



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

Religions for Peace

Breakfast Session 8: Engaging Non-State Actors in Resolving Conflicts and Promoting Peace and Development

Non-state actors, specifically religious communities and their leaders and faith-based organizations increasingly play a major role in promoting peace by advancing conflict transformation and development. Religious leaders and personalities are engaged in peace processes and reconciliation efforts, while their institutions have for centuries engaged in the delivery of crucial services, ranging from humanitarian assistance to health and education and cultural exchanges.

The importance of partnering with multi-religious efforts to build peace and advance development is increasingly recognized by the United Nations, governments, and other actors. Effective models of partnership can further harness the power inherent in cooperation among these groups.

This Working Session will present two models of engaging religious leaders and groups for joint action and partnership:

1) *Religions for Peace*, the world's largest multi-religious coalition, will describe how multi-religious councils built on the national, regional and global level are useful instruments for action which include partnerships with the UN and other stakeholders. Examples of *Religions for Peace's* work on conflict transformation and the HIV and AIDS pandemic will be highlighted.

2) The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) will describe its efforts to build an Interfaith Movement for Population and Development. Building on a legacy of 30 years of partnership with faith-based organizations around the world, UNFPA will offer examples of work on maternal health and migration.

The session will provide an occasion to make concrete recommendations to the Alliance of Civilization on ways to advance partnerships among religious leaders and groups and United Nations, governments, and other actors.