THIRD GLOBAL FORUM OF THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS, in Rio de Janeiro

BRIDGING CULTURES, BUILDING PEACE


Background

The starting point for this session would be Goal 3 of the MDGs: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. This session will draw on lessons from good practices to empower women through education (both formal and non-formal) to be full participants in the fields of politics, peace-making and the economy. Panelists who have implemented these good practices and can demonstrate their impact, both in education and in wider society, will be drawn from all major regions. An astute moderator will tease out these implementers’ successful tactics to inspire others, receive commitments, and offer examples to be replicated in other regions of the world.

As girls get more access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education, they are able to contribute to society as successful workers, healthy mothers, and full participants in the political life of their societies. Further, it has been argued that educating women (gender perhaps being the most visible element of cultural diversity) is the best way to fight extremism and poverty. The full contribution of girls and societies in women demands policy and legal actions by authorities as well as civil society. As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said (in remarks delivered March 5, 2010 by Rachel Mayanja, Secretary-General’s Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), “We can only win freedom from fear and space for women and girls to flourish by strong policies and laws, effective advocacy and the examples of role models.”

Also, in recent remarks (on April 28, 2010), US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said, “There isn’t any way we can increase peace, prosperity, stability, and security throughout the world unless women are full partners – full partners in the home and the family, full partners in the community and the country and the world.” Being full partners in all of these spheres is enhanced by education of girls and women as well as boys and men to prevent violence against women (whether at home or in conflict situations), uncovering indigenous traditions of the empowerment of women, and initiating policies to encourage greater participation of women in the economy and society.

The objective of this session is to highlight innovative practices all over the world, implemented by men and women, to empower women through education to enable them to become full participants in society.
Questions for discussion

1. How do we empower women through education to be full participants in their societies in the sectors of politics, peace-making, and the economy?
2. What kind of education for boys and men do we need to empower women through education?
3. What are the respective roles of formal and informal/non-formal education in empowering women through education?

Organizing partners

The UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and MenEngage (MenEngage is a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that seeks to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality)