



ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS ANNUAL FORUM
15-16 JANUARY, MADRID, SPAIN

Tuesday, 15 January

9:00- 10:00

Opening Plenary

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

10:15-11:50

Plenary Session I: The Alliance of Civilizations: Managing Diversity in the Era of Globalization

The aim of this facilitated dialogue between global leaders is to introduce the broad issue of growing diversity in the world, the challenges and opportunities that it presents for relations within and between societies, and how the AoC can assist in practical terms in managing diversity. It will seek to orient Forum participants towards practical and constructive perspectives: what can we do?

Panelists will include 6-8 high profile political leaders, leaders of multi-lateral agencies, and renowned personalities.

12:00-13:35

Plenary Session II: Political Challenges to Building Cross-Cultural Understanding

This session will explore the primary political issues and conflicts that threaten to polarize communities broadly across cultural, religious, or other lines, thereby threatening international stability. Panelists will be asked to provide a realistic assessment of the prospects for improvement in these situations and how communities may help prevent their further deterioration into intractable identity-based conflicts. (Issues likely to be covered include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation in Iraq, widespread political repression in predominantly Muslim countries, and the polarization of views).

Panelists will include 6-8 high profile political leaders, leaders of multi-lateral agencies, and renowned personalities.

13:45-15:00

Lunch

15:30-17:30

High Level Political Dialogue of the Group of Friends: “Reinforcing our commitment to the Alliance”

Members of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends (GoF) – a network of over 70 countries and international organizations supporting the work of the Alliance – will be invited to provide input and make commitments to the work of the AoC as well as to present plans for national or regional implementation of the AoC implementation plan.

Participant: Members of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends.

15:30-17:30

Working Sessions (simultaneous)

Working Session 1: Consolidating international partnerships

This working session will provide an opportunity to reflect on the specific challenges of promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding in the coming years. It will focus on the development and strengthening of partnerships among international and multilateral organizations involved in the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Participants will be encouraged to explore joint activities and programming, cooperative agreements and partnerships regionally and across program areas. The focus will be on how the Alliance can contribute to enhance, highlight and support efforts to promote cross-cultural relations globally. On the basis of cooperation agreements and Memoranda of Understanding between the AoC and international organizations, the discussion will explore the specific role that the Alliance can play in international efforts to build cultural understanding in the areas of youth, education and the media.

Participants: Representatives of international organizations

Working Session 2 - Building the AoC Clearinghouse: media literacy education

The AoC is developing an online clearinghouse which gathers knowledge, expertise and best practices in the area of intercultural understanding. The AoC has developed the first theme of this clearinghouse – media literacy education – and the session will kick off with a presentation of this theme. This session will be an opportunity to discuss successful media literacy and media education programs as well as explore ways in which they could be developed in other countries or regions. Of particular importance is the challenge of maintaining the relevance of the clearinghouse, so that it becomes a participatory, dynamic and interactive “knowledge community” which fosters innovation and exchange of ideas.

Participants: Representatives of foundations, think-tanks, universities and research bodies.

Working session 3: The Role of Religious Leaders and Communities in Promoting Shared Security

This session will explore the specific roles that religious communities and their leaders can play in promoting peace and shared security—a notion that highlights the reciprocal and positive dimensions of security and the collective responsibility to achieve it. While religious traditions have often historically functioned as a moral source for order, they have also sometimes lead to the misguided perception that religion itself is the root

cause of intercultural conflict. This session will explore how interfaith dialogue and cooperation can open up new paths for constructively relating the world's diverse religions to the common good by identifying shared moral commitments and will seek to identify ways to publicize efforts of constructive religious engagement so as to make them more widely available to communities around the world.

Participants: Politicians, public personalities and religious leaders.

Working Session 4: Innovative Uses of Mass Media to Promote Cross-Cultural Understanding

This session will explore new media approaches to addressing the challenge of building bridges across cultures and religions. The session will focus on identifying possibilities and innovations underway in mass media's contribution to cross-cultural understanding, and mechanisms by which such media can be broadly shared and distributed.

Participants: Senior media executives, publishers, producers and editors.

20:00

Official Reception

Wednesday, 16 January

8:30-10:00

Breakfast

International Foundation Working Group

The working group will bring together senior representatives of private foundations, corporations, and individual philanthropists who are concerned with building cross-cultural understanding, decreasing polarization, and fostering tolerance, openness, and collaboration (with a particular focus on relations between the West and Muslim countries). The group will serve as a network for donors to exchange information, share best practices, listen to experts, tackle difficult questions, and identify knowledge gaps that require additional research and analysis to advance work in this field. The working group will focus specifically on areas where there is the greatest need and there appears to be potential for great impact, such as in the fields of education, media, the arts, youth, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, religio-political conversations, and unofficial diplomacy processes.

Participants: Foundations, philanthropists and corporate sector representatives.

9:00-11:00

Working Sessions (simultaneous)

Working Session 5: Youth Approaches to Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

This working group will highlight ongoing intercultural and interreligious exchanges (online or face-to-face) and leadership training programs organized by and for youth. It will also explore how youth can contribute to improving the learning processes of university student exchange programs. The exchanges and leadership part of the session will place emphasis on projects that have been led by civil society organizations and that can be replicated, especially by participating youth networks and youth councils. The working group will address some of the challenges to such work; the measures of success for ongoing exchange programs; how to scale up such initiatives; and how to ensure such programs reach youth in more remote regions or segments of the population. The session will also look at how international student exchange programs promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue and explore ways in which the impact of these programs could be maximized, particularly with regard to promoting students and young people as intercultural “bridge-builders”.

Participants: organizations leading in intercultural and interreligious youth programming; youth networks; youth councils; managers of major international student scholarship programs

Working Session 6 - Conflict Prevention, Religion, and Politics at the Community Level

This session will highlight insights from experts and activists who organize, facilitate, or study on-going dialogue processes with diverse religious-political movements in the hope of contributing to conflict prevention. The group will explore efforts to develop lines of communication and relationships of trust with policy-makers and other relevant actors who are central to managing religio-political relations.

Participants: Political, civil society and think-tank leaders who have participated in, organized, and/or facilitated dialogue processes involving secular and religious political activists with the goal of fostering mutual understanding and preventing conflict.

Working Session 7 - Rapid Response Media Mechanism

The aim of this session will be to discuss the development of a Rapid Response Media Mechanism to provide a platform for voices that can help reduce tensions in times of cross-cultural crises. To bring this initiative to life, the Alliance intends to develop a broad network of personalities and experts who are strongly involved in cross-cultural issues and can be mobilized as soon as a crisis emerges. Working closely with media editors and producers, the Alliance will seek to maximize the impact of their perspectives on public opinion with a view to help framing the debate in less polarizing terms.

Participants: Editors and producers of media outlets from diverse regions, representatives of public relations firms, prominent personalities and experts interested in contributing media content during times of heightened cross-cultural tensions.

Working Session 8: Engaging the Corporate Sector in the AoC - How Business and Increased Cross Cultural Understanding Can Benefit Each Other

Corporate leaders will be invited to discuss the contribution of the private sector in promoting intercultural understanding at two levels: first, they will have the opportunity to explore the constructive role played by the private sector in bridging cultural, religious and ethnic gaps in communities in conflict. Examples of best practice in developing business partnerships across cultural divides will be highlighted and the potential for their replication and expansion will be discussed; second, corporate executives will be able to focus on the role played by private sector companies and multinationals in promoting a culture of diversity. They will also be asked to examine how their experience in managing diverse workforces can be instructive for efforts to improve cross-cultural understanding; and how they can contribute to the advancement of the Alliance of Civilizations.

Participants: CEOs and other representatives from the corporate sector who have demonstrated leadership in supporting or initiating efforts to improve cross-cultural understanding.

11:15 – 12:45

Plenary III: From Global Talk to Local Action

This session aims at mobilizing support for the AoC at the community level. It will feature high-profile personalities and Mayors who support the work and objectives of the AoC. The discussion will focus on the role they all can play to promote citizenship and cultural understanding. Drawing on their own experience, they will share their views about ways in which to avoid segregation at the community level and about how cross-cultural initiatives developed at a local level can be expanded and made relevant to some of the divisive cross-cultural tensions in the world today. Public figures and Mayors will also be encouraged to explore how they can collaborate to raise awareness about bridge-building and reconciliation initiatives among diverse cultures.

Panelists: High-profile personalities, civil society leaders and Mayors of major world cities

13:00- 13:45

Closing plenary

14:00

Lunch