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ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

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Open Roundtable
On

“Addressing Islamophobia: Building on unused opportunities
for mutual respect and inclusion”

Third Forum of the Alliance

Rio de Janeiro,

27 May (16:30-18:00)

2010

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear members of the Group of Friends

- First of all, I would like to thank the co-organizers of this Round-table for their active collaboration in its preparation, as well as the participants who sometimes had to adapt their agendas to make their participation possible.

- I do not want to take up too much of our valuable time because I have already shared with you some thoughts on this topical issue.

- Let me, however, quickly stress two points.

- Firstly, on the purpose of this session.

- In supporting and participating in this session, my aim as High Representative for the Alliance is really to see that it serves as a platform to engage a meaningful dialogue about confronting Islamophobia.

- For this to happen, it means that we need to go beyond words, calls, let alone accusations. It means that we need to move to action.

- But for that we need to recognize that we face problems on both sides. This is a prerequisite to avoid deepening the double-helix spiral of denial and victimization.

- Secondly, from this session some concrete proposals for action should come out – action at global and regional level.

- In this regard, I would like to stress that in addition to local action, which always builds on the concrete situation on the ground, we cannot ignore that there is also a global dimension that has to be taken into consideration if we want be serious about combating Islamophobia, understood within the broad concepts of racism and racial discrimination.

➤ And so, in my view, a strategy for change, thought globally, makes sense, as well as regional strategies, although I am in your hands and keen on the exchange of views that we will hold here.

➤ Many thanks