THIRD GLOBAL FORUM OF THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS, in Rio de Janeiro
BRIDGING CULTURES, BUILDING PEACE

Session ‘Roundtable: Joint Reporting Across Cultures’, 27 May 2010, 09.00 – 10.30

Partner organization

International Center for Journalists

Background

The winners of the first X-Cultural Reporting Award will discuss the challenges and opportunities of working on joint reporting and writing projects across cultural boundaries. Jointly created by the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the International Center for Journalists, the X-Cultural Reporting Award was launched following a journalist training workshop in Alexandria, which brought together 45 journalists from the Arab world, Europe, and the USA. Over a period of three days, they participated in hands-on workshops on writing opinion pieces and using new digital tools and engaged in vigorous debates on stereotypes and mutual perceptions.

First place winners Ruth Eglash of the Jerusalem Post and Hani Hazaimeh of The Jordan Times joined forces to investigate Israeli and Jordanian young people’s perceptions of each other, 15 years after the two countries signed a peace treaty and wrote columns about it in The Huffington Post, The Jerusalem Post, Palestinian note and Radio Chicagoland. Second place awardees Asmaa Fathy, of El Mawqef Al Arabi, Aleksander Milosevic, of Daily Serbia and Tarek Mounir of Egyptian newspaper Al Raai developed a website called Hijabskirt Info. The site creatively tackles biases in fashion and culture in both the Western and Muslim worlds. Third place winners Naveed Ahmad, of Pakistan’s GEO TV, Alia Turki Al-Rabeo of Kuwaiti newspaper Awan and Ruzanna Tantushyan produced another outstanding multimedia website called Silent Heroes that profiles individuals who create projects that cut across social and cultural misunderstandings.

Questions for discussion

Panelists will use their own experiences in creating joint media projects to address the following questions:

1. What are the main challenges faced by journalists who attempt to develop joint projects aimed at building bridges between communities?
2. What do these challenges tell us about the responsibilities of journalists and the role they can play in divided societies?
3. How can journalists collaborate effectively to improve mutual perceptions across diverse cultures?
4. In a rapidly evolving media environment, how can new media and social networking be used to support efforts to improve mutual perceptions across cultural and religious divides?