



**Second Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations  
Istanbul, Turkey, 6-7 April, 2009**

**Plenary Session I**

**Shaping the Global Agenda in Times of Crisis - Why Does Good Governance of Cultural  
Diversity Matter?**

**Background**

Increasingly, intercultural relations are having a significant impact on politics at national and international levels. Perceptions of cultural identity contribute in shaping political agendas at the global level. Negative perceptions of the “other” can enhance polarization, while constructive cooperation can help build confidence between communities and support coalition-building at the global political level. In this context, it is crucial to develop inclusive policies that help establish harmonious and constructive relations among diverse communities and that build on the potential for creativity and progress that cultural diversity brings to societies.

**Organization**

The aim of this facilitated dialogue between global leaders is to discuss the broad issue of growing diversity in the world and to what extent the issue of good governance of cultural diversity is shaping the global agenda. The debate will focus on different perspectives on how the Alliance of Civilizations can assist in practical terms in managing diversity. Some of the key questions with which they might engage are detailed below.

**Key questions**

- What lessons can be drawn from successful political and diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and improve intercultural relations in divided or post-conflict communities worldwide?

- How can initiatives that help to connect cultures at civil society level and address prejudice and marginalization help lay the groundwork for a political culture that is not premised on confrontation, but on engagement?
- What can be done to ensure that initiatives aimed at building understanding between communities are effectively coordinated with broader diplomatic and foreign policy objectives?
- When different cultures view freedom and equality differently, is it possible to reach international compromises in the areas of gender rights, media freedom, economic equity, religious freedom and education, linguistic rights, minority rights and so on?