrid Forum, held in January 2008. The feedback and input received in Istanbul will help shape these initiatives, ensuring that they continue to respond to needs on the ground. The Alliance has also benefited from the insights of partners who can help increase the reach and impact of Alliance projects. Existing initiatives presented and discussed at the Forum include:

Rapid Response Media Mechanism

The Alliance of Civilizations' Rapid Response Media Mechanism (RRMM) was launched at the first Forum of the Alliance in Madrid, in January 2008. At the core of RRMM is an online resource of experts for journalists covering stories about cultural, religious and political tensions between communities, and across borders. This resource, called Global Expert Finder (www.globalexpertfinder.org) connects media professionals with leading analysts and commentators on intercultural crises and their likely long-term impact. Since the launch, the resource has grown to over 100 experts. On average, between 2-3 email alerts are sent every month to a constantly growing list of media contacts (currently over 7,000) to alert journalists about intercultural-related issues they might want to cover and offering names of GEF experts prepared to comment on these issues.

Currently, each email alert generates an average of 7 direct inquiries.

The RRMM project concluded a number of partnerships in Istanbul with key organizations including the Anna Lindh Foundation, the European Commission, Search for Common Ground, Gallup, and the International Center for Journalists. An announcement to collaboratively launch a Rapid Response Media Mechanism for the Euro-Mediterranean region with the European Commission and the Anna Lindh Foundation was made and integrated into the wider initiative named "Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges", jointly put forward in the aftermath of the Gaza crisis by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance (*see below*).

Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund

The Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund expands the production of entertainment media, television, and new media content that challenges common stereotypes and exposes audiences to more balanced representations of regions and cultures that are often ignored or negatively portrayed in mass media. In Istanbul, the Media Fund unveiled a three-part strategy, which includes: a. conducting research to increase understanding of the impact of media on attitudes and behavior through a research project at Harvard University, MIT, and the New School University; b. raising awareness of the research findings through a global media-industry-targeted campaign to garner additional support of media industry leaders for the Media Fund; and c. producing and distributing content

in film, television, and new media to promote greater cross-cultural understanding.

Media Literacy Education Clearinghouse

The Media Literacy Education (MLE) Clearinghouse is a comprehensive database of organizations, resources, best practices and events that are relevant to MLE, Media Education Policy and Youth Media. Media literacy education and media education policy are critical in combating cultural stereotypes, as well as developing critical thinking skills to evaluate media messages and source credibility. The site (www.aocmedialiteracy.org) is developed with the collaboration of a growing network of 33 partner organizations and it has become an internationally known MLE portal with currently over 24,000 unique visitors per month.

Youth Solidarity Fund

The Youth Solidarity Fund provides seed funding to outstanding youth-led initiatives that promote long-term constructive relationships between young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The UNAOC launched the pilot phase of the Youth Fund in early 2008 with an initial budget of \$100,000. During the application period, over 110 proposals came from a total of 55 countries from all continents. The review and evaluation of these proposals was conducted by a Youth Selection Committee which was composed of 7 youth representatives nominated by key regional youth platforms the AoC partners with. Six projects were identified as winners and received grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

From July 2008 to April 2009, youth organizations implemented their winning projects. They reported on the results of their projects during a Breakfast Session at the Annual Forum in Istanbul. Following analysis of the lessons learned and results of the pilot phase of the Youth Solidarity Fund, the UNAOC will launch a new edition of the program in mid-2009.

Silatech

Silatech, an initiative of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, is aimed at addressing the critical and growing need to generate jobs and economic opportunities for young people. The initiative promotes large-scale job creation, entrepreneurship, and access to capital and markets for young people, initially in the Arab world, where the highest rate of youth unemployment exists globally. In Istanbul, details of Silatech's progress since becoming fully operational were announced, including the alliances that it has established with global, regional and international partners to promote job creation, enterprise development, and job placement.

International Network of Foundations

Since the announcement of the creation of an International Network of Foundations, in Madrid, work has been carried out to identify four areas of common interest: intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, education and translation, arts and media, and the engagement of religious leaders in peace building efforts. During the Istanbul Forum, a special session of the network of foundations



outlined its priority activities moving forward: knowledge exchange, information sharing and dissemination in the four focus areas; operational support with a view to developing tools that help identify projects and partners and build capacity; identification of collaborative opportunities; and advocacy and contributing to public policy.

Doing Business in a Multicultural World: Challenges and Opportunities

A commitment was made at the Madrid Forum to produce a publication aimed at raising the visibility of best practices in the corporate sector toward supporting cross-cultural relations. The report was subsequently completed and launched at the Istanbul Forum. Developed jointly with the UN Global Compact, the report, entitled 'Doing Business in a Multicultural World: Challenges and Opportunities', explores cross-cultural challenges companies are facing, highlights good practices and lessons learned and illustrates why and how business can play a vital role in fostering intercultural understanding.

New Projects

Education about Religions and Beliefs

Launched in Istanbul, the Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) Clearinghouse collects and organizes resources for learning about the world's diverse religions and beliefs as well as ethics education, tolerance education, and civic

education. The clearinghouse features resources on these subjects including learning and teaching materials, links to relevant organizations, a journal, events listings, a forum and news that could be useful to teachers, policy-makers and researchers.

Alliance Fellowship Program

Announced at the Istanbul Forum, the Alliance Fellowship program facilitates mutual, substantive, and meaningful exposure for emerging leaders from North America, Europe, and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society, and religion in each other's countries. It provides a unique opportunity for emerging leaders to learn about other societies, institutions, beliefs and people. It also aims to create an informal network of emerging and influential leaders who will bring fresh perspectives to relations between different countries and regions and who will advocate for new approaches to promoting intercultural understanding. This project is being organized in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, ISESCO and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Dialogue Café

In collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations, CISCO launched Dialogue Café at the Istanbul Forum. The project is based on a bold but simple idea: ordinary people have more in common than not and given the opportunity will



explore their common interests even across radical geo-political divides. Dialogue Café links diverse groups of citizens from around the world through third generation video-conferencing technology, thereby creating a new space for social innovation and exponentially expanding our ability to solve problems and innovate as a global community. Dialogue Café's development is being supported by an international multi-sector consortium of partners, enabled by cutting-edge technology, and most importantly is driven by ordinary people. The Café proof of concept started with preparations for pilot cafés in New York, London, Istanbul and the Middle East.

PLURAL +

In Istanbul, the Alliance, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched PLURAL +, a youth-produced video festival on migration, inclusiveness, identity and diversity. PLURAL + will invite young people from across the world to participate by sending videos expressing their opinions and visions relevant to these themes. PLURAL + is being developed with the support of a number of organizations, among them the BaKaFORUM, Chinv India, the Anna Lindh Foundation, COPEAM and UNESCO. A selection committee composed of youth and experts from the media, migration and development sectors will identify the finalists and winners for each of the award categories and age groups.

Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges

This cluster of projects was jointly developed by the Alliance and partner organizations in the wake of the Gaza crisis. This initiative followed a meeting co-organized by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilizations in February 2009, aimed at assessing the impact of the crisis in Gaza on relations among and within societies in the Euro-Mediterranean region. A series of joint actions were agreed upon in order to help restore trust in Euro-Mediterranean dialogue and rebuild human and cultural bridges among societies in the region. In addition to the creation of a Regional Strategy, involving a number of preparatory actions, proposed by partners, this initiative will provide a cluster of projects, including a rapid response media mechanism aimed at responding to intercultural crises in the Euro-Mediterranean region (UNAOC, Anna Lindh Foundation and the European Commission); a number of civil society projects promoting reconciliation supported by the Anna Lindh Foundation; a cycle of international seminars on the dialogue among civilizations of the Mediterranean presented by the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED); a workshop on conflict transformation for intercultural dialogue and overcoming hatred, as well as a Peace camp (Council of Europe); a Seminar on Jerusalem as a city of coexistence between monotheistic religions with participants coming from both shores of the Mediterranean (OIC); a training activity in capac-

ity building addressed to Palestinian civil society institutions working in the fields of youth and culture (OIC); and an Intercultural Vade Mecum (UNESCO).

Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programs and Challenges

The Alliance of Civilizations launched a unique publication to help create a generation of informed media consumers capable of navigating their way in the complex and often polarized world of news and current affairs. Developed in partnership with UNESCO, Grupo Comunicar and the European Commission, 'Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programs and Challenges' offers the insights of eighteen international experts who, through their in-depth analysis, advise on media literacy policies and provide citizens with the tools they need to make sense of the sometimes overwhelming flow of daily news and information. "The purpose of this collection is to map some of the most relevant practices that exist at regional level and to highlight the underlying educational and media cultures that support them", writes Divina Frau-Meigs, co-editor of the book.

Alliance of Civilizations Research Network

This network brings together a group of institutions from around the world that will serve as a collective think-tank for the Alliance and will drive a movement to encourage cross-cultural educational exchange. Institutions that are part of this network share an interest in the four key areas of work of the Alliance (education, media, migration, and youth), as well as in other topics such as cross-cultural understanding, good governance of cultural diversity, conflict resolution, and city diplomacy. The Research Network will also provide a base of experts to form "communities of knowledge" in different areas of interest to the Alliance.

Partnership Agreements

At Istanbul, the Alliance signed agreements with seven international organizations, with a view to leverage networks and the comparative advantage of its partners. Agreements were signed with:

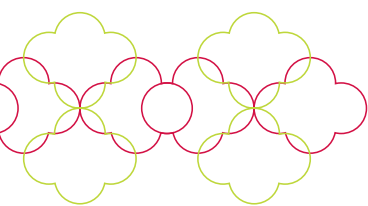
the International Organization of Migration, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Ibero-American General Secretariat, the Anna Lindh Foundation, l'Organisation de la Francophonie, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and the Union Latine.

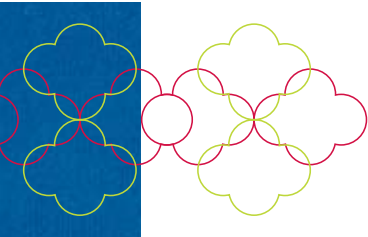
National Plans and Regional Strategies

The Alliance of Civilizations is supported by a growing community of over 100 countries and international organizations known as the Group of Friends. Since the first Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, this network has expanded by 20%, enriching the work of the Alliance by providing ideas, insights and financial support. Members of the Group of Friends have also created their own National Plans to advance the goals of the Alliance. A range of practical initiatives aimed at creating trust and promoting mutual understanding across cultures have already been launched.

In Istanbul, National Plans to advance the objectives of the Alliance were announced by the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Qatar and Slovenia. Bulgaria, New Zealand, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom have already adopted National Plans. Other countries mentioned ongoing work aimed at preparing National Strategies.

Regional Strategies for East-European countries, the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Ibero-American countries were also announced. With regards to the East-European Strategy, an International Conference in Sarajevo due to take place in the second half of 2009 was also announced. Concerning the Euro-Mediterranean regional Strategy, a set of initiatives will be carried out in order to prepare its adoption at a meeting to be hosted by Egypt. Moreover, a forthcoming Regional Strategy for the Ibero-American countries has also been foreshadowed.





GROUP OF FRIENDS

The Forum featured two gatherings of the Group of Friends of the Alliance – a growing community of over 100 states and international organizations: the high-level debate of ministers and heads of international organizations; and a working session for the recently-created community of Focal Points of the Alliance, who met for the second time.

High-level Debate

This working session was designed to facilitate an informal debate between ministers on a number of issues affecting the future work of the Alliance and on practical ways to transform ideas into action. A frank exchange of views, based on participants' knowledge and experience, provided input for the work of the High Representative with a view to shaping the strategic outlook of the Alliance, enhancing the role it can play in defusing intercultural tensions and building momentum around common objectives.

The debate focused on the five following issues:

1. Addressing extremism and radicalization

Polls show that the vast majority of people support respect for religious and cultural diversity and reject extremism. But wherever and whenever communities believe they face persistent discrimination, exclusion, humiliation or marginalization based on ethnic, religious or other identity markers, they are likely to assert their identity more aggressively. Evidence shows that grievances, real or perceived, can lead to violence and radicalization.

Building on what is known about extremism and radicalization, the importance of improving intercultural relations should be more widely understood and supported by members of the Alliance. Efforts should focus on policy rather than simply on principles.

What are the key issues in the struggle against extremism? What is the best policy to win the "hearts and minds" of people? To what extent

are governments engaged in supporting the Alliance through their National Plans and regional strategies for intercultural dialogue? To what extent are they willing to engage in action in three main areas of intervention, i.e. the "3Cs" – currencies (beliefs, ideologies and narratives); communities (individuals and key groupings) and context (social hostility and discrimination)? How can the Alliance's National Plans and regional strategies for intercultural dialogue help?

2. Rethinking the role of education as a critical key for fostering respect and understanding

Fifty per cent of the world population today is under the age of 25 and in some countries the proportion is closer to three-quarters. Young people are the inheritors of a changing world, shaped by major economic, social, cultural and historical shifts.

In the long run, education will be one of the most effective tools in shaping shared narratives across potential divides. Education plays a critical role in promoting peaceful coexistence in today's multicultural societies. To achieve this goal, we need to strategically rethink education in its broadest sense - education for human rights; education for citizenship and respect for others; education for intercultural understanding and dialogue; education in media literacy; education about religions and beliefs; and education about world history. All these are indispensable strategies if we want to make the world a better and safer place to live together in mutual respect.

3. Fostering the role of civil society in building inclusive societies

Though civil society groups are very diverse and have a wide range of functions, they can play a critical role in generating a sense of belonging across communities. By empowering individuals as citizens, they contribute to creating a sense of group identity. Moreover, the pro-

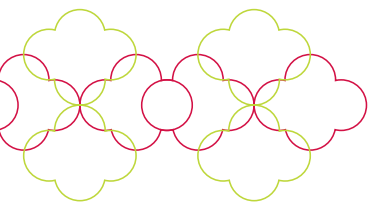


motion of greater involvement of citizens in public debates and in forging public policies, community-based, grassroots and non-governmental organizations can help shape common identities and strengthen social ties.

That is why fostering civil society's role in building equal and inclusive societies is of paramount importance. This role can be reinforced through the development of National Plans for Intercultural Dialogue and Regional Strategies that are based on a bottom-up approach that provides opportunities to civil society organizations to put forward concrete initiatives aimed at bridging intercultural divides.

4. Politics and religion: new paths for cooperation

Political radicalization of religion creates militant theologies. But disregarding the relationship between religion, politics and international affairs and casting religion as one of the primary problem in international relations weakens the positive role that religious communities can play in creating support for peace-building efforts.



Participants reflected on the following issues: What can be done to open new paths for a more inclusive dialogue that engages multiple levels of leadership particularly in conflict situations? What are the most effective ways of engaging in dialogue with leaders who have a significant political or religious following or who are in a position to influence opinion within their respective secular and religious communities? What mechanisms should be put into place to facilitate innovative regular exchanges between religious and secular political activists that can complement traditional “track one” diplomacy efforts?

5. Public diplomacy: winning the “hearts and minds”

The Gallup World Poll consistently confirms that beliefs and perceptions of the “other” are major factors affecting intercultural relations

and foreign policies. Over the last few years, the war against global terrorism has been fought on three major fronts: military, economic and diplomatic. But it is not through military actions that the struggle for the “hearts and minds” can be won – therefore we need public diplomacy strategies that address the ideological dimensions of war: the war of ideas and the foreign policy decisions it generates.

We therefore need to move beyond common assumptions and stereotypes and form partnerships that transcend the “us” and “them” view of the world. What can be done to consolidate the role of the Alliance of Civilizations as a platform for bridging cultural divides and creating the framework for inclusive policies in international affairs?



Focal Points Meeting – April 8th 2009

Following introductory remarks by the High Representative, members of the High-level Group briefly shared their perspective on the Istanbul Forum. The Focal Points then held a long exchange of views on the various aspects of their challenging work, options for strengthening cooperation among themselves and synergies with the Alliance's Secretariat. Recent initiatives of the Secretariat were highlighted: a regular newsletter for Focal Points, weekly one-on-one teleconferences with Focal Points and the development of a template for National Strategies.

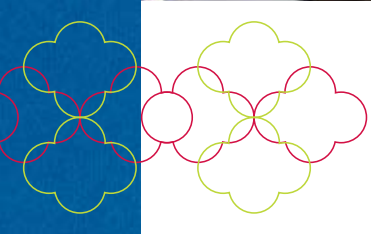
Participants welcomed the second Focal Points Meeting, suggesting that there should be at least two meetings each year in order to undertake substantive work and achieve real progress. A number of Focal Points described challenges in their work and discussed the centrality and limits of their role as Focal Points: providing overall coherence, managing information flows, relaying information, identifying the right interlocutors in complex administrative structures, and promoting exchange of good practice. There was a clear need to learn from others and to reflect jointly on the political dimension of intercultural work. Several participants presented the main features of recently adopted national strategies in their respective countries.

There was much reference to the twin challenges of widening and deepening the scope of the Alliance. As the Alliance kept expanding, some felt that Focal Points had a particular responsibility to ensure a deepening of the work of the organization. Opportunities for regional cooperation and the creation of affinity groups and cooperation platforms attracted particular attention and debate. Flexible forms of cooperation were indeed needed, in order to improve the overall efficiency of the Alliance.

Participants recognized the need to work at regional level and to create stronger links among regional institutions. They also felt that the impact of the Alliance at the local level can be enhanced by encouraging and supporting local initiatives and facilitating their development and replication. One major task of the Alliance is to connect innovative initiatives, actors, potential donors, policy makers, researchers, the private sector and the media in order to build synergies and complementarity among them and engage them to work across boundaries. In that respect, the Istanbul Forum has been very successful, fostering links and partnerships among a wide range of diverse actors.

The need for all members of the Group of Friends to share the financial burden to support the work of the Alliance was strongly emphasized.





MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

During the Marketplace of Ideas, some of the world's most exciting, innovative and lesser known civil society projects aimed at advancing intercultural understanding were showcased in front of a high-level audience.

The goal of the Marketplace was to present grassroots projects which are unique, but also have the potential to be scaled up and replicated in other diverse communities around the world. By bringing these projects to the attention of leaders from governments, international organizations, business, religion, civil society and academia, the Alliance sought to inspire new thinking about current challenges, and to connect some of the world's most dynamic civil society entrepreneurs with an audience of decision-makers who have the ability to give their work greater visibility and impact.

To that end, projects were selected for presentation which did not already possess firmly established links with the UN system, and had yet to be truly 'discovered' by the international community. Almost 100 applications were received, from which 18 projects were selected via a comprehensive review process.

The Marketplace of Ideas was presented by Ghida Fakhry, news presenter at Al Jazeera English since April 2006.



FEATURED PROJECTS AT THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

The 99
Teshkeel Media Group, International
A comic based on the 99 attributes of Allah; each of 99 comic book characters is based on one of the 99 attributes. The religion of the characters is not specified, and the positive value or attribute each character represents are inclusive and relevant to every society. (www.the99.org)

Ramadan Festival
Bridgizz, Europe
A series of cultural events during Ramadan that is organized in multiple cities around Europe. The festival is aimed at fostering social cohesion and building bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims. (www.ramadanfestival.org)

Be Seen Be Heard Be Known
Commonwealth Youth Programme, Caribbean
An initiative to highlight and feature positive stories of young people between the ages to 13 and 29 in national newspapers and magazines with the aim of changing national perceptions of young people in the Caribbean. (www.thecommonwealth.org/cypcaribbean)

Respect Magazine
No Ghetto, France, Africa and the Middle East
A magazine produced with young people from marginalized communities in France, Africa and the Middle East to promote diversity, point out stereotypes, create

a space for dialogue and build bridges across communities. (www.respectmag.fr)

Qantara
Qantara.de, International
An online portal that fosters greater understanding between Europe and the Middle East by showcasing arts, culture and current affairs. The word 'Qantara' means 'bridge' in Arabic. (www.qantara.de)

OneVoice
OneVoice Movement, Israel-Palestine
A project that develops, in partnership with negotiations experts, a methodology that addresses taboo areas where agreement between Israelis and Palestinians is most difficult – from refugees to Jerusalem – through an iterative polling process and a series of town hall meetings. (www.onevoicemovement.org)

Connecting Cultures
Connecting Cultures, International
A project that promotes face to face interaction between young people from the Western and Arab world via short wilderness journeys to celebrate cultural diversity, promote understanding, and help reduce the polarization of cultures. (www.connectingcultures.co.uk)

Social Mobilization for Change through Dialogue
Amahoro Youth Club, Burundi
A project which aims to connect youth from different groups in Burundi in a post-conflict environment to create a space for exchange and to enable communities to participate in peace building and sustain-

able development. (www.amahoroyouthclub.wordpress.com)

Tools 4 Trialogue
Three Faiths Forum, UK
A project that gives young British students an exciting and topical encounter with religious texts from within their own faith and then facilitates discussion with students from other faiths. (http://www.3ff.org.uk/prog_t4t.htm)

Soliya Connect Program
Soliya, International
A project that links students from universities around the world via a customized videoconferencing application, providing them with skills and experience to build more constructive relationships among different cultures. (www.soliya.net)

Intercultural Study Trips
Initiative for Intercultural Learning, International
A project that brings together students from a diverse group of countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Japan, Nepal, Thailand, European Union, Syria, Lebanon, USA, Israel and Palestine, Switzerland) and facilitates mutual exchanges between them. (www.ifil.ch)

IMC Weekend School
IMC Weekend School, Netherlands
A project that convenes volunteer professionals who teach their jobs to children aged 10-14 in under-resourced, largely immigrant neighborhoods, in order to foster connections with mainstream Dutch society. (www.imcweekendschool.nl)



Pakistan Madrasa Project

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, USA

A project aiming to reform curricula, improve infrastructure and offer teacher training at religious schools all over Pakistan to help strengthen education standards. (www.icrd.org)

Achieving Youth Potential!

Education for Employment Foundation, International

A project that seeks to increase the employability of young adults in the Middle East and North Africa by offering skills-building trainings that have been designed with specific input and consultation from employers in the region. (www.efefoundation.org)

Rafi.ki

Gemin.i, UK

A large, accessible and user-led online learning community where pupils and teachers from around the world work collaboratively to develop their understanding of global issues through communication and joint participation in educational projects. (www.rafi.ki)

The Intercultural Communication and Leadership School

International

A project that aims to bolster civic youth leadership for inclusive and informed governance of urban diversity – piloting on 5 continents and in the Middle East. (www.intercivilization.net)

Tomorrow's Youth Organization

Palestine

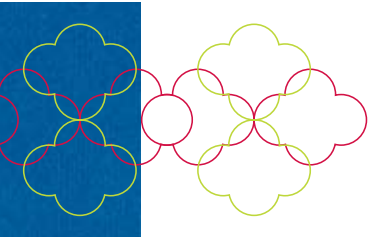
A project which offers community outreach programs in Palestine to empower children, youth and parents. (www.tomorrowsyouth.org)

Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture

Turkey

A project seeking to promote Istanbul's status as an open-air museum, and a city dedicated to peace, understanding and culture. (www.istanbul2010.org)

Following the Istanbul Forum, the Alliance of Civilizations is working on an ongoing basis to promote the work of the eighteen projects featured in the Marketplace of Ideas session, and to connect them with other potential civil society partners, foundations and policy-makers who might be able to provide them with support. The Alliance website (www.unaoc.org) features a comprehensive description of each of the Marketplace projects, as well as video interviews with the project presenters.



YOUTH AT THE ISTANBUL FORUM

Introduction

Mainstreaming the voice of youth into policies and initiatives aiming to foster understanding among people from different cultures and religions is a priority of the Alliance of Civilizations and its youth partners. In order to reach this objective in the context of the Istanbul Forum, the Alliance developed a two-pronged approach to youth participation: 1) a Youth Event held immediately before the Forum; and 2) the participation of youth in the various components of the Forum itself, including in a number of sessions dedicated to the challenges they face in promoting intercultural dialogue. The main outcomes of the Youth Event are described below while the contributions of youth to the Forum are mainstreamed in the other sections of this report.

Youth Event

Close to 100 youth from over 40 countries gathered in Istanbul for 2 days in preparation for the Alliance of Civilizations Forum. The Youth Event was designed to help young people prepare for their participation in the Forum while shaping key elements of the AoC Youth Programming. This event adopted a highly participatory approach offering young participants more familiarity with the Forum themes and the opportunity to develop strong links – and partnerships – with their counterparts. Results achieved by participants in the Youth Event included:

- Input into the **Alliance Youth Strategy** which was the object of an initial consultation with Alliance youth partner organizations. The Youth Strategy includes several Alliance-led initiatives organized around 3 mutually-reinforcing objectives: a) raising awareness; b) strengthening capacity; and c) sharing information. Youth participants reviewed the document and refined its content in order to ensure it clearly reflected their challenges and needs in relation to the areas of work of the Alliance.

- Building of a **Global Youth Movement** for the Alliance of Civilizations supporting the efforts of the Alliance and its youth partners. The objective of this initiative is to mobilize youth organizations and individuals in order to strengthen commitment to Alliance principles and highlight concrete actions or projects advancing cross-cultural understanding. This Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations will serve as a channel to highlight the impressive and concrete contributions of youth organizations to foster mutual understanding and respect both locally and globally. This movement will also provide the opportunity for individual youth to publicly make commitments to advance cross-cultural understanding in their daily lives. The establishment of this large movement will highlight and leverage thousands of local youth projects for the Alliance and a global movement of young citizens pledging to foster engagement in cross-cultural understanding. A unique aspect of this Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations will be the on-line sharing of results achieved through these projects and pledges.
- Development of the terms of reference for the **Youth Advisory Committee** to assist the Alliance in the implementation of its Youth Strategy and help coordinate the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations along with regional youth platforms. It was proposed that the Youth Advisory Committee will be composed of 10 young people from youth organizations.
- Drafting of concrete **recommendations** for all Forum participants. These concrete recommendations were delivered as part of the Forum Opening Ceremony and were mentioned and discussed by several high-level participants at the Forum, including during plenaries.



YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS ISTANBUL FORUM

Delivered during the Opening Ceremony, April 6, 2009

On behalf of the youth delegates who have participated during the last two days in the Youth Event organized as part of the Alliance of Civilizations Istanbul Forum, we are honored to share the following recommendations with all the Forum participants.

1. We are fully committed to capitalize on recent progress made in advancing youth participation for cross-cultural understanding and are calling on decision-makers to work closely with the UN Alliance of Civilizations in furthering this goal.
2. We launched the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations

which is composed of young people and youth organizations actively engaged in making the objectives of the Alliance a central part of their daily lives. As this Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations aims to highlight the innovative contribution of youth, young people call on all UN AoC partners to support it in any way they can.

3. We also developed a Youth Advisory Committee to assist the Alliance of Civilizations in the implementation of its Youth Strategy and the management of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations.

4. We are calling on governments to universally implement the right to education for all as a key to sustainable peace, focusing on developing nations and areas of greatest need, and acknowledge that peace education needs to address all levels of society.

5. We underscore the need for objective representation across multiple media platforms including web, film, television, and the video gaming industries.

6. In order to fully realize the objective of the Alliance of Civilizations, the dignity of every migrant must be respected through a human rights approach.

7. We are convinced that youth exchanges and people-to-people contacts are some of the most effective ways to fight stereotypes while putting the emphasis on the values of understanding, respect and dialogue.

We hope that our view and recommendations can help share your discussion and inspire creative and productive approaches to fostering intercultural understanding.



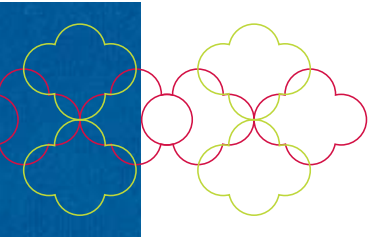
“The elements that unite us outnumber the elements that divide us. Harmony, mutual compassion and tolerance are innate to human nature. What we need to do is to activate this nature.”

*HE Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,
Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic*



“We need to develop a sense of dialogue which above all means knowing how to listen, to understand, to accept and to respect different points of view. It is also about knowing how to build room for constructive dissent. Constructive dissent means that we can disagree over certain issues, that disagreement need not trigger any rise in tensions and should not stop potential partners from working together.”

*HE President Jorge Sampaio,
High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations*



PLENARY SESSIONS

Opening Plenary

Welcoming remarks were delivered to Forum participants by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Government of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations President Jorge Sampaio.

Opening the Forum, Prime Minister Erdoğan spoke about Turkey's long history of diversity and culture of coexistence, which laid the basis for the country's enduring support of the Alliance of Civilizations. The Prime Minister called for a focus on addressing the underlying causes of extremism and the creation of an international culture of solidarity, and noted that the rapid expansion of the Alliance's Group of Friends over the last year offered the potential to do just that.

President Zapatero reaffirmed the message of Prime Minister Erdoğan, noting that the Second Forum of the Alliance represented a consolidation of the project, and the emergence of the Alliance as a serious convening place for advancing tolerance and respect. President Zapatero emphasized the potential of the Alliance to contribute towards the broader agenda of global security, through aiding the fight against poverty and social injustice, and supporting other international actors – including NATO – by helping to defuse tensions and build bridges

between different cultures. Citing several examples from the work of the Alliance, he highlighted the importance of building better relations between cultures and communities as a crucial component of the global peace-building agenda.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon focused his remarks on presenting the Alliance as a proactive mechanism within the United Nations that helps avert potential crises before they grow. Furthermore, he stressed that the global economic crisis may worsen growing cross-cultural divides, thereby increasing the relevance of the Alliance's work. Finally, he inspired the delegates in attendance to act urgently on such issues in their own countries by listing some of the outcomes of the Forum.

The High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, President Jorge Sampaio, also emphasized the urgency of the Alliance's mission, with the economic crisis and other global challenges already threatening to undermine international security and societal stability. He noted the unique role of the Alliance within the UN system, working with a broad range of partners, including the grassroots, corporations, young people, journalists, foundations, and governments. He noted that the Alliance works at multiple levels in societies around the world to develop and implement new ideas, new thinking and innovative action. In closing, he expressed the aspiration that the Alliance continues to work as a platform for dialogue – that delivers.

“The Alliance of Civilizations is fast becoming the common space for tolerance and respect... it is an organization that is founded upon the best values that inspired the establishment of the United Nations: the ideal of peace, the highest ideal human beings can aspire to.”

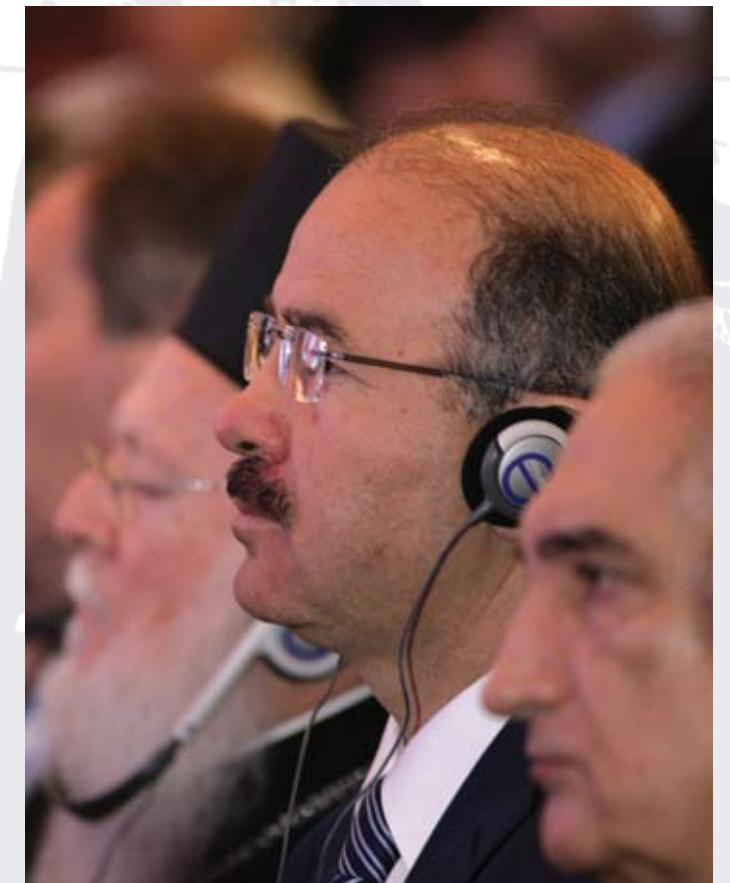
*HE José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero,
President of the Government of Spain*

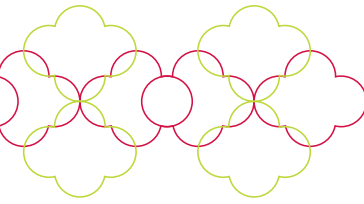




“All too often, the United Nations must deal with fires after they break out. Through the Alliance of Civilizations, we can stamp out the sparks before they catch.”

*HE Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General of the United Nations*





Plenary I. Shaping the Global Agenda in Times of Crisis – Why Does Good Governance of Cultural Diversity Matter?

Moderated by Mr. Riz Khan of Al Jazeera English, the first Plenary sought to address why good governance of cultural diversity matters. This question is particularly relevant in the context of a changing world, where technology has allowed for unprecedented levels of connectivity between peoples while disparities in opportunity have created unique migration flows between regions. The session brought together a number of heads of state, international organizations, and prominent opinion leaders.

The President of Finland, HE Mrs. Tarja Halonen, opened the session by discussing the challenges of enabling balance in society that encourages everyone to respect the cultures and backgrounds of others, but also gives them the opportunity to be proud of their own culture. In her view, this is an ongoing challenge in Finland,

as a country that is becoming increasingly diverse through the entry of new immigrants.

This latter point was emphasized by the Bulgarian President, HE Mr. Giorgi Parvonov who, in his remarks, also suggested Bulgaria as a model of dialogue for the Balkans. In Bulgaria, Mr. Parvonov explained, members of different ethnicities and faiths have had a long history of peaceful co-existence.

The President of Slovenia, HE Mr. Danilo Türk, focused on the need to discuss issues of cultural diversity among youth, a group which constitutes nearly fifty percent of the world's population. Moreover, he noted that there is a correlation between people who engage in intercultural dialogue and participate in various interfaith fora

and the level of education. For dialogue to be effective then, it must be made more inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Beyond the above, religion also requires special attention according to the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, HE Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. He stated that, while there had been a very successful historical reconciliation between Christianity and Judaism, a historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity was now needed.

HE Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary-General of NATO and former Prime Minister of Denmark, spoke on the delicate balance between respect for religions and freedom of expression. Mr. Rasmussen announced that during his tenure at NATO he would pay special attention to the cultural and religious sensibilities of others, and

make it a priority to intensify cooperation with Muslim-majority countries.

HE Mr. Mohammad Khatami, former President of Iran, added that human history is not mainly characterized by conflict between different cultures and religions, but rather, by their confluence and open exchange. He emphasized the commonality between the major faiths of the world, and in particular the Abrahamic faiths. Significantly, he also pointed to the need to address political, economic, and social injustices in different parts of the world. According to Mr. Khatami, these injustices have less to do with civilizations and cultures than with the diverging interests of different parties over resources.

Mr. Enrique Iglesias, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB), stressed the need to look at the likely effects the current



“We are not isolated from the world. Everybody should learn more about other cultures – respecting them while at the same time being proud of his or her own culture.”

HE Mrs. Tarja Halonen



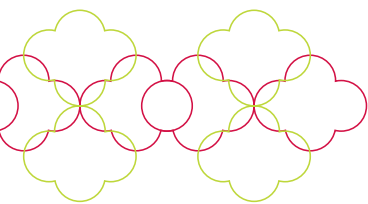
“Bulgaria is a model of dialogue for the Balkans. In Bulgaria, members of different ethnicities and faiths have had a long history of peaceful co-existence.”

HE Mr. Giorgi Parvonov



“Young people constitute an enormous potential. At the beginning of this conference, we heard an impressive message from the Youth Forum. It made a short list of priorities: Education, Dialogue and Respect for the dignity of migrants and minorities. If young people are capable of articulating an agenda with such clarity and focus, I think they are offering something very promising.”

HE Mr. Danilo Türç



economic crisis will have on relations between cultures. More specifically, rising unemployment, declining incomes, and increased migration will lead to new social tensions. However, according to him, this challenging situation also brings opportunities. As the financial architecture of the world is changed to address the crisis, there is an extraordinary possibility to redress the economic inequities that have defined much of our history.

Asked whether globalization is likely to increase tensions between cultures, the panelists acknowledged the difficulties that are inherent with greater interdependence. At the same time, they asserted that greater connectivity also allows for greater interaction between people and more opportunities for dialogue. Moreover, it underscores the need for better global governance as well as a movement toward injecting values that cater to the welfare of all people in economic policy making.

“Dialogue has not yielded what we expected from it... we need a historical reconciliation between Islam and Christianity... this will be a paradigm shift.”

HE Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu





“Prejudices have to be confronted...that is why freedom of expression is the pre-condition for a frank and open dialogue... [but] we are all responsible for administering freedom of expression in such a manner that we do not incite hatred or cause fragmentation of our community...”

HE Anders Fogh Rasmussen





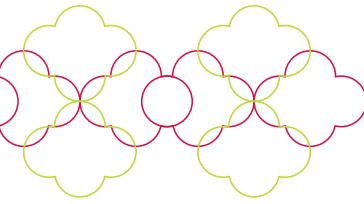
“Human history is not mainly characterized by conflict between different cultures and religions, but rather, by their confluence and open exchange. There are strong commonalities, for example, between the major faiths of the world, and in particular the Abrahamic faiths.”

HE Mr. Mohammad Khatami



“We are confronting the most serious economic crisis since the 1930s. I see tensions that need to be overcome. But I also see tremendous opportunities: the opportunity to introduce in the new society that will emerge, not only a new paradigm of economic development, but also a set of basic principles – dialogue, understanding and tolerance – which are embodied in the Alliance of Civilizations.”

Mr. Enrique Iglesias



**Plenary II. Enhancing Dialogue and Strengthening Cooperation:
Connecting Innovative Policies and Initiatives**

Moderated by Mr. Roger Cohen, columnist for the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune, this Plenary focused on conflicts that divide people and communities across cultural and religious fault-lines and on practical ways to overcome them. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Cohen highlighted the fact that, in a world where the frontiers of nations are increasingly permeable, politics remained nationally rooted, even while issues confronting the world are global. The challenge, therefore, is to find ways of achieving integration while respecting cultural identities. In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for instance, confronting enduring stereotypes through education and youth initiatives is an important issue for all concerned.

HE Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, remarked that, while stereotypes are, indeed, rife, the real issue is a political one. It is the reality on the ground, rather than perceptions of the other, that shape relations between communities. The theory of a “Clash of Civilizations”, which has been used and exploited by neo-conservative politicians, only applies to the fringes of society. Opinions shared by the mainstream, in diverse communities, do not justify this theory. But as long as a fair solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict has not been found, tensions across cultures and civilizations will remain.

For HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal, perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the US revealed interesting trends. As Saudi Ambassador to the US from 2005-

07, he witnessed determined efforts to denigrate and attack Islam, within certain political circles. However, Prince Turki was struck by the attitude of American citizens as a whole: he found them to be keen to learn more about Islam and to discover its traditions. This interest indicates that one of the major problems facing diverse communities in the world today is ignorance of each other.

For HH Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, Chair of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, the three pillars of intercultural dialogue are youth, education and media. Although education is a basic right, there are still 150 million children worldwide who are out of school, a third of them living in conflict situations. This is all the more tragic that young people have the potential to be active global citizens and to be agents of positive change in their communities. As for media, Sheikha Mozah believed that it is necessary to equip

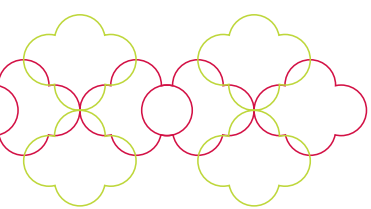
people with the tools they need to interpret media messages, particularly when they are of an inflammatory nature. That is why Qatar is developing a media literacy curriculum that will help young people become critical media consumers.

HE Mr. Jan Figel, Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, agreed that young people needed to be given opportunities, not only because they are the builders of a better future, but also because they have to play a role in shaping the present. The European Union fosters cooperation and exchange of best practices to help empower young people. In the EU, efforts are made to promote education as a key to cultural integration. The aim is not to assimilate or to impose a “one-size-fits-all” model, but to preserve a mosaic of cultures while promoting intercultural knowledge.



“I believe in dialogue among civilizations. The theory of a 'clash of civilizations' is correct only on the fringes of society. We must not let the mainstream be overtaken and exploited by this ideology... I hope that we are now moving from an era of confrontation to an era of understanding and respect.”

HE Mr. Amre Moussa



“It is important not only to develop policies *for* youth, but also *with* youth.”

HE Mr. Jan Figel



According to HE Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, the real issue, beyond integration or assimilation, is to create the conditions for constructive dialogue. It is crucial to note, however, that dialogue can only be meaningful if it entails engaging with people who do not agree with us. Only such a dialogue can break down the walls of ignorance and pave the way towards a better understanding of other peoples' culture and history. We should also move away from the idea that dialogue is a duty – dialogue should be enjoyable. It should teach us that diversity is to be embraced, rather than feared.

HE Professor Mehmet Aydın, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey, underlined the fact that faith and secularism were also part of the debate on diversity. He pointed out that there are several ways in which religion and politics can be connected. For instance, justice can be understood both from a secular and a religious point of view. However, in a secular democratic society religious understanding of any public matter do not have a defining or determining power, though it ought to be respected by those who do not see a need for such an understanding. To reach this understanding, we must be prepared, in the public space we share, to learn about the other, about traditions and worldviews other than our own. Indeed, lack of reliable knowledge is the malaise of modern times. We must not only do more to learn about other cultures, it also is crucial that we exercise

self-criticism. Talking about the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations, Professor Aydın also underlined the importance for all members of that group to develop National Strategies as a tool to support the goal of the Alliance both nationally and regionally.

For his part, HE Mr. José María Figueres Olsen, former President of Costa Rica, emphasized the positive role played by the private sector in promoting intercultural understanding. Mentioning a recent report jointly produced by the Alliance of Civilizations and the Global Compact, Mr. Figueres stated that there were multiple ways in which the business sector could play a positive role. For instance, the Education for Employment Foundation helped create job opportunities for young people in North Africa and the Middle East.

Finally, HE Mr. Kasim Jomart Tokayev, Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan, noted that in the face of an increasingly diverse world, there was a tendency for nations to rally around their linguistic, cultural and spiritual traditions. But the world should resist forms of nationalism that lead to hostility towards the other. Mr. Tokayev highlighted the fact that, in Kazakhstan, the multicultural and multi-confessional dimensions of society were part of the country's historical destiny. An early supporter of the Alliance of Civilizations, Kazakhstan has been actively encouraging intercultural dialogue.

“Young people need to be equipped with the tools they need to be active global citizens.”

HH Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned





“One of the major problems we are facing is ignorance of each other. Civilization is like a tree that has its deepest roots in human history. Its branches, the diversity of cultures we know, are all connected to a common origin.”

HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal



“Economic measures only work if they are backed by a change of values. And values can change through a dialogue of civilizations.”

HE Mr. José María Figueres Olsen



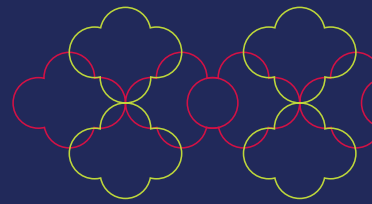
“Lack of reliable knowledge is the malaise of modern times.”

HE Professor Mehmet Aydın



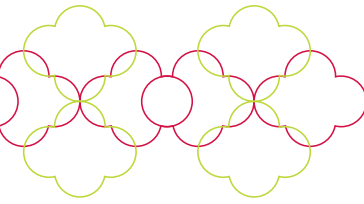
“In the face of an increasingly diverse world, no nation will give up its linguistic, cultural and spiritual traditions. But the world should resist forms of nationalism that lead to hostility towards the other.”

HE Mr. Kasim Jomart Tokayev



“Knowledge is the best antidote against fear.”

Mr. Terry Davis



Plenary III. Education for Dialogue: Building Peace in the Minds of People

A panel of speakers from various backgrounds engaged in discussions on the theme of creating sustainable peace and harmonious relationships among cultures through education. This plenary, moderated by the well-known historian and High Level Group member—which is the group of eminent personalities that gave the Alliance its founding vision—Karen Armstrong, opened with two films: one on Karen Armstrong’s *Charter of Compassion* and one on the Alliance of Civilizations. Both films set the stage for a vigorous discussion on the nature of dialogue, the role of factors both in and beyond traditional education systems, the role of perception and the linkages between knowledge and policy.

Welcoming the speakers and audience on behalf of the Turkish hosts, HE Education Minister Hüseyin Çelik emphasized the role of education in building up “peace in the minds” and said that this required attention to children, libraries, and curricula. Mr. Çelik cautioned that while we were facing new situations, the experiences of the past were important to remember and therefore history education was quite important. In this regard, he stated that both the positive and negative parts of history needed to be taught. Moreover, apart from particular histories, children needed to be taught the unity of humanity and learning to be “accustomed to each other.”

Marcio Barbosa, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO, reminded the audience of UNESCO’s historic commitment for dialogue among civilizations, cultures, and people. He expressed his pleasure at the creation of the Alliance of Civilizations as a way to bring valuable new players to the table. He gave many examples of UNESCO’s activities in the area of education to promote dialogue, such as the development of education material based on UNESCO’s General and Regional History Series; UNESCO’s role in the preservation of cultural heritage to illustrate different influences and interactions; and the Intercultural Vade-Mecum project which will foster ties between Muslim, European and Arab societies.

Mayor of Paris, HE Mr. Bertrand Delanoë, opened by highlighting the role of 21st century cities as places where people of different com-

munities got together and learned and discovered from each other. He pointed to the important role played by UCLG in the projects of the Alliance and hoped to continue contributing to, and exchanging good practices on solutions for inclusion, social development, and access to education. Mr. Delanoë emphasized that countries must provide access to education in a very broad sense. He said, “Education is... developing critical thinking, learning about freedom and, most of all, learning about respect of differences.” Mr. Delanoë also emphasized the revision of history textbooks to eliminate rivalries, as in the case of France and Germany and closed with his optimistic belief that through the Alliance of Civilizations humanity would build for the best.



“We are living in unprecedented times... we need to divest ourselves of our own certainties in a compassionate way and engage with others.”

Karen Armstrong



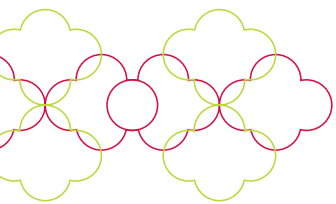
“Even though there are differences, we should all live in unity by protecting our personal characteristics.”

HE Mr. Hüseyin Çelik



“We need to educate our citizens to be open to other ways of thinking and being.”

Mr. Marcio Barbosa



Mr. Candido Mendes, HLG member and Secretary-General of the Academy of Latinite, spoke about the unique times that we are living in with the rise of new nations as important players, new leaders like President Obama, and the decline of the old ideas of center-periphery. Mendes decried the platitudes on education, peace, dialogue, and human rights and called for action beyond the statements. He remarked on the confusion between culture and civilizations, the perception of terrorists, and the universality of human rights and freedom.

HE Ms. Lisbet Rugtvedt, Norwegian State Secretary of Education, reminded the audience that prejudice is not innate, but rather something that is learned. In her estimation, education systems need to prepare students to show respect for different cultures and beliefs while maintaining confidence in their own identities. Human rights education was important in this regard, as was teacher training. In the case of the latter, Ms.

Rugtvedt mentioned the Wegerland Center which was just opened in Oslo as a meeting place and center of dissemination of knowledge and experiences among education authorities.

Prof. John Esposito, HLG member, agreed that education of the next generation was important but reminded the audience that this generation mattered too. Here he highlighted the current role of the Alliance in practical efforts, such as to media practitioners to change the perceptions of conflict and peace. Prof. Esposito mentioned that people needed to be educated about differences because they must recognize what their differences are and agree to disagree on some of them.

The post-plenary discussion raised questions on practical steps to educate policy makers and school children, the necessity to educate different regions of the world about each other, and ways of getting around traditional media in shaping perceptions.

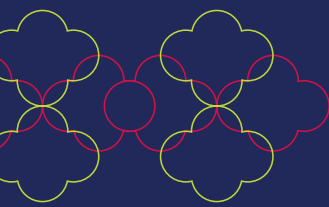
“This is a historical moment in which we must discuss education as a learning process for peacebuilding.”

Professor Candido Mendes



“Education is... developing critical thinking, learning about freedom and, most of all, learning about respect of differences.”

HE Mr. Bertrand Delanoë



“Nobody is born with prejudice. It is something we learn or don't learn.”

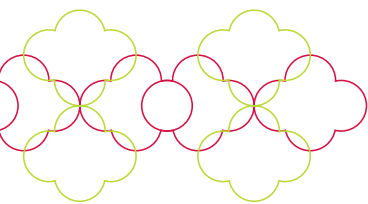
HE Mrs. Lisbet Rugtvedt



“Negotiation means: we have to first understand, we have to know our deep differences... we have to agree to disagree on some issues.”

Professor John Esposito





Closing Plenary

The Closing Plenary featured remarks by HE Mr. Ali Babacan, Foreign Minister of Turkey, HE Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Foreign Minister of Spain and HE President Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

For Minister Babacan, a consensus emerged from the discussions, that none of the problems the world faces today is insurmountable. Cultural differences were not, in themselves, sources of conflict. In his view, the international community was entirely capable of solving political problems, even long-lasting ones, provided that there was a strong political will to do so.

Minister Babacan underlined the importance of National Strategies for intercultural dialogue in increasing the reach of the Alliance of Civilizations and helping to stem the flow of extremism and radicalization. The Minister suggested that “national leaders and senior statesmen of international prominence could do more to promote cohesion and constructive engagement. This would make it easier for us to reach out to those sections of our societies which are skeptical about coexistence across cultural lines.”

Finally, the Minister recalled that Forum discussions also focused on the global dimension of the Alliance and on the perceived need to move beyond the issue of the Muslim-West divide while retaining this dimension high on the agenda.

Minister Moratinos was encouraged by the continued expansion of the Group of Friends. He noted that the Alliance started as an idea, developed as a project and became a significant movement whose mandate was to promote peace, tolerance

and dialogue. He also underscored the broadening of the scope of the Alliance beyond the so-called “Muslim-West divide” and its focus on intercultural issues in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Minister Moratinos highlighted the importance of the Alliance as the “cultural pillar” of the United Nations’ political action, adding that the political agenda around cultural interrelations needed to be included in the UN reform process.

Finally, President Sampaio sketched his vision of the achievements of the Alliance and of the tasks ahead in the run-up to the Rio Forum. He recalled the main objectives of the Istanbul Forum: providing a global platform for open and inclusive dialogue; presenting the Alliance as a network of partners focused on dialogue that delivers; enhancing the role of the Alliance as a global matchmaker, connecting innovative grassroots initiatives with policy makers and potential funders; and highlighting the political leverage of the Alliance by showcasing the strong commitment of Group of Friends members.

President Sampaio then outlined the key outcomes of the Istanbul Forum. In particular, he highlighted the announcement of National Plans and regional strategies for intercultural dialogue and the establishment of new partnership agreements with international and multilateral organizations.

The High Representative underscored some of the key priorities of the Alliance in the months ahead and, looking forward to the Rio Forum, he highlighted the power of the Alliance to mobilize high-level commitments in support of cross-cultural projects and to galvanize support from governments (particularly members of the Group of Friends).

“We have reason to be confident about the future of intercultural relations in the 21st century. None of our problems is insoluble. All of our difficulties are of a political, socio-economic character, rather than civilizational.”

HE Mr. Ali Babacan



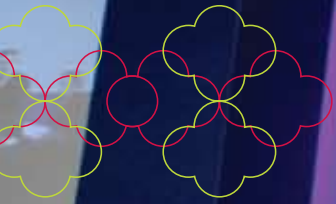
“As we are building the United Nations of the 21st century, we need a cultural pillar in the UN system. The Alliance is that cultural pillar – a pillar for understanding and dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions.”

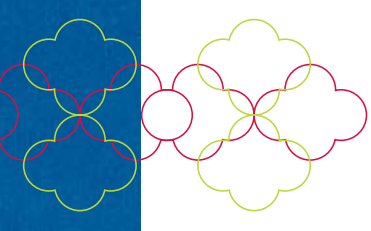
HE Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos



“The Alliance is here to help – preventing divides, promoting good governance of cultural diversity, and building more inclusive societies. It is here to help build better societies, based on equality, dignity and respect for human rights.”

HE President Jorge Sampaio





WORKING SESSIONS

Working Session 1. Learning About and Across Differences

Organized by the Education about Religions and Beliefs Network, ISESCO and the Network of European Foundations

This session convened religious leaders, specialists of religious education, international organizations, and representatives of NGOs active in the field of learning about and across differences. Nine representatives from among the aforementioned groups spoke during this panel. The session was moderated by Dr. Ahmed Said Ould Bah (ISESCO) and Luce Pépin, Network of European Foundations (NEF).

Among the major causes of tension and misunderstanding between cultures is the misrepresentation and stereotyping of religions. Education has a major role to play to counter this phenomenon. Learning about and across differences requires not only high quality teaching, but also good curricular content and effective teacher training. Such learning should give pupils and adults the necessary knowledge, skills and perspectives to enable them to learn and benefit from their multicultural environment.

Schools and teachers must have at their disposal relevant and adaptable tools and material to facilitate such learning. A number of panelists emphasized the urgent need to review school textbooks and examine how “the other” is depicted in learning materials. Many also stressed that compassion and empathy need to be inculcated at all levels (media, educators, parents, etc.). The Charter of Compassion was cited as a potential tool to encourage the practice of compassion as a means to understand “the other”.

The discussion emphasized the need for appropriate pedagogical methods for learning about religions, encouraging critical distance as well as empathy. Such methods should ensure: 1) that religions are represented as more than belief systems, but rather as dynamic ‘ways of life’ 2) that the meaning of others’ religions is interpreted in a way that helps learners appreciate similarities and differences between their own current understanding and of different religious traditions and 3) the self awareness and sensitivity of the learner.

Such a comprehensive approach would enable students not only to have some understanding about religious diversity but also to be in a position to view tolerance, respect and recognition as key concepts underlying freedom of religion or belief.

Presentations of national developments in religious education in the school system (Turkey, Indonesia) showed both the diversity of approaches in place (confessional, non confessional) and the efforts made toward more inclusive approaches and greater religious diversity. A major element of education about religions is the teaching of clergy to understand other religions. In this vein, the rationale and methods for teaching about other religions to clergy belonging to a religious minority was presented. The importance of civil society actors at the grassroots level – particularly through youth initiatives – was shown through a presentation of the US-based Project Interfaith, which teaches about different faiths through art

exhibits, architectural tours, and various training programs.

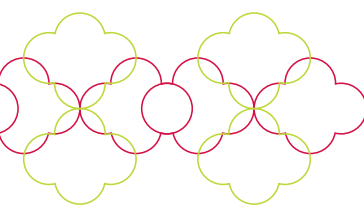
Several international organizations have taken steps to facilitate access to reliable and unbiased information and material about faiths, beliefs, history and ethics. Several participants spoke highly of the OSCE’s ODIHR publication, the Toledo Guiding Principles on Education about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools. UNESCO has also produced resources relating to cultural literacy, globalization, and ethics through ongoing projects such as the UNESCO World History volumes, Global Ethics Observatory, and new projects such as the Intercultural Vade-mecum.

The UNAOC launched its Education about Religions and Beliefs Clearinghouse which works with a network of partners to facilitate access to educational resources about diverse religions, civic education, tolerance and ethics education. The

Council of Europe’s newly established Wergeland Center on Education for Intercultural Understanding was mentioned as a means of exchanging good practices at all levels. A book recently produced by ISESCO with the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Foundation on the image of the other in the textbooks was also referred to as a useful tool.

Ensuing discussions included topics such as the need to review school textbooks about the image of the other, including compassion and empathy as a way to learn to live together, development of appropriate learning material to support intercultural education, and measures to develop high-quality teacher training on these issues. Also, one potential way forward for synergy and effectiveness on these issues was for the UNAOC Clearinghouse, UNESCO’s Global Ethics Observatory, the COE’s Wergeland Center and other interested parties to develop links and partnerships.





Working Session 2: Integrating Migrants – A Challenge for Inclusive Societies

Partner organization: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Moderated by the Director General of the IOM Mr. William Swing, the panel discussion brought together the Mayor of Lisbon, Mr. Antonio Costa, the President of the German Association for East European Studies, Dr. Rita Süßmuth, the Director of the Shanghai Center for International Studies, Prof. Pan Guang, the former Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, Mr. Mehmet Umit Pamir and Father Mario Santillo, Director General of the Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos. The debate stemmed from the key importance of forging an ‘alliance for integration’ that brings together migrants, the hosting societies and countries of origin alike.

Integration is a multi-dimensional process that encompasses social, economic, and political factors at both the individual and community levels. Sometimes it has to take into account differences in religions as a key issue. An approach that emphasizes working with the migrants and not for migrants is critical in helping to create ‘win-win’ situations.

The recent experience of cities has shown that of all the dimensions that shape integration, policy making remains predominant: governance systems at both the central and local level need to involve new citizens in an inclusive and open way. Modern societies need to equip themselves

with a set of laws and tools that promote access to rights, and help combat discrimination, stigma and social exclusion.

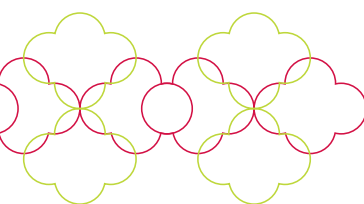
Panelists underscored the key role that political participation – through access to local voting – can play in promoting inclusion and upholding diversity. Civic participation should be recognized and properly promoted through processes that foster dialogue with migrants, draw on their resources, and recognize them as holders of rights and obligations. This promotes open societies and helps preclude the prospect of having migrants give up their cultures.

Additionally, the panelists and the floor underscored the fact that the UNAOC could play a major role in promoting the following:

- Building bridges between migrants, origin and host societies, with a view to understanding migrants as agents of change;
- Linking the work of different initiatives such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the UNAOC for more effective policy making;
- Promoting good practices and mechanisms to protect migrants’ rights regardless of their status (in particular labor and education issues).

It was also suggested that countries could produce annual reports to measure the level of inclusiveness, and build coherent and innovative strategies for integration.





Working Session 3. Youth: Key Actors and Stakeholders in Advancing Intercultural Understanding and Dialogue

Moderated by Dato' Amarjit Singh Gill – a youth leader from Malaysia – this working session focused on meaningful participation of young people in decision-making. A number of representatives from regional youth platforms, multilateral bodies and civil society organizations came together to identify conditions essential to active youth participation in initiatives seeking to advance cross-cultural understanding.

All panelists began by underlining the fact that supporting young peoples' participation in decision-making benefits society as a whole. According to Mr. Adeola Ojeniyi, the Regional Program Coordinator for the West Africa Youth Network, another reason for decision-makers to ensure meaningful participation of young people is that “they are key to the sustainability of today’s efforts to foster inter-cultural dialogue. Youth need to be involved in issues that affect their future such as peace and stability.”

However, panelists agreed that despite recent advances, much remained to be done to reach systematic and meaningful participation from a critical mass of diverse youth. Mr. Julian Lugo Mendez, Vice President of the Latin American Youth Forum, shared his conviction that “today’s youth have the responsibility to work toward global understanding. Participation is their right.”

Reflecting on Mr. Mendez’s comments, Mr. Diogo Pinto, the Secretary-General of the European Youth Forum, stated that there is a need to convince current decision-makers that youth are experts and knowledgeable about cross-

cultural understanding. “It would be ill-advised for governments and other decision-makers to refrain from using young peoples’ ideas, expertise and enthusiasm for the development of inclusive societies. Not doing so would mean that a large portion of society would not be mobilized to address the problems that affect us all.”

In a second round of questions, panelists were asked to elaborate on the conditions essential to sustained youth participation in policies or initiatives aiming to build positive relations between groups of different cultural or religious backgrounds. Ms. Lillian Solheim, Advocacy Coordinator for the United Network of Young Peacebuilders stated that capacity and space are essential conditions to successful youth participation. For youth organizations, training in advocacy and lobbying can significantly increase the impact of their participation in government-led initiatives and policy development.

Mr. Ralf-Rene Weingärtner, Director of Youth and Sport at the Council of Europe, added a third condition to consider, i.e. the legal rights of youth from all walks of life to meaningfully participate. Dr. Fatima Serour, Director of the Youth Affairs Division at the Commonwealth said that a complement to this rights-based approach would be to “ensure that the decision-makers recognize that young people are assets rather than problems. It is essential that when current leaders engage youth, they are convinced that young people are bringing something unique and essential to the table.” Mr. Elshad Iskandarov, the Secretary-General of the

Islamic Conference Youth Forum added that in order for the participation of young people to have a real impact, youth organizations should ensure that they find the right interlocutors for the specific challenges they want to address.

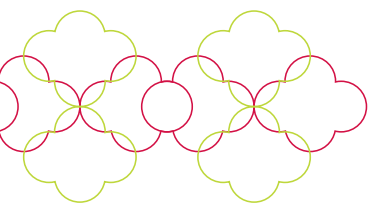
Regarding tested methods of youth participation, Mr. Weingärtner shared details of the co-management model his organization adopted a few years ago. For the Council of Europe, it was important to go beyond youth participation and adopt this model which calls for co-decision-making in collaboration with the European Youth Forum. Although not always easy to implement, this model remains a source of inspiration, a target to attain to observe the principle of *Nothing about youth without youth*.

Ms. China Sajadian, International Education Program Coordinator for the OneVoice Movement, which is advocating for a two-state solution to the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shared information on the youth participation model offered by her organization. According to Ms. Sajadian, “OneVoice offers a non-partisan platform through which the voices of young moderates are amplified.”

Throughout all the panel discussions, there was a desire to convey the fact that youth are not only tomorrow’s leaders, but today’s agents of positive change when it comes to cross-cultural relations and inclusiveness. The youth participation methods shared by panelists constitute the basis of a call to action for international organizations, governments and civil society to fully leverage and harness the role that young people play in leading social and political progress.





Working Session 4. Reporting Across Cultural Divides: Global Perspectives

Partner organizations: European Commission and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

This working session sought to address a number of key questions relevant to the Alliance’s Rapid Response Media Mechanism: Do journalists have a role in finding common ground on issues that tend to divide societies along cultural or religious lines? What tools do journalists have at their disposal to address the need to report sensitively and in a balanced way about stories that go to the core of religious and cultural difference? How should the issue of freedom of expression be approached? Are debates over freedom of expression and issues such as religious blasphemy political in nature, or are they symptomatic of differences between various sets of values that could be addressed outside the political realm? The session was moderated by Shereen El Feki, Fellow at the Adham Center for Journalism Training and Research at the American University in Cairo.

The discussion opened on the issue of freedom of expression and defamation of religion, an issue that has been the subject of many debates at the United Nations. Some argued that freedom of expression is an essential tool in peace building efforts and should only be limited in cases when it has the potential to undermine democratic society. They also raised the concern that laws against defamation could be used against minority religions and to prevent discussion within religious communities about their own moral values. Moreover, some made the point that in today’s world of global media access, regulation and control were not always the most effective method to tackle

such issues. Instead, education and promoting better understanding among diverse communities were perceived as more constructive approaches.

Others, however, claimed that many journalists in the Muslim world believe that, when it comes to criticism or attacks on religion, double standards apply: when religions other than Islam are targeted, legal measures are more likely to be taken. The point was made that neither Fitna nor the Danish cartoons were exercises in free speech. They were a test for the Muslim community, a deliberate provocation aimed at testing to what extent Muslims adopted European values. These incidents ended up providing arguments to extremists on both sides. On one side, some took these events as proof that Islam had no place in Europe, while on the other, the conclusion was that Europe was essentially xenophobic.

Some thought that a distinction needed to be established between attacks on religion and criticism of religious beliefs or systems. In Europe, there is a widely shared view that the law protects ethnic or racial groups, but not religions. However, religions are not only systems of beliefs, but can also be expressions of collective identity and as such, should also be protected from hate speech.

Moreover, there was a need to go beyond the stereotypical view of Islam and false oppositions between “Islam” and the “West”. According to a study by the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies,

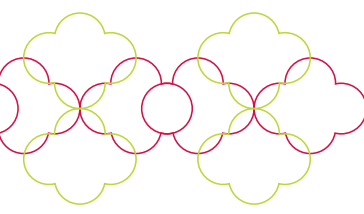
most Muslim Europeans reject offensive speech. However, it also shows that the more Muslims are accepted and integrated in European societies, the more likely they are to show tolerance for criticism of Islam.

Diverse societies, other participants contended, always generate a degree of tensions and sometimes even conflict. The media to a large extent reflects these internal tensions and lack of understanding of other cultures that sometimes creates divisions in plural societies. One way to address this issue is to ensure that minorities are also represented among newspaper staff. It is important, for in-

stance, for multicultural broadcasting companies to encourage discussions among international staff: when a sensitive issue arises, they can consult each other and decide on the best course of action to take.

Some concluded that there were positive outcomes deriving from crises such as *Fitna* or the Danish Cartoons: they helped create greater awareness of Islam within the journalist community; and in the Muslim world they prompted for the very first time a constructive debate over the issues of blasphemy and freedom of expression.





Working Session 5. Dialogue Café Initiative

Partner organization: CISCO

Moderated by Simon Willis, Global Vice President for Public Sector at Cisco's Internet Business Solutions Group and the creator of Dialogue Café, Working Session 5 brought together academics and experts to contribute perspectives on the need and potential for technology to bridge cultural divides.

Dialogue Café is a social innovation project which helps ordinary people to connect using advanced video-conferencing technology. The Dialogue Café Project started with an international group of students from three universities, representing over 35 countries, and is still a work in progress.

Over time, Dialogue Café will partner with a wide range of international organizations in order to innovate and develop new solutions to create dialogue between predominantly Muslim countries and the West, and to give a wider audience the chance to experience cutting-edge technology.

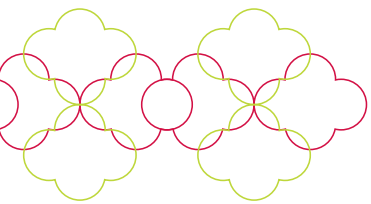
Participants wondered if strangers would actually feel the need to reach out to each other through this new technology. But the consensus was that curiosity would draw people in, as was the case with the social-networking website Facebook. The Dialogue Café project could prove particularly appealing for young people, and participants

predicted that in time, they would start to build communities which could even extend into the offline world.

Participants remarked on the relevance of Dialogue Café in an age of increased interconnectedness. In a world where twenty-five people cross a national border every second, and in the aftermath of the great mass migrations of the 20th Century, there is a constant desire by people from all walks of life to find new ways to communicate with people in other countries. In that respect, the technology behind Dialogue Café could prove fundamental in facilitating communication through enabling face-to-face interaction across borders. Dialogue Café could also potentially play a direct part in the integration of immigrant children.

Participants recognized that educators and political leaders should keep up with the new technologies in order to communicate better. Moreover, it is critical that they support and understand how a new generation of students and citizens is connecting, communicating, and organizing via social-networking tools. Dialogue Café can play an important role in the education of university students, both in creating projects and facilitating intercultural communication. The distance between parliaments and citizens can also be overcome through the use of technology, and it was suggested that there should be a Dialogue Café in every parliament building for youth to communicate with parliamentarians.





Working Session 6. Empowering Women to Strengthen their Role in a Culture of Peace

Partner organization: Prime Ministry Directorate General on the Status of Women, Turkey and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, chaired by Ambassador Ann Dismorr

While women suffer disproportionately in situations of conflict, they are major contributors to peace-building efforts around the world and potent agents of change when their voices are heard and their actions recognized.

The speakers of this working session aimed to raise the profile of gender issues within the mandate of the Alliance of Civilizations. In addition, they sought to identify cultural obstacles preventing strategies for women's empowerment and gender equality to be fully effective. Lastly, they elaborated approaches for working on women's

issue within the priority areas of the Alliance of Civilizations.

HE Mrs. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, began the discussion by underscoring the fact that the global issues humankind is currently facing call for the contribution of everyone, not simply half of the world's population. She pointed out that "Women are not only the victims of the current crisis the world is experiencing; but they are the possible solutions."

HE Mrs. Bibiana Aido Almagro, Spanish Minister for Equality reiterated that peace, develop-

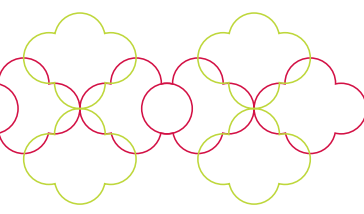
ment, respect and mutual understanding cannot be achieved without women. Minister Aido Almagro also called for the development and implementation of equality policies at the national and international levels. In a similar vein, Ms. Saniye Gülser Corat, Director of Division for Gender Policies at UNESCO, called for genuine and long-term commitment to the empowerment of women in building a culture of peace. This commitment includes building gender equality into policy, securing genuine political will, and ensuring allocation of resources and mobilizing partnerships.

While agreeing with the need for long-term commitment of a vast array of partners, Professor Yakın Ertürk, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, suggested that gender issues should be mainstreamed and

become an integral part of the Alliance of Civilizations' work. According to Professor Ertürk, "what is needed is the transformation of power rather than the simple integration of women into existing structures of power."

The Alliance of Civilizations has a great opportunity to pursue women's multicultural leadership, according to Dr. Gillian Young, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Leicester. The promotion and support of inclusive leadership that reflects gender, religious, as well as cultural differences would greatly contribute to enhance recognition of the role of women in peace-building and would bring it into the public sphere for the benefit of society as a whole.





Working Session 7. Doing Business in a Multicultural Environment: Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Partner organization: UN Global Compact

Working Session 7 was moderated by Jean-Christophe Bas, Strategic Partnerships Manager of the UN Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat, and Melissa Powell, Head of Strategy and Partnerships at the UN Global Compact. The session was organized in collaboration with the Global Compact in order to discuss the role of the private sector in promoting intercultural understanding and dialogue.

The session also provided a platform for the launch of *Doing Business in a Multicultural World*, a joint report of the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the UN Global Compact Office. Showcasing innovative corporate actions to address the challenges arising from cross-cultural tensions, this report was developed in response to the recommendations made by business leaders who attended the Alliance of Civilizations Madrid Forum.

The moderators opened the session by reminding the audience of the historical role of commerce in fostering peace and dialogue among civilizations and noted that there has been a growing demand for the proactive engagement of companies in better managing cross-cultural challenges as they have become more global over the past few decades. Participants in the discussion noted that as business has gone global, a strong business case has been made for developing effective mechanisms to address challenges arising from multicultural environments. They also outlined the two major benefits of incorporating diversity and inclusion into business strategies. First, multiculturalism is a basic principle which ensures meritocracy within a company and attracts best talents across the globe to maintain business competitiveness. Second,

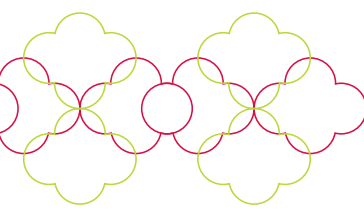
culturally-sensitive business practices contribute to enhancing customers' loyalty and improving companies' brand image.

Participants went on to provide observations on the ways business has overcome cross-cultural challenges in the workplace, market place and local communities. Many global companies provide cross-cultural training programs and develop human resources policies in order to integrate diversity and inclusion in their business operations. One participant noted that the long experience of the private sector in leading cross-cultural training could make a useful contribution to the development of cross-cultural education for young people. In the marketplace, companies have utilized their core competencies to promote diversity and inclusion. Companies have also contributed to improving stakeholder relations through culturally sensitive marketing practices and community dialogues. A number of participants highlighted the

importance of respecting different religious traditions and values and asked the business community to pay more attention to these values in marketing and product development in order to strengthen competitiveness.

While the efforts made by businesses in this area are notable, participants emphasized the need for strong support from other stakeholders including business associations, civil society, and governments. Highlighting the critical role of education, it was suggested that governments and academia could support better educational programs for cross-cultural learning as well as exchange programs for young people. Participants indicated their interest in collaborating with the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the UN Global Compact by establishing a network which will help facilitate the sharing of lessons learned in this area.





Working Session 8. Citizenship for the Information Society: Media Education and Civic Participation

Partner organizations: International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), UNESCO's Information for All Program and the Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC)

This session was an opportunity to highlight and contextualize media literacy education programs implemented in the education systems of Turkey, Argentina and Finland. It was moderated by Vladimir Gai, from UNESCO's Communication Development Division.

The Alliance of Civilizations' *High-Level Group Report* (November 2006) recognizes the importance of including media literacy education in the schools. Since its publication, the UNAOC has developed a number of initiatives and resources aiming at the inclusion of media education in the National Plans of the countries of the Group of Friends.

Examples of initiatives in Turkey, Argentina and Finland were presented during the session. Turkey's Ministry of Culture has provided professional development workshops in order to train social studies teachers so that they can meet the challenges of delivering effective media literacy education, and discussions were held on ways in which this valuable initiative could be further developed. It was suggested that a possible good source of educators for this course could be graduates from the communication departments of journalism schools.

Argentina's model of media literacy education was also presented and discussed during the working session. Through the program *Escuela y Medios* (School & Media) Argentina's Ministry of Education engages in a series of around the year collaborations with the media industry and the private sector aiming at raising the awareness of the impact that media has in society. The *Escuela y Medios* program includes initiatives such as the production of public service announcements focusing on how to critically watch television, films and surf the Internet; the in-school production of videos written and produced by students for TV broadcast; and the celebration of World Press Freedom Day (May 3rd). During the session's discussion the *Escuela y Medios* program was recognized as a particularly creative and all-compassing model aiming at the development of a *media literate* citizen.

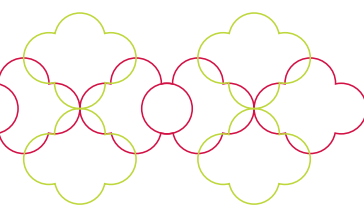
Finland's contribution to the discussion started by reminding the participants that "the future does not just happen – we help to create it through our choices." In some form or other, media education has been part of Finland's national educational curriculum since the early 1970s. Currently the country's focus is in updating and developing teaching materials; providing teaching training to

educators; and the unfolding of *Global Education*, Finland's newest media education program. The program encourages media production in schools as well as a critical analysis approach where the concepts and practice of world citizenship, social inclusion, ethical values, intercultural dialogue and media literacy education are all intertwined within the Global Education curricula. The rich and progressive vision of Finland's model was further explored during the discussion.

Other presentations from the panel included comments on today's fragmented and overwhelming

plethora of media sources, creating a cacophonous media landscape often difficult to navigate for citizens lacking minimum media literacy skills. Ismail Serageldin, reflecting on the role of media and media education in contemporary society, concluded the session by signaling the importance of distinguishing between *knowledge* and *wisdom*, the latter understood as the necessary means for individual reflection and the development of constructive civic participation.





Working Session 9. Cities at the Heart of Cultural Diversity – How to Foster City Diplomacy?

Partner organization: United Cities and Local Governments

Increased migration and globalization have made cultural diversity one of the main features of modern cities. The majority of the world's population – 3.3 billion people – now lives in cities. This number is projected to reach 4.9 billion in 2030. Municipal and local governments, therefore, have a critical role in promoting sustainable urban development based on cultural diversity, with the twofold aim of preventing conflicts and contributing to security and peace.

Moderated by Pedro Castro, President of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, Working Session 9 brought together mayors, representatives of local governments, and opinion leaders to discuss the role of city in peace building and conflict prevention.

Mr. Castro opened the session by outlining the changes affecting the make-up of cities around the world, underlining the need to create more inclusive multicultural societies. In his opinion, public areas of cities present the possibility for interaction between different cultures and for people to learn about each other. Schools are also an avenue for young people to do the same. The use of technology in projects such as Dialogue Café offers myriad opportunities to connect individuals who otherwise would not get a chance to talk to each other.

Mayor of Barcelona, Jordi Hereu, added that in a complex globalizing world, polarized perceptions between different cultures can threaten inter-

national stability. In a mainly urban world, this situation is manifested to an even greater extent in cities. In Barcelona, as new citizens join the city, it is imperative to secure their access to the same benefits and entitlements as everyone else. Failing to do so risks creating exclusionary societies where people of different backgrounds feel unwelcome. Mr. Hereu also felt that cities needed to act in a coordinated way to better marshal their financial resources toward meeting the cultural challenges they face. As an example, Barcelona has sought to build ties with Sarejevo, Jericho, Beirut, Gaza to supplement the work being done at the state-level.

Importantly, Mayor of Gaza, Mageed Abou Ramadan, noted that cities deal with the everyday lives of people. He pointed to the case of Gaza to emphasize the need to understand 'the other' before common ties between people can be built, and to challenge preconceived notions of other cultures. Cities are much better placed to deal with this task.

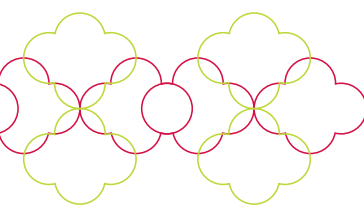
Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General Iqbal Riza added that globalization is increasingly seen as a threat to identity. When speaking about multiculturalism in cities, it is clear that there are often tensions between host and immigrant populations. The Alliance of Civilizations has focused on what can be done to address these tensions at the political level as well as from a perception point of view, while also recognizing that, ultimately it comes down to the level of cities to present solutions.

Stefania Craxi, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for Rome, added that city diplomacy is a tremendous tool for creating sustainable peace within divided societies. She announced that Reggio Calabria, an Italian city, will host the first meeting of Mayors of Main Mediterranean Coastal Cities in the autumn, to be co-chaired by Reggio Calabria and Tunis.

Closing the session, Elizabeth Gateau, Secretary-General of United Cities and Local Governments,

mentioned the need for greater connectivity between the United Nations and local governments and municipalities. She appreciated the role that the Alliance has played in this regard. Finally, she said that while national governments engage in peace-building at an international level, it is often up to city authorities to translate their policies into action at the local level.





Working Session 10. Contributions of Entertainment Media to Cross-Cultural Understanding

Partner organization: Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund

Moderated by Jim Berk, CEO of Participant Media, Working Session 10 brought together academics, film makers, politicians and experts to present perspectives on the use of media as an instrument for cross-cultural dialogue and to put forward concrete strategies to enhance the role media can play in tackling prejudice and popular stereotypes.

Mahnaz Fancy, Director of Development of the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund (AoCMF), presented the organization, a non-profit consortium of media industry leaders and philanthropists working in partnership with the United Nations to expand the production of commercial film, television and new media content that challenges com-

mon stereotypes and exposes audiences to regions and cultures that are often negatively portrayed in mass media.

Ms. Fancy defined the strategies of AoCMF as follows: a) understanding the impact of media on attitudes and behavior; b) raising awareness of the impact of media on perceptions; and c) production and distribution of media content. She gave examples of projects supported by the fund and described two of its projects: the Middle East Region Short Film Competition and Muslims On TV Screen (MOST).

Mr. Berk highlighted some of the productions of Participant Media, including Charlie Wilson's War, The Visitor, Fast Food Nation, An Inconvenient Truth, The Kite Runner, Good Night and Good Luck. He commented that films can work as magnets for people to get together and generate other activities such as training programs.

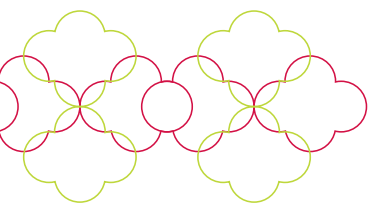
The Turkish Minister of Culture and Tourism, HE Ertuğrul Günay, underlined the growing influence of media and the responsibilities of media professionals. Media has the capacity to create positive change in society, he explained, quoting Muslim thinker Muhammad Iqbal: "New worlds cannot be built with new stones but with new ideas."

For her part, Abigail Disney, Founder and President of the Daphne Foundation, stressed that tell-

ing real human stories can play a significant role in overcoming prejudice and stereotypes. Storytelling transcends cultural boundaries and helps improve our understanding of other people.

These discussions led to the following conclusions: the AoCMF should aim to promote cultural diversity in the media and special programs should be developed for communities and groups that are often excluded from mainstream media. To achieve these goals, partnerships should be developed, particularly between commercial media and media focusing on social action. Finally, an advisory group bringing together the TV, film industry, media and youth sectors should be established.





Working Session 11. The Cost of Conflict in the Middle East

Partner organization: Strategic Foresight Group

The starting point for this session's discussion was a study on the cost of conflict in the Middle East undertaken by the India-based Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), with the support of governments and institutions from Turkey, Switzerland, Norway and Qatar. The study was the first-ever effort in 60 years to measure all kinds of costs of conflicts in the region, using 97 parameters. The session was moderated by Sundeep Waslekar, president of SFG.

By pointing to the scale of the costs, including huge losses of opportunities and negative consequences for the whole world, the report was widely recognized as making a compelling case for greater political engagement and sustained efforts to resolve the conflicts by all concerned. The human cost was the most significant and included the loss of dignity imposed on 1.4 million people locked in Gaza. No peace process could be successful if the situation of the victims is not addressed in an equitable way.

Speakers felt that the only option was a two-state solution, combined with an effective freeze on settlements. Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, felt that pending a freeze on settlement building by Israel and a notification to this effect to the UN Security Council, Arab countries would respond and a new dynamic would unfold.

However, speaking in the absence of Shlomo Ben-Ami, Vice-President of the Toledo Interna-

tional Centre for Peace (who, at the last minute, was unable to attend), an Israeli diplomat stressed that the main obstacle to a solution was not the settlements but the non acceptance of Israel's right to exist. Jean-Daniel Ruch, Special Envoy to the Middle East for Switzerland, agreed that Israel should be recognized by all. Introducing himself as a representative of a rare country that did not boycott the results of the Palestinian elections, he further understood the fear provoked by Hamas' stance. This did not however take away Israel's duty to engage in the peace process. The country was also expected to fully cooperate with the Goldstone Commission.

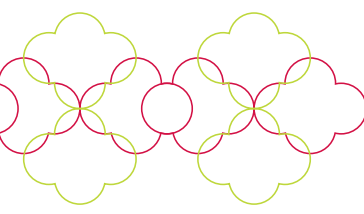
The discussion focused on measures that should be considered if the settlements do not stop and no real engagement on a 2-state solution takes place. The international community would have to send a strong and well coordinated message, insisted Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spanish Foreign Minister and Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister of Luxembourg. Some international assistance may be withdrawn. There was little support for a boycott, considered generally ineffective. There was a need to find new innovative diplomatic incentives.

President Obama had raised high expectations, which should be followed up by persistent and constructive involvement in the region. It was hoped that the international community would now more consistently move together in the same direction. Turkish Minister of State Egmen Bağış

said that his country was implementing a policy of zero conflict with neighbors and promoting it throughout the Middle East. It was engaged in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Process, now damaged by the Gaza crisis. Turkey remained committed to new efforts and wanted to be part of the solution, as a country with credibility in both the West and Islamic countries. Jean Asselborn emphasized that other countries were expected to help – in particular Jordan and Egypt – when it comes to bringing about a transition Palestinian government. Syria had to be part of a solution.

The Alliance of Civilizations, it was found, offered a welcome platform for people to speak and discuss the issue. At the same time, as Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations clearly emphasized, it was not for the Alliance to find political solutions for conflicts. Its mandate is either to act at the preventive level – to help defuse tensions and prevent them escalating into conflicts – or to act for peace building consolidation in post-conflict situations.





Working Session 12. Islamic and Muslim Contributions to European Culture, Societies and Identities

Partner organization: the British Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

For over 1,300 years Europe has been home to peoples with direct or indirect connections to Islam. They have been traders and teachers, converts and conquerors, astronomers and astrologers, architects and builders. But in spite of these exchanges and cross-fertilization, findings of polls tracking public perceptions show that relations between Europeans who are Muslims and those of other belief systems are generally weak. The British Council is developing an ambitious program to address this issue in the context of Europe. The Council organized this working session in partnership with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Anna Lindh Foundation, to introduce and debate the program under the title of “Our Shared Europe”.

Professor Richard Bulliet of Columbia University, USA, gave a historical perspective. He reminded the audience of how the political and historical interactions of Muslims and the “West” have been distorted and oversimplified. Muslims who fought on behalf of Western political interests have been forgotten; only those who confronted the West are remembered. The diverse and long standing peaceful side of European-Muslim relations remains in the shadows. Daily life is infused with products from the Muslim world, from oranges, to chess, sugar and pasta. Beyond daily life, there are myriad other borrowings, especially in the areas of science and philosophy. Such enrichments

continue now with Iranian films and the personal experiences of those who were initially immigrants and their families who are now European.

This point was picked up by Dr. Anas Al-Shaikh Ali of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK) who focused on the importance of education in schools and universities of all Europeans so that a better understanding can develop in the mainstream of European societies. He referred to the partnership he had developed with the British Council which led to the publication of “British Muslims: A Media Guide” in 2006.

Dr. Gemma Martin Munoz of Casa Arabe, Madrid, continued with this theme and referred to the publication of the Spanish version of the guide, supported by the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe.

HE Professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, stressed that Islam was a component of European culture and identity and welcomed the British Council’s program. He referred to Prof. Bulliet’s concept of an ‘Islam-Christian’ European civilization to reiterate his proposed historic reconciliation between these two Abrahamic religions.

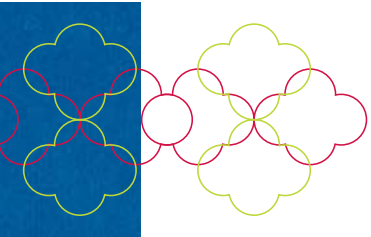
A lively debate followed with contributions from participants drawing on their experiences in Bangladesh, USA, Morocco and the other Maghreb

countries, the UK and the former Yugoslavia and today’s Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Professor Mike Hardy, the leader of the British Council’s inter-cultural dialogue programs drew the session to a close. “Our Shared Europe” is, from his perspective, a cultural project to tackle the roots of alienation and intolerance. The program does not set out to re-write history; rather, it aims to change how Europeans think about each other in the current day reality of the continent.

He ended with a relevant quote from President Obama: “Our patchwork heritage is a strength not a weakness: we are a nation of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and non-believers”. “Our program”, Mr Hardy continued, “sets out to demonstrate that Muslims are part of Europe’s past, present, and more importantly, its future.”





WORKING BREAKFASTS

Working Breakfast 1. From Competing Narratives to Cooperative Actions

Moderator: President Jorge Sampaio

The High Level Group (HLG) Report presented in November 2006 identifies the Israel-Palestine conflict as one of the main causes of the widening rift between Muslim and Western societies. This emphasis is not meant to imply that it is the overt cause of all tensions between Muslim and Western societies, but suggests that the Israeli-Palestinian issue has taken on a symbolic value that colors cross-cultural and political relations among adherents of all three major monotheistic faiths well beyond its limited geographic scope.

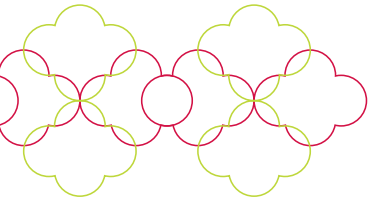
Specifically, the HLG report urges that the Alliance address the central Israel-Palestine issue, which has fomented mutually hostile perspectives, and prolonged violence, both in the form of wars and of violence against non-combatants and civilians. Furthermore, the HLG Report recommends the development of a “white paper” analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dispassionately and objectively, giving voice to the competing narratives on both sides, reviewing and diagnosing the successes and failures of past peace initiatives, and establishing clearly the conditions that must be met to find a way out of the crisis. The “white paper”, by recounting historical truths, would hope to redress the reluctance of the community of nations to confront the realities underlying this threat to world stability. It could help political decision-makers to resolve the issue by bringing Palestinians and Israelis to acknowledge a history – their own history – and which would have the

fundamental and unprecedented merit of bringing the international community to treat both sides as equals in their aspirations and rights.

In order to implement this mandate, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations held a brainstorming meeting in Lisbon, in February with two main objectives: firstly to take stock of past or on-going works and experiences in the field of competing narratives, compare outcomes and build on lessons learned. The outcome of that meeting was twofold: a “white paper” may be necessary but insufficient unless it is accompanied by a “white process” because narratives which develop during intractable conflicts have a severe impact on people’s life, not only at mental level, but also on social interactions, attitudes and behaviors.

The session was intended to collect additional inputs particularly from civil society organizations. Participants were invited to share their vision on the role of a white paper and a white process, as described above, and to put forward innovative ideas about their content and possible implementation. The idea of a white process generated great curiosity and some participants such as Just Vision and One Voice expressed interest in a future collaboration.





Working Breakfast 2. UNESCO UNITWIN AoC Chair on Media Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue

Partner organizations: UNESCO and NORDICOM (Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research)

This breakfast, co-organized with UNESCO and NORDICOM (Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research), was an opportunity to publicly present and discuss the creation of the UNESCO UNITWIN Alliance of Civilizations Chair on Media Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue. At its initial phase this UNITWIN (UNESCO's Chair program for universities linked in network) will include six universities: Sao Paulo University (Brazil), Tsinghua University (China), Cairo University (Egypt), University of West Indies (Jamaica), Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain), and Temple University (USA). Representatives of the universities attended the session and explained to the participants the main objectives and planned outcomes of the Chair.

By coordinating the creation of this Chair, the AoC continues to support the development of media literacy education worldwide. The increasing global awareness about the importance of media literacy within the intercultural dialogue framework was underlined by the amount of interested participants that attended the session. During the session it was explained that the main focus of this Chair is the development of educational

and media literacy practices that can contribute to dissolve prejudices, cultural stereotypes, and intercultural barriers in favor of global dialogue and cooperation among citizens and institutions of different cultural or religious backgrounds.

The Chair will develop and organize, in coordination with the AoC, a series of research initiatives, conferences, teacher training workshops, and exchange programs (for faculty and graduate students) involving the active universities of the network. Additional outcomes will include publications (in partnership with NORDICOM) and the ongoing development (by adding new content, supplementary information, resources, and articles) of the AoC Media Literacy Education clearinghouse (aocmedialiteracy.org).

Additionally, the breakfast session was also an occasion to present the new research publication *"Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programs and Challenges"* recently published by the AoC in collaboration with UNESCO and the support of Grupo Comunicar and the Media Program of the European Union.

Working Breakfast 3. Launch of the UN AoC Research Network

Organized by the Alliance of Civilizations Research Network

The Alliance Research Network is intended as a diverse collection of research centers and universities to serve as a collective thinktank for the Alliance, and be leaders of a movement to encourage cross-cultural educational exchange and research.

Consequently, the Network consists of institutions from around the world who have interests in the areas of focus for the Alliance – education, media, migration, and youth plus other topics with special reference to cross-cultural understanding such as good governance of cultural diversity, conflict resolution, women and peace-making, and city diplomacy. The Network was formally launched at a working breakfast at the Istanbul Forum, April 6, 2009.

The meeting was chaired by Koç University focal point, Dean Baris Tan. Participants included

administrative, faculty, and students from higher education institutions; intergovernmental organization representatives, and government officials from around the world. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare a plan of action for the following year.

As a first step, the Network will explore common areas of research and exchange. Second, the need to explore opportunities for partners to meet to discuss next steps in collaboration was raised. Explorations are currently underway to identify potential hosts, resources, and concrete agendas for such meetings. Third, participants discussed the need for an online platform to disseminate research and to interact with one another. The Alliance of Civilizations has developed a web page dedicated to the members of the Research Network which features news about, and of interest to, academic network members.



Working Breakfast 4. Partnerships across the Mediterranean; Launch of the Mediterranean Journalist Award 2009 and the Rapid Response Media Mechanism for the Mediterranean region

Partner organizations: the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures and the European Commission

A joint breakfast briefing session by the European Commission, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance outlined cooperation between the three institutions on a range of media issues. European Commissioner for education, training, culture and youth, Ján Figel, Andreu Claret, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation and Alliance of Civilizations Director Marc Scheuer spoke in turn about their respective institutions' work with the media and about their belief in the constructive role journalists can play to promote understanding between different nations and cultures.

A key item in the presentation was the Rapid Response Media Mechanism for times of cultural crises in the Euro-Mediterranean region, which is being developed as a joint initiative by the three bodies. The initiative aims to assist journalists and others involved in any public debate that risks being highly polarised and divisive. It will use shared resources – including expertise on issues related to intercultural tensions and joint communications to the media and networks of civil society organizations – to encourage and support those wanting to develop more balanced dialogue about intercultural issues.

While there is still work to do to bring the project to fruition, several aspects are already in place

following a series of discussions with media and civil society representatives. The Alliance of Civilizations Global Expert Finder, the European Commission sponsored European Neighbourhood Journalism Network and the Anna Lindh Foundation network of civil society interests are already in place as a framework within which the initiative can operate. Mechanisms to link them more firmly, with a common portal as central resource and a means of mobilization of opinion when a crisis occurs, are in development.

During the meeting, the 2009 edition of the Anna Lindh Foundation's Mediterranean Journalist Award for 2009 was launched, the regional organization's award in recognition of journalists reporting across cultures and on issues of cultural diversity. The Award, which runs across the 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean, has been expanded in 2009 to the audio-visual sector, as well as including a special award for reporting efforts during the recent Gaza crisis and a new award for bloggers. The rapidly growing influence of new media presents great potential to create dialogue communities and responsible blogging is seen by the Foundation as a way of promoting a shared space for dialogue and opinion.

Working Breakfast 5. Contemporary Society and Religion

Partner organization: Network of European Foundations

This breakfast session introduced the work developed under the Network of European Foundations (NEF) Initiative on 'Religion and Democracy in Europe' which focuses on the relationship between religion and democracy in European societies. NEF presented its findings in the specific fields of health and school systems in Europe and representatives of other regions contributed as discussants. The session brought together political representatives, religious leaders, international organizations, foundations and NGOs representatives, and was moderated by Rien Van Gendt, chairman of the NEF initiative on Religion and Democracy and former Executive Director of the Van Leer Group Foundation. Speakers included Luce Pépin, former Director of the Eurydice Network European Unit and author of the 'History of European Cooperation in the fields of education and training', Dimitrina Petrova, Executive Director, The Equal Rights Trust, and Joyce Dubensky, Executive Vice President of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in New York.

The discussion began with a presentation on the findings of the NEF thematic dossier on the 'Teaching about religions in European school systems'. This initial overview touched upon the different approaches characterizing the teaching about religions in the European Union: confessional religious education (optional or non compulsory); confessional religious education (compulsory with exemption possibility); non confessional education and education about the 'religious fact', integrated in other subjects of teaching. Ongoing major challenges for EU public school systems in this area

were also presented, including recommendation to make non-confessional teaching more effective, a clear status in the curriculum, and solid training of teachers and teacher trainers.

Subsequently, the NEF findings on 'Religion and Healthcare in the European Union' were presented. The influence of religion on national healthcare policy, and in particular the issue of belief-based exemption for health care providers from performing certain duties, the issues of euthanasia, organ donation and transplant, blood transfusion, religious assistance to hospital patients, faith space in hospitals, medication and dietary needs, hospital clothing, requests to be served by a doctor or nurse of the same sex, and issues related to death, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health were all briefly addressed as well.

This moved the conversation in the direction of the intersections between religion and health care and how religion influences patients' and practitioners' decisions, and the need for training a community of health care providers who are prepared to communicate with their patients about religion.

In the discussion that followed, participants raised several interesting questions including whether religion should be regarded as a liability or as a positive force in health policy; whether certain policy issues are affected by religion as such or rather by culture and traditional cultural practices, and whether the state should provide exemptions to doctors and nurses and within what limits.

Working Breakfast 6. Diversity and Development: Leadership Challenges for Managing Diversity and Promoting Politics and Policy to Build Shared Societies

Partner organization: Club of Madrid

The breakfast session on *Challenges for Leadership to Manage Diversity and Build Shared Societies* organized by the Club de Madrid – an organization of 71 democratic former heads of state and government from around the globe that works to promote democratic responses to global challenges – examined the conundrums that lie at the

heart of the relationship between leadership and development.

During the session, the Club de Madrid presented its Shared Societies project, a global initiative aimed to encourage leaders to understand the benefits of social cohesion and the incentives and means to act to advance it.



Leaders and communities often resist co-operation and collaboration preferring to protect their own immediate interests and deny the interests of "the other" – and the mutual interests they share – to the detriment of all. The Shared Societies Project works on leadership to reverse this tendency.

Over 50 people participated in the session that featured Kjell Magne Bondevik, former Prime Minister of Norway; Ebrahim Rasool, former Premier of the Western Cape Province and current advisor to South African President Montlath; and Fernando Perpiñá-Robert, Secretary General of the Club de Madrid. Sean C. Carroll, Director of Programs of the Club de Madrid moderated the session.

Former Prime Minister Bondevik spoke of his time in office and of his role as a Lutheran pastor, and, speaking of his other Club of Madrid members, said that "we know from experience that leaders bear a major responsibility for promoting good community relations and shared societies. We believe that one of the most important conversations of our time is the issue of how to promote and encourage positive relations between cultures

and now that we are out of office we wish to offer our good offices to stimulate that discussion and to help to overcome tensions where they occur." He also said: "shared societies make good sense in cultural terms, human terms, in ethical terms, in security terms, and, in the present economic climate they make economic sense."

Ebrahim Rasool, spoke very practically of the challenges and some easy tools for leaders to use to promote shared societies. He spoke of the need for societies and political leaders to "ascend the steep path" ("aqaba"), "avoid the extremes" ("wasatiyah"), and to make "coexistence and interdependence" ("ubuntu") and "empathy and compassion" ("rahma") central to leadership. He said, "in the effort to construct a shared society, some say we need unity; others say we need diversity. Well, we need enough unity to avoid having atomized societies. And, we need diversity, but not so much that, again, we end up with atomized societies. We need to find the balance."

A lively debate and exchange of ideas on the role of leadership in promoting social cohesion followed.



Working Breakfast 7. Jobs in Period of Recession: A Global Challenge for Youth

Partner organizations: Education for Employment Foundation and Silatech

Moderated by Salvatore Nigro, CEO Europe, Education for Employment Foundation, and featuring Michael Hager, President, Education for Employment Foundation and Ahmed Younis, Director for Resource Development, Silatech, this breakfast session explored the links between employment and the development of societies.

Employment offers a chance to confer on people an identity, self-respect, economic security, and a stake in the future – all important cornerstones for citizens of a peaceful and prosperous society. Conversely, unemployment devastates the social and economic fabric of society, cheating countries of their greatest potential. It can cause many people, particularly youth, to feel marginalized, frustrated, and angry at a society that has failed them – and can thus lead to destructive behavior. Consequently, economic and social inclusion of young people is vital for peace and stability worldwide.

Participants agreed that employment opportunities can have an enormously positive impact on societies and relations between them. Keeping the bulk of a population in work is essential towards sustaining the economy of a society, and achieving a robust economic situation is a powerful driver for social change. At the same time, ensuring adequate opportunities for youth can help

defuse societal tensions, which left unchecked can be directed towards other communities which are perceived to have been more successful or to blame during difficult economic conditions.

Consequently, investing in first-time job seekers is a win-win situation both for governments and civil society organizations and the private sector. Participants noted the need for international organizations to pay greater attention towards supporting the development of youth employment programs, but also affirmed the need to examine the needs of the private sector itself before undertaking any employment training program. At the same time, there is a need for coordination among the various entities that are working on education and employment programs.

The varying approaches of Silatech and the Education for Employment Foundation were deemed worthy of consideration by breakfast participants, and showed tremendous potential to be replicated in other parts of the world. Participants also stressed the need to devote attention and resources towards promoting entrepreneurship as well as employment, and hailed the fact that both projects sought to do just that.

Working Breakfast 8. Engaging Non-State Actors in Resolving Conflicts and Promoting Peace and Development

Partner organizations: Religions for Peace and UNFPA

This session occasioned the opportunity to make concrete recommendations to the Alliance on ways to advance partnerships among religious leaders and groups and United Nations, governments, and other actors. Approximately 30 participants, representing governments, UN agencies, media, NGOs and religious communities contributed to the discussion.

Religions for Peace introduced its model, highlighting three core approaches: 1) multi-religious efforts can be more powerful symbolically and substantively than the efforts of individual religious groups acting alone; 2) “representative” multi-religious structures through their leaders, outstanding persons, grassroots congregations and other organizational manifestations serve as the main agents of multi-religious cooperation; 3) cooperation on multiple levels, including global, regional, national and local levels.

These approaches allow religions to engage with other stakeholders in the public sphere in a principled manner. Religions have impressive potentials/assets that may be mobilized for the common good in a multi-faceted process in which division of labor can be negotiated. Although some skepticism about involving religion too closely in issues of political nature was expressed, the major thrust of contributions called for principled engagement of religious actors in the public debate. The described model for engagement was supported as viable and with great potential.

Government representatives expressed appreciation of the multi-religious approach, which offered governments a “politically neutral” partner to reach religious communities for dialogue and cooperation. Concern was raised that multi-religious cooperation needs to reach into those segments of religious communities that are normally reluctant to open up to dialogue. Efforts to reach out to the more extreme segments and gradually build trust across divides are needed.

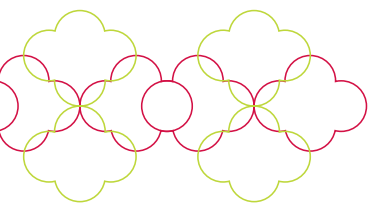
Examples of multi-religious engagement in peace processes were shared, including conflicts in Africa, Sri Lanka and the Middle East. Specific reference was made to the newly established interreligious council for Middle East and North

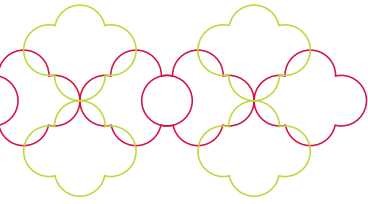
Africa (Religions for Peace MENA). In a press conference the previous day, a bold appeal to Alliance of Civilizations about the situation in Israel and Palestine issued by the Religions for Peace MENA was presented. This was seen by the participants as an example of constructive and timely multi-religious advocacy.

The idea of a “UN Decade for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” (Ref. General Assembly resolution A/RES/63/22) was mentioned as a good way of promoting major UN agendas with participation of religious communities and interfaith organizations.

The inclusion of “interreligious dialogue and cooperation” in the programs and meetings of the Alliance of Civilizations was seen as important to explore. A number of specific recommendations were offered to the Alliance of Civilizations by the religious leaders present such as:

- Themes and concerns related to the role of religions and inter-religious dialogue and cooperation in policy and politically related issues should be given prominence in future annual meetings of the Alliance of Civilizations.
- Considerations should be made to establish projects specifically focusing on inter-religious cooperation within the framework of Alliance of Civilizations. Projects oriented towards youth were seen as particularly interesting.
- With reference to the recommendation from the religious leaders in the 2008 Madrid meeting: “Engaging the media to help communicate the positive role of multi-religious dialogue and cooperation in building peace and promoting the common good”, Religions for Peace and other organizations engaged in multi-religious cooperation should partner with Alliance of Civilizations in utilizing their media mechanisms to further this recommendation.
- *Religions for Peace* was encouraged to take leadership in communicating with the Alliance of Civilizations for planning of the next annual meeting in Brazil.





Working Breakfast 9. Culture and Development

Partner organization: French Development Agency

The breakfast session, organized by the French Development Agency (ADF), explored the strong links that exist between culture and development. Participants agreed that there could be no successful development project without a human and cultural dimension. Although all development projects are, to a large extent, political projects, they must always be nourished by cultural references.

Taking account of the economic and development value of cultural goods was also seen as vital. Indeed it is possible to invest in culture as an economic tool for development. Development agents must work to promote the domains and locations where development and culture are closely articulated. For instance, microloans directed at the owners of cultural goods can prove to have both an economic and a cultural heritage value. Moreover, in old city quarters, urban planning must go hand-in-hand with cultural heritage preservation.

It is also possible, as shown by the work done by UNESCO, to integrate dialogue and exchange into concrete development programs. Cultural dialogue can be translated into tangible actions. Development actors must show that culture can be a resource for our future.

Thus the dialogue between development and cultural actors and networks must be encouraged. Such exchanges already took place through the series of Mediterranean Cultural Workshops initiated in 2005. One way to institutionalize this work could lie in the creation of a 'cultures and development institute', which participants expressed strong interest in. Through the ten Mediterranean cultural projects approved by the Mediterranean Forum on Culture, this network would promote both reflection and production regarding specific projects, such as a Mediterranean translation centre, or the sharing of scholarship and discussion on the evolutions of religious practices, and on the dialogue across the legal systems of different cultures.



Working Breakfast 10. Can New Media Help Bridge Cultural Divides?

Partner organizations: UNESCO and Global Voices Online

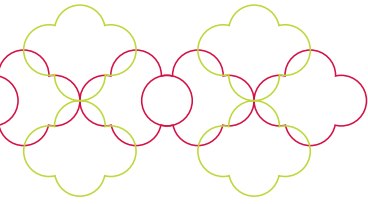
The new media breakfast session at the Alliance Forum in Istanbul Forum served as an opportunity to showcase the different and innovative applications of new media that various organizations are using to promote intercultural dialogue. The session was moderated by Susan Moeller, director of the International Center for Media and the Public Agenda at the University of Maryland.

Participants observed that the growth of the internet and the burgeoning of social networking websites have revolutionized the way people engage with the world. By providing creative opportunities to share information and opinions with online networks and virtual communities, new media is serving to enrich public debates, open a broader spectrum of ideas and opinions, and contribute to a global shift away from mainstream news organizations as a primary source of information. More than this, it is having a mobilizing effect on societies, and it was noted that in societies with weak rule of law, new media is often ascendant precisely because of its utility and versatility as an organizing tool.

In this context, it was announced that the Alliance is interested in creating an online forum that facilitates direct exchanges between citizen journalists of adjacent regions or neighboring countries that have few opportunities for direct interaction with each other. In such cases, information is often relayed through Western sources having undergone a number of cultural and values filters. The Alliance seeks to circumvent these barriers to direct interaction and understanding, and further details about the proposed forum will be released shortly.

Participants also discussed the rapidly evolving nature of new media. Increasingly, resources are being directed towards increasing the capacity of new media to serve as a rival to mainstream news organizations, or to vigorously promote development campaigns. Technological innovations are also leading to greater diversity and choice in the new media environment. Blog aggregators, public forums, and blogs that explicitly target audiences as consumers are gaining in popularity. As the power and reach of new media expands further, its already profound effects on societies around the world will continue to grow.





Working Breakfast 11: Intercultural Dialogue and History in the Context of Globalisation: Towards a Worldwide Network of Historians and History Teachers

Partner organizations: Council of Europe, North-South Center, and the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)

This breakfast session focused on the value of creating a network of historians and educators, the necessity of bringing academic history to the public, the utilization of resources such as UNESCO's History of Humanity Series, incorporating a gender perspective into history, and discussions on involving regions and historians from around the world.

The breakfast was organized in collaboration with the Council of Europe, the North-South Center and the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (Organization of the Islamic Conference), and was preceded by a pre-Forum event on 5 April 2009 which was devoted towards the same range of subjects.

The main focus of the breakfast was the announcement of the launch of a pilot project on "A History of Interactions within the Mediterranean, and between the Mediterranean and Other Cultures and Regions of the World." This three-year project will aim to produce didactic material for formal and non-formal education to highlight positive interactions over the centuries among the people of the Mediterranean Basin as well as between them and other cultures and regions of the world.

These materials, with an emphasis on social and cultural history, will be produced through the collaboration of historians and educationists conversant with history teaching. Products will

include written and audio-visual supports for learners, as well as handbooks for teachers and trainers. Drawing on existing networks and consortia of specialists, a small task force will be set up to pursue the project's objectives, which will be reflected in its composition.

Benefiting from relevant accomplishments of IRCICA, the Council of Europe, the Union for the Mediterranean, as well as from UNESCO's "History of Humanity", and others, the new projects will adopt an area and issue-centered approach, and include the identification of conditions enabling positive interactions. IRCICA and the Council of Europe will be the leading agencies of the project, which will draw on the collaboration with UNESCO, ALECSO and other interested parties. The European Wergeland Centre will also be involved in the implementation of this project, as well as the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

The operational phase of the project will be preceded by a review of, and further consultations with, networks, associations, etc. of historians and of specialists in the didactics of history. This review will be not only instrumental towards the setting up of the project's task force, but will also form the basis for the possible creation of a fully-fledged worldwide network of historians and history teachers, willing to pursue further initiatives based on the experience of the pilot project in question.

Working Breakfast 12. Expanding International Student Exchange Scholarship Programs: Challenges and Opportunities

Partner Organizations: International Institute of Education, League of Arab States, AFS, ISESCO, ALECSO

This working breakfast was a first step towards creating a network to enhance student exchanges between the Muslim world and the West. The session was chaired by Dr. Ahmed Said Ould Bah, Chef De Cabinet for the Director General of ISESCO. Over twenty participants from various sectors including intergovernmental organizations, governments, NGOs, educational institutions and youth participants in exchange programs attended this session.

Dr. Ould Bah opened the session by emphasizing the need to expand exchange programs between the Muslim world and the West as a key element of enhancing intercultural relations. After introductions of the participants, UNESCO Representative Ms. Ann-Belinda Preis gave an overview of the Mondialogo program, jointly launched by UNESCO and Daimler in 2003. This program consists of a school contest (which has brought to-



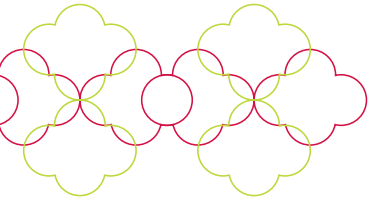
gether over 100,000 students from 144 countries), an Engineering Award, and an Internet portal.

AFS CEO Mr. Tachi Cazal spoke of the importance of addressing issues in enhancing exchange programs such as information, accreditation regulations, and funding. International Institute of Education's Director of Research, Dr. Rajika Bhandari, spoke of the IIE's efforts to enhance exchanges between the Middle East and the United States, including free membership to institutions in the IIE Network. Dr. Driss Ouaicha, President of Al Akhwayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, described his institution's programs that provided placements to 130-140 students from the US, Europe and Asia and sent about 100 Moroccan students abroad and participated in the AMID-EAST program.

Josh Weiss from the Abraham Path Initiative spoke of the non-formal ways in which his organization seeks to bring together young people from various countries by retracing the steps of Abraham/Ibrahim in the Middle East.

EC Representative Mr. Vito Borrelli detailed the various programs offered to encourage mobility of students in the European Commission's Erasmus Mundus program. Ms. Fatma Akgun, AFS Turkey's Executive Director, spoke of the great demand in Turkey for study-abroad positions and encouraged governments to liberalize visa requirements for foreign students. A number of youth participants in study-abroad programs spoke about their experiences and lessons from their experiences.

The meeting urged actors in this area to enhance study-abroad experiences by sharing information, liberalizing regulations in both the educational area and visa requirements, and promoting the benefits of studying abroad in various constituencies. The Alliance was requested to: a) distribute a list of participants at this session to create a network of interested organizations and individuals and b) organize a working session at the next Forum to examine concrete ways in which exchanges could be enhanced.



Working Breakfast 13. Bridging Divides in the Field of Humanitarianism and Development

Partner Organization: Humanitarian Forum

This breakfast session explored ways in which the international community can pool together the knowledge and resources of NGOs from different cultural backgrounds and value systems to bring humanitarian and development aid to people in need.

In many crisis contexts, there is often a lack of interaction between “Western” and “Muslim” humanitarian NGOs, even though both “sides” have great impact. This international picture is mirrored on the ground, where local NGOs tend to work in isolation from each other and international organizations. This amounts to a divide in the field of humanitarianism and development.

Both at a national and international level, gaps between communities and differences in capacity (or willingness to recognise a different form of capacity) are exacerbating divides. As a result, the global response to humanitarian and development needs is impaired, since it accepts inefficiencies (e.g. in use of funds and coverage of programs) and fails to take advantage of opportunities (e.g. new funding sources, comparative skills and in building stable communities).

The breakfast session highlighted the Humanitarian Forum as a case study in multilateral cooperation. The Humanitarian Forum is a network of key humanitarian and charitable organizations from Muslim donor and recipient countries, the West and the multilateral system. The goals of the Humanitarian Forum are to foster partnerships

among western and Muslim organizations, and to improve their work. The Humanitarian Forum began its work with a needs assessment exercise, holding workshops in 13 countries in 2005-6, involving 1,100 local NGOs.

The Humanitarian Forum builds bonds between communities, based on equality, understanding and trust. It uses the large area of common ground between religions and cultures – the strong heritage of charitable and humanitarian work – as a non-political environment on which to build bridges. Internationally, its Steering Committee includes key Sunni, Shi’a and Western organizations from 13 countries in four continents.

The Humanitarian Forum also aims to build bridges between local communities in a number of pilot countries (currently Indonesia, Sudan, Yemen and, as an example of a donor country, Kuwait). For instance, the local forum in Indonesia includes Muslim, Christian, secular and international NGOs. This creates familiarity and trust between disparate groups through membership, the governing board and training workshops.

In the course of this wide-ranging discussion, other issues were raised, including: building bridges between Muslim and secular organizations within Arab countries; educating donors about the breadth of Muslim charities’ humanitarian and development work; and exploring the relationship between humanitarian actors and the military.

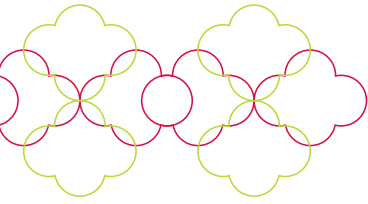
Working Breakfast 14. The Youth Solidarity Fund: Celebrating Young Bridge-Builders

Launched at the Madrid Forum in 2008, the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF) provides seed funding to outstanding youth-led projects that promote long-term constructive relationships between young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. For the pilot phase of the Youth Solidarity Fund, a committee of 7 youth representatives, nominated by regional youth platforms, was charged with selecting 6 projects for funding from over 110 submissions from 55 countries.

The winning projects were implemented from August 2008 to April 2009. Project leaders from these 6 youth organizations came to the Istanbul Forum to share the results and learnings of their projects. Each YSF project was given an opportunity to showcase its work and results.

Issah Ali of the Federation of Youth Clubs of Ghana presented a project that convened leaders from youth organizations in Christian, Muslim and Traditional religious areas of Ghana to participate in workshops on diversity, conflict prevention, human





rights and tolerance. The project helped strengthen relationships and build partnerships between youth from regions prone to violence. The project also raised awareness about the contribution of youth to peace-building among Ghanaian policy-makers, and encouraged them to integrate young people into peacemaking efforts at the national level.

Christopher Malano of the International Movement of Catholic Students and Pax Romana presented a project that brought together Muslim and Catholic university students to learn more about each others' faith experiences and promote mutual respect and understanding. Those involved in the project learned that dialogue belongs to everyone, not only to religious leaders. Another key conclusion was the need to acknowledge one's limitations when engaging in dialogue while leveraging one's strengths for the benefit of all. This project also solidified Pax Romana/IMCS's conviction that youth from all religions have an instantaneous sense of solidarity when it comes to dialogue, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds.

Nikki Delfin presented GenPeace, which is a network of Pilipino organizations and individuals committed to youth-led advocacy for a just and sustainable peace in the Philippines. This project organized a series of youth leadership training workshops on peace and human rights in Mindanao, in the Southern region of the Philippines. The project increased the capacity of youth leaders to mobilize and connect different Muslim, Christian and indigenous youth organizations for a more consolidated youth peace advocacy in the Philippines. While many intense debates among opposing groups preceded the training workshops, youth participants discovered that open dialogue guided by new skills and clear common objectives creates a sense of connection that allows for progress to be made in efforts to address long-standing conflicts.

Samid presented the Cultural Center DamaD, which is a Serbian non-governmental organization whose mission is to foster a culture of dialogue and human rights through creative work in local communities and beyond. This NGO focuses on empowering youth from 7 towns of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Sandzak region of southwest Serbia. The Center helps young people develop leadership skills that can be used to ad-

dress local community issues of relevance to them. The learning outcomes of this project included the utility of focusing socially isolated individuals on common issues as a strategy for effective dialogue. Each individual has unique experiences, and has much to gain from exposure to the experiences of others affected by conflict and tensions. Participants emphasized that the results of the dialogue should be shared with decision-makers to make them aware of the potential of citizens in addressing cultural and religious tensions.

Rejane Ereau of Respect Magazine presented the "God and Me" project, which collected, compared and published testimonies about religion, spirituality, dogmas and traditions from French youth of diverse backgrounds. The project focused on youth from disadvantaged areas and communities that suffer from misrepresentation and discrimination. This grassroots media project published messages from youth on their expectations of religious leaders around creating societies with shared national identities and better education about diverse religions and beliefs. Lessons learned included the need to ensure that media is not just about youth, but also inclusive of other citizens, as such an approach contributes to raising awareness and unpacking taboos and stereotypes.

Juan Martin Camusso presented the Argentinean Youth Organization for the United Nations, which is a pluralist NGO created and directed by young people committed to human development. This organization's project established and strengthened relationships between young people from Latin America and Africa, two regions not often connected. The project promoted networking, offered a 7-day training seminar partnership building, and strengthened dialogue skills on intercultural issues. It also brought to light the need to ensure that new skills and values supporting intercultural dialogue are applied in a sustained manner in order to promote long-lasting and peaceful relations.



Working Breakfast 15. Foundations Engaged in Building Trust and Cooperation among Religions, Cultures and Peoples

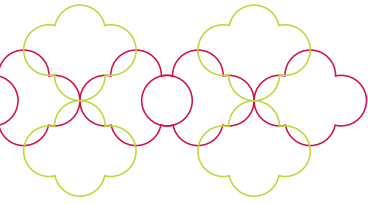
Organized by the Alliance of Civilizations International Network of Foundations

The purpose of the meeting was to further the discussion started at the International Network of Foundations (INF) meeting in Marrakech in February 2009. The INF's primary goal is to bring together foundations working to build trust and cooperation among religions, cultures and peoples, by promoting knowledge exchange, collaboration and advocacy.

The INF aims to achieve these goals in the following ways: a) facilitate information exchange and increase collaboration by acting as a central space for foundations to share information and best practices; b) encourage collaboration among complementary initiatives, especially across regions; and c) provide resources to support

foundations working on AoC-related themes. INF will begin by focusing on the following areas as identified by foundations – education, media, the arts, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, youth leadership, and conversations on religious issues.

The breakfast session also explored further how the International Network of Foundations could successfully carry out its role in managing relations between foundations as well as between foundations and other stakeholders. The session was attended by many notable foundations around the world, including those who attended the earlier meeting in Marrakech.



Working Breakfast 16. Media Dialogues Between Regions: The Euromediterranean Experience

Partner Organizations: European Commission and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures

While many workshop sessions dealt with the potential of the media to impact on intercultural issues – both positively and negatively – this session allowed media representatives to demonstrate their own capacity for promoting understanding between different nations and peoples. The European Neighbourhood Journalism Network (ENJN) – evolving from Euromed and the Media – is a European Commission sponsored consultation with media in the Euromed region about their views on the relationship between the EU and its neighbours and their capacity to report on it. Participants in the consultation present at the Forum addressed the question of whether there is value in the media having its own dialogue as part of the greater process of improving relationships between different cultures.

European Commission (External Relations) representative Tom McGrath opened the briefing with a context-setting explanation of how the initial project was conceived and what it brought to the Commission's understanding of media operations in the region. This was followed by the presentation of Paul Walton, Communications Manager of the Anna Lindh Foundation, on the work of the Foundation and its contributions to the field of media, including bringing together top managers from the media sector in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean and promoting region-wide recognition for the positive action of journalists for intercultural dialogue.

Irish Times Foreign Affairs Editor, and ENJN member, Paul Gillespie then provided an account of the Euromed media dialogue from its start in

2005 to the operation of the network today. He explained how repeat meetings of media professionals over a period of time – more than 500 have been involved to date – had established common trust, confidence and actual cooperation among journalists from very different backgrounds. Discussions have focused on topics of importance to the media – such as training of journalists, their safety and security in carrying out their work and representation of minorities in the profession – as well as on broader issues that affect the way individual media professionals operate: freedom of the press, reporting on terrorism and the challenges of intercultural communication have all been hotly debated.

The consultation now has sufficient credibility in its own right in EU political circles for participants to be requested to give their views on a range of policy issues. Communications have been sent to meetings of EU ministers and the journalists involved have offered input into government and administration work that has a media aspect, such as the Rapid Response Media Mechanism for times of cultural crises in the Euro-Mediterranean region being jointly developed by the Commission, the Alliance and the Anna Lindh Foundation. The understanding and trust generated among the group is seen as reflecting what can be achieved when there is an opportunity for dialogue that is allowed to focus on matters of common interest as well as tackling those areas where differences naturally exist.



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