



General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 August 2011

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session

Item 15 of the provisional agenda*

Culture of peace

Letter dated 11 August 2011 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

As you know, the Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 under the auspices of the United Nations, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, in order to promote the agenda of good governance of cultural diversity at both the global and local levels and to help counter divisions, polarization and extremism within and among societies.

Events and news headlines underscore the relevance of the Alliance as a leading initiative to deal with polarization, transitions and dilemmas of our current time. At the end of a decade of great challenges to intercultural understanding, I remain convinced of the usefulness of the innovative work carried out by the Alliance as a platform to bring together a unique constellation of partners at all levels, committed to harnessing the resources of cultural diversity for peace and development.

The international community continues to provide the Alliance with broad political support, with the Group of Friends now numbering 130 members. By its resolution 64/14 of 22 December 2009, the General Assembly expressed its support for the Alliance. I look forward to more countries joining the Group of Friends and actively supporting the Alliance, including financially. In this regard, I should like to underscore the importance of the replenishment mechanism which will complement the voluntary Trust Fund of the Alliance and will help to provide sustained, diversified and predictable support for the initiatives of the Alliance.

I am pleased to present to you the fourth annual report which the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, President Jorge Sampaio, has submitted to me together with the third implementation plan (2011-2013). The report highlights the main activities carried out between August 2010 and July 2011 in accordance with the second implementation plan (2009-2011), which set out the agenda of the Alliance for the period covered and defined concrete initiatives to be carried out.

* A/66/150.

Good progress has been made in planning for the Doha Forum, to be hosted by the Government of Qatar from 11 to 13 December 2011, which is expected to raise the visibility of the Alliance and enhance political commitment to its goals. The Doha Forum will mainly focus on the topical issue of boosting development through a culture of peace and dialogue, thus developing synergies between the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals and the mission and fields of action of the Alliance of Civilizations.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present report to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon

Alliance of Civilizations: fourth annual report of the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

3 August 2011

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	4
II. Overview of progress	4
III. Consolidating the Alliance of Civilizations.	7
IV. Main initiatives and activities	9
V. Preparation of the Fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations	19
VI. Outreach.	20
VII. Governance: Trust Fund and secretariat	20
VIII. Conclusion	21

I. Introduction

1. The Alliance of Civilizations aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures, and help counter forces fuelling polarization and extremism within and among societies. Furthermore, it provides a platform for promoting good governance of cultural diversity. This initiative is anchored in the common framework of principles and values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments.

2. The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 as a political initiative of the Secretary-General, under the co-sponsorship of the President of the Government of Spain and the Prime Minister of Turkey. It emerged from a conviction that, in order to achieve sustainable peace and development, long-standing divisions and misperceptions between cultures, in particular between the so-called Western and Muslim societies, need to be addressed.

3. In April 2007, the Secretary-General appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. President Sampaio sets the Alliance's agenda and ensures its implementation. As a political initiative, the Alliance promotes dialogue aimed at delivering change on the ground. To that end, biennial implementation plans prioritize goals and provide a framework for action on the part of partners and stakeholders.

4. The Alliance draws its strength from the expanding community of its Group of Friends currently comprising 130 Governments and international organizations, the Group provides the necessary political support for the High Representative, acts as the driving force of the Alliance and plays a vital role in the Alliance's implementation process. Through a broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach, the High Representative seeks the input, advice and support of its members on all key aspects of the Alliance's activities.

5. This is the fourth annual report submitted by the High Representative. It highlights the main activities carried out from July 2010 to July 2011, in accordance with the second implementation plan (2009-2011). The plan's implementation reflected, to some extent, unfolding international developments such as the new context in the Middle East and North Africa region, the growing tensions among and within societies fuelling extremism and intolerance across Europe, and the topical issue of the influence of religion on peace and development. Much energy was also devoted to the preparation of the Fourth Annual Forum, to be held in Doha in December 2011 at the invitation of Qatar.

II. Overview of progress

6. The Alliance further established itself as a leading platform for intercultural dialogue that delivers, both between and among increasingly diverse societies. The main purpose of the activities carried out was to consolidate the results achieved so far and advance the Alliance's goals in a world marked by a global economic crisis; persistent cultural, ethnic, religious and social tensions; and changing perspectives in parts of the Middle East and North Africa region.

7. The timely adoption of the Alliance's Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean at a regional conference hosted by the Government of Malta in November 2010, as

well as the preparation and the launching of its action plan (with the “Cairo Dialogues” held on 27 and 28 July 2011 in Cairo), were main achievements of the period under review.

8. Furthermore, the regional forums in Australia and India, organized by the Global Dialogue Foundation and local partners under the auspices of the Alliance, allowed the Alliance to expand its outreach and significantly develop its footing at grass-roots level.

9. Since January 2011, intensive preparatory work has been under way in close cooperation with Qatari representatives to prepare the Fourth Forum of the Alliance, to be held in Doha from 11 to 13 December 2011. A draft concept paper for the Forum was presented to the Group of Friends for comments in order to engage the whole community in the preparation of the annual gathering from its very inception. Apart from taking stock of progress made on the Alliance’s agenda since the Rio de Janeiro Forum and featuring topical debates and new projects, the Fourth Forum will draw attention to the connection between cultural diversity and development and will explore further ways of reinforcing these links for the benefit of peace and sustainable development.

10. A pre-forum was held in Doha in May 2011 for the purpose of holding consultations with civil society organizations not only as part of a strategy of consolidating the role of civil society in the pursuit of the Alliance’s goals, but also as part of the Qatari vision of the Fourth Forum as a key opportunity for the Alliance to achieve a turning point in terms of reaching the grass roots, raising visibility, reinforcing commitments to action and bringing the Millennium Development Goals into its agenda.

11. Among the priorities identified in the implementation plan for 2009-2011, further progress was made in the majority of areas, while concerns appeared in others that have still to be addressed.

12. Good progress was made in the following areas:

(a) Consolidation of the global scope of the Alliance and its universal perspective, following the enlargement of the Group of Friends and the diversification of actions around the world;

(b) Global recognition of the Alliance as one of the major United Nations platforms for intercultural dialogue and cooperation following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/14 on the Alliance on 10 November 2009; the Third Forum held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in May 2010; and intensified activities of the High Representative in various international forums to make the Alliance visible, promote its activities and seek partnerships;

(c) Consolidation of the role of the Alliance as a catalyst, a bridge builder and a convener;

(d) The adoption of the Regional Strategy for South-East Europe in Sarajevo in December 2009 and the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean in Malta in November 2010; and the start of work on a regional strategy for Latin America;

(e) Significant development of the main ongoing projects of the Alliance launched in Madrid, Istanbul and Rio de Janeiro;

(f) The launching of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations in Baku in April 2011;

(g) Good progress in relations with the private sector through concrete partnerships on a number of projects described below;

(h) A good step forward in relations with civil society through the pre-forum held in Doha on 3 and 4 May 2011, with a view to the possible setting up of an Alliance of Civilizations civil society platform.

13. However, achievements on a number of other priority goals — namely enhancing the sustainability of the Alliance and improving its overall communications strategy — did not entirely meet expectations.

14. The expansion of the Group of Friends had little impact on the Alliance's resources and capacities. Therefore, progress in making the Alliance a sustainable initiative has become a matter of great urgency, prompting the High Representative to propose a replenishment mechanism for the Trust Fund and the holding of its first session in the latter part of 2011.

15. The successful setting up of a replenishment mechanism for the Trust Fund of the Alliance requires further commitment by the members. Without the combined efforts of all constituencies and partners, the replenishment mechanism will not meet the goal of providing sustained, diversified and predictable support for the initiatives of the Alliance.

16. Reference should be made here to efforts made within the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to have the Alliance included in the list of international organizations eligible for official development assistance. In spite of the strong support of a number of countries, it was not possible to achieve this aim this year. However, it was decided that contributions earmarked to specific developmentally focused activities could be reported as bilateral aid. That decision, which can be reviewed next year, should a change justify it, opens up new avenues for cooperation.

17. While a new website was launched and some high-profile events were organized during the reporting period, more work is still needed towards an effective communications strategy. The close attention devoted to outreach in the preparation of the Doha Forum should help.

18. To sum up, the evolution of the Alliance over the past 12 months (August 2010-July 2011) shows that because of its considerable progress, the Alliance is now facing a number of significant challenges, namely:

(a) The increasing diversity of its members brings additional competing demands and expectations about the Alliance. Ensuring a unified vision and coherent and consistent actions is bound to be a permanent challenge;

(b) As a global initiative facing an ever-increasing number of demands, the Alliance has to consolidate its strategy and tools and further develop its capacity to deliver; otherwise, it will fail to live up to expectations.

19. Bloodshed linked to terrorist attacks and a rise in intercultural tensions and intolerance seem to have increased in many parts of the world, including in democratic societies. Confronting this trend towards extremism and intolerance is the *raison d'être* of the Alliance and should therefore remain its main priority.

III. Consolidating the Alliance of Civilizations

20. The main priority for the period covered by the present report was the consolidation of the Alliance as a global platform for intercultural dialogue and cooperation, further to its particular focus on relations between the so-called Western and Muslim societies. The following points may be highlighted in this regard.

Group of Friends community

21. Support for the Alliance continued to grow with an increase in membership, bringing the number of Group of Friends members to 130 (108 countries and 22 international organizations).¹

22. The Group of Friends met three times, twice at the level of permanent representatives and once at ministerial level. Consultations were also conducted through a wide range of bilateral contacts (see below) and through written communications:

(a) The High Representative sent a letter to all members recalling his priorities for 2011 and asking for additional suggestions;

(b) Members of the Group of Friends from the Latin American region were invited to engage in the preparation of their regional strategy following the momentum created by the Rio de Janeiro Forum;

(c) European Union countries and European regional organizations were consulted on a new regional initiative to be developed by the Alliance in 2011: "Reconciling diversity and cohesion: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in the European Union".

23. For the first time, members of the Group of Friends were invited to contribute suggestions for the third implementation plan (2011-2013). As usual, they were also invited to contribute to setting the agenda for the next annual forum.

24. Malta organized the first regional conference for the Mediterranean on 8 and 9 November 2010 (see para. 41 below).

25. The High Representative had a steady flow of contacts with members of the Group of Friends. He held many bilateral meetings with members and representatives of Governments and/or organizations of the Group (namely in the margins of the summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in November 2010 in Lisbon and of the sixth ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies in Vilnius, in June 2011) and participated in a significant number of multilateral forums to secure support for the Alliance and its ongoing activities. He gave high priority to negotiation of the Alliance's Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean during the second half of 2010, when the Union for the Mediterranean was blocked, as well as the various regional forums of dialogue. Furthermore, he developed several contacts with countries from the Gulf region, Asia, Europe and North Africa. During the first six months of 2011, the High Representative devoted particular attention to emerging changes in some countries

¹ The following new members joined the Group of Friends during the reporting period: Ghana, Georgia, African Union, Palestinian Authority, Viet Nam, Guyana, World Tourism Organization and Mongolia (announced).

of the Middle East and North Africa region, participated in various meetings and visited Egypt and Qatar twice, as well as visiting Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

26. The reporting period was also marked by contacts with heads of international and regional organizations, to strengthen synergies and secure the implementation of memorandums of understanding. The High Representative notably participated in various meetings organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Human Rights Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the League of Arab States and the Council of Europe and its North-South Centre.

Focal points

27. In 2008, members of the Group of Friends were invited to appoint focal points to oversee implementation of the Alliance's goals at national level, notably through national plans, and to coordinate with the secretariat of the Alliance. By 30 June 2011, 79 countries and 21 international organizations had appointed focal points.

28. The Alliance ensured coordination of their efforts and exchanges by organizing focal point meetings hosted by Germany in Berlin (October 2010) and by Qatar in Doha (May 2011), issuing a periodical newsletter and holding regular consultations. Focal points were involved in various meetings within the Mediterranean regional process and in the framework of the Regional Strategy for Latin America. They also initiated regional consultations among themselves on an informal regional basis.

Thematic platforms

29. The work of thematic platforms continued to develop. Based on a proposal by Switzerland, the platforms bring together small groups of countries interested in further exploring specific themes and putting forward proposals for concerted or joint action. One platform focuses on media literacy education, particularly on social media and the cultivation of cultural stereotypes. The other aims at bridging gaps in mobilizing humanitarian and development assistance.

30. The "humanitarian" platform held one meeting in Berlin and one in Bern. It stressed the importance of better cooperation with and among faith-inspired organizations to improve the quality of humanitarian and development work and advance the cause of breaking down barriers between people.

Civil society consultations, global networks and partnerships

31. On the joint initiative of the High Representative and Her Highness Sheikha Mozah of Qatar, a major civil society consultation was organized in Doha on 3 and 4 May 2011, as a pre-forum event.

32. Efforts were also scaled up to build and/or consolidate various interfaith networks and networks targeting specific groups — youth, universities, think tanks and foundations — and to set up partnerships involving the private sector. Public-private partnerships are playing an increasingly important role in the work of the Alliance. They form the basis for the development of concrete projects with a global dimension, such as the "Dialogue Café" with Cisco, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and a number of other partners; the World Intercultural Facility for Innovation with the BMW Group to help identify and replicate the most innovative

grass-roots initiatives for cross-cultural bridge-building; the Alliance of Civilizations summer schools; a joint task force with Vivendi on measuring the impact of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity; and the “Do one thing for diversity and inclusion” campaign made possible through a partnership with 20 of the largest firms in Silicon Valley (Yahoo, Intuit, Intel and others).

33. As for global interfaith networks, the Alliance continued to collaborate closely with countries, agencies and non-governmental organizations working on issues of interfaith dialogue and faith-based cooperation with a view to building on complementarities. This work includes, in particular, engaging with the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Saudi Arabia’s initiative on interfaith dialogue, and the Jordanian initiative for a World Interfaith Harmony Week. The High Representative sent a video message to the meeting of the European Council of Religious Leaders held in Moscow in June 2011.

The Alliance as a soft-power tool of cultural and preventive diplomacy

34. The High Representative intensified his action aimed at developing the Alliance as a soft-power tool of cultural and preventive diplomacy. He furthered contacts and dialogue with political, religious, media and civil society representatives who can use their influence to achieve progress on common objectives. On individual occasions — either publicly or discreetly depending on circumstances — he expressed concerns at mounting tensions and stressed the need for preventive, long-term action to counter intolerance and extremism. In contributions to conferences, political meetings or media, he invited interlocutors and stakeholders to reflect on issues such as political and religious pluralism, the role of intercultural dialogue and cooperative action or the conditions of social cohesion in increasingly diverse societies with reference to specific problems. In addition to underlining the role that national plans and regional strategies can play as strategic tools combining a top-down with a bottom-up approach, the High Representative suggested that new opportunities be created for people-to-people diplomacy in divided or conflict-prone societies, and that an early warning mechanism be developed with regard to intercultural tensions on the basis of the existing network of global experts (see paras. 64-68 below).

35. Initiatives such as the “White paper and the white process: from competing narratives to cooperative action”, aimed at implementing the relevant recommendations of the report of the High-level Group, particularly its annex III, continued to receive his special attention.

IV. Main initiatives and activities

36. A number of initiatives were further developed during the reporting period to support the broad objectives of the Alliance.

A. National plans and regional strategies

National plans

37. Encouraged by the High Representative, 26 States are currently implementing their national plans: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, the

Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

38. More plans are in preparation as part of a long-term, gradual exercise to be carried out by countries at their own pace, using their own implementation channels.

39. Lessons learned were informally discussed among a number of focal points in May 2011. Three points were stressed:

(a) Although these plans cannot follow a single model, they should be more than a list of existing programmes. They should focus on removing barriers to equality and fighting prejudice (“breaking down walls”), helping develop intercultural skills (“building bridges”) and creating spaces for respectful exchange (“sharing spaces”);

(b) Because of the combination of political backing at the top and grass-roots participation at the bottom, national plans need coordination and critical evaluation;

(c) Reflection should be encouraged on measurement tools and observatories. The political backing and coordination provided by international organizations are welcome. The Alliance should closely follow the drafting and implementation of national plans and support further exchanges between countries.

Regional strategies

40. The Alliance has been calling upon groups of countries facing common challenges to generate common actions in cooperation with civil society. The first formal initiative along these lines was the adoption of the Alliance of Civilizations Regional Strategy for South-East Europe in Sarajevo in December 2009, followed in summer 2010 by the plan of action for its implementation.

41. Work launched in Alexandria, Egypt early in 2010 culminated in the adoption on 9 November 2010 of the Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation for the Mediterranean. The strategy was adopted at a conference in Valetta hosted by Malta, where the outline of a plan of action based on projects proposed by civil society partners was also adopted. This led in May 2011 to the release of a plan for a number of prioritized actions, taking into consideration the new context in the Middle East and North Africa region.

42. The funding of these two plans of action has admittedly been a problem. However, consultations are going on for the allocation of international funds made available to support reform in countries in transition. The further funding of both plans of action will also be addressed in the context of the replenishment session.

43. The delays have not prevented a few projects from being developed already. These include a history teaching project, the main topic of a seminar held in Slovenia with the Council of Europe, building on a number of projects developed by the European Association of History Educators (Euroclio) with the support of the Soros Institute. Talks for a Dialogue Café in Belgrade are well advanced and a first round of contacts was made in Podgorica to identify potential partners in Montenegro. Before the end of 2011, Dialogue Cafés are to be opened in Ramallah and Tel Aviv, and funds are being raised for Tunis, Cairo and Istanbul. The 2011 summer school for young diplomats was held in Podgorica with the participation of

the High Representative. The research and mobility grants for European studies (Charles V European Award) from the European Academy of Yuste Foundation were announced and the first candidates were selected.

44. In response to an invitation by Peru, work is under way on a Regional Strategy for Latin America. Focal points meeting in Lima in December 2010 and March 2011 developed a preliminary draft. Work is continuing on a plan of action, which will build on work carried out by regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society partners. The work is expected to be completed in 2011.

45. The High Representative discussed a proposal to develop a Regional Strategy for Central Asia with the 2010 Kazakh Chairmanship of OSCE. Some African countries have expressed an interest in concerted subregional initiatives.

B. Multi-stakeholder initiatives, including projects and programmes led by the Alliance

46. The Alliance acts as a platform for the development of practical initiatives which help deliver change on the ground in the four fields of action. Many initiatives are implemented in application of the existing network of memorandums of understanding between the Alliance and UNESCO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the League of Arab States, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, but also with a number of non-governmental organizations, foundations, universities, etc.

47. The sections that follow give a good overall picture of ongoing projects and initiatives.

Education field of action

Education about religions and beliefs platform

48. The Alliance of Civilizations Education about Religions and Beliefs Online Learning Community (www.aocerb.org) has become an important Internet resource for learning about diverse religions and beliefs. With a network of 18 academic and civil society partners spanning the globe, the Learning Community has also evolved into a platform for educational activities; a facilitator of discussions on the role of faith-based organizations; and a synergizing agent for the Alliance on the role of interfaith activities in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural education, the exploration of good practices and the impact of teaching about issues such as religions, ethics education and intercultural education.

49. The Alliance participated in several workshop sessions on religion and the United Nations. It lent its patronage to a major gathering of young Muslims and Jews from 25 countries at a Muslim-Jewish conference held in Vienna from 1 to 6 August 2010, to combat intolerance through education and media. It participated in the final consultation meeting with OSCE, UNESCO and the Council of Europe on guidelines for educators on Islamophobia, held in Vienna on 16 May 2011.

Alliance of Civilizations research network

50. The Alliance has built up a research network of think tanks and universities from around the world to collaborate in areas of mutual interest. It has 20 members, including academic institutions and networks comprising over 200 institutions. Its dedicated web page on the Alliance website (www.unaoc.org) apprises visitors of opportunities in the area of conferences, publications, fellowships and research grants in areas of interest to the Alliance.

Enhancing academic exchanges

51. The Alliance continued to play its advocacy and partnership role in promoting exchanges with a view to favouring cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. Through its various websites and pages, the Alliance has circulated hundreds of opportunities for cross-cultural study and research. The 2010 Rio de Janeiro Forum featured a working meeting on the challenges and opportunities for academic exchanges. Some of the major challenges faced by traditional exchange programmes are the costs, legal issues, breadth of participation and the tendency to avoid regions that may be physically dangerous. With this in mind, the Alliance has entered into a partnership with Soliya (see www.soliya.net) to promote Soliya's "Exchange 2.0" programme to expand Web-enabled international cross-cultural educational experiences worldwide.

Educational outreach

52. For the third successive year, the Alliance partnered with the Istanbul Center of Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America and others on an art and essay contest for middle- and high-school students. There were over 2,500 entries for the contest theme of "Empathy: walking in another's shoes".

53. The Alliance worked closely with the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat on the second Global Model United Nations Conference, on the theme "Towards an alliance of civilizations: bridging cultures to achieve peace and development", held in Kuala Lumpur from 14 to 18 August 2010. During 2010, the Alliance and its activities were also introduced to several educational institutions and non-governmental organization audiences in the United States, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, China, Colombia and Italy.

Youth field of action*Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations*

54. The first convention of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations was held in Baku in April 2011. The Movement aims to highlight the strong message of peace and understanding set forth by youth. It also seeks to advance the mainstreaming of their voices and participation in the initiatives of the Alliance.

55. In Baku, 130 youth from over 80 countries worked together on the charter and the action plan for this initiative. The discussions demonstrated a high level of commitment. The Alliance will now work with leaders of the Movement to implement the decisions made in Baku.

Youth Solidarity Fund

56. The second edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund was completed with great success. This international small grants programme provides seed funding of up to US\$ 30,000 to youth organizations advancing intercultural and interfaith dialogue at local, national, regional or international levels. Projects funded under this programme are developed and implemented in their entirety by youth organizations.

57. The 18 projects funded during the last round were implemented in 14 countries,² mostly in Africa, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2 projects). A global report outlining the results of these 18 projects is currently being developed and will be ready in the latter part of 2011. It is estimated that 33,000 individuals, mostly youth, benefited from the 18 projects.

Youth website

58. The Alliance's youth website (<http://unaocyouth.org>) continues to grow and attract more partners. It is a one-stop website where users can obtain, post and exchange information about (a) other youth organizations; (b) opportunities available to youth wanting to get involved in Alliance-related matters; and (c) tools to enhance their capacity to do so.

59. In addition, information about the Alliance's youth programme is included along with a news section, "words of wisdom" from individual youth and a discussion forum.

International Year of Youth

60. The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding announced at the end of 2009 provided a unique opportunity to mainstream the objectives of the Alliance and its youth programme within the United Nations system and a vast network of partners.

61. The Alliance has been a leading partner in the development of the framework for the celebration of this International Year at the United Nations, and of the key documentation to promote the event. As part of this effort, a flagship card on the role of youth in fostering cross-cultural understanding was developed in collaboration with UNESCO.

62. The Alliance also played a key role in the organization of the High-level Meeting on Youth marking the close of the International Year. The PLURAL+ youth video festival (see paras. 78 and 79 below) was celebrated as a side event to the High-level Meeting.

Media field of action*Rapid response media mechanism*

63. The Alliance's rapid response media mechanism focuses on amplifying the constructive role of media in furthering public understanding of divisive debates,

² Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya (2 projects), Malawi, Nigeria (2), Pakistan, Somalia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

ensuring that a diversity of voices is heard from and providing free quality content to media outlets around the world. The project has continuously expanded since its inception to address the growing needs of both media and grass-roots communities.

Global Experts

64. The Global Experts online resource (www.theglobalexperts.org) has continued to grow. The resource now numbers over 400 experts. Each expert generates several media impressions weekly, and 12 to 15 media alerts are sent every month to thousands of journalists around the world. Each alert offers journalists the opportunity to directly contact five or six experts on breaking news stories.

65. The online resource has also begun to aggregate commentary by experts from media outlets around the world, while also featuring exclusive content written or produced by experts for the site in the form of articles, podcasts and video interviews.

66. The project has secured a wide range of partnerships to produce content, including, for instance, one with the British Council and the University of Missouri School of Journalism, under which over 80 videos featuring experts are being produced with a focus on West-Muslim relations.

Media empowerment training of Arab civil society and citizen journalists

67. In response to growing needs in the Arab region and to recent events, the rapid response media mechanism (see para. 63 above) designed additional training programmes for Arab civil society representatives and citizen journalists/bloggers. These focus on building skills in four areas: interviewing techniques, writing skills, media relations and utilizing social networking tools for more effective campaigning. The first training session takes place in September 2011 in Jordan. Others are being planned in Cyprus and Tunis.

Syndication of articles and article series

68. Expanding its practice of providing articles and opinion pieces to newspapers around the world, the rapid response media mechanism invited prominent analysts to comment on issues of their choice touching upon the role(s) of religion in the public space. This first article series, *Religion and the Public Space*, brought together over 20 contributions. They were published in five languages in newspapers from Singapore to Brazil, from France to Jordan.

Debates and conferences

69. The Alliance media programme organizes regular public debates of interest to media professionals and broader society on international crises and issues. Together with the League of Arab States and the Anna Lindh Foundation, it recently convened a major forum in Cairo on 5 and 6 April 2011, focusing on the media in the Arab World in the face of ongoing regional changes, and their role in relations with the West.

Meeting of television station owners

70. Following an initial meeting hosted in Paris in May 2010, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance, in partnership with the European Broadcasting Union,

the Arab State Broadcasting Union and the European Commission, plan to convene a symposium of television station owners and managers in Jordan in October 2011 in the framework of the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean. This meeting will be hosted by His Majesty King Abdullah.

71. The purpose is to create a network of leading transnational media groups and media networks with a significant level of viewer engagement in the Mediterranean region, and to develop new joint actions with national broadcasters from countries of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Euro-Mediterranean joint media framework

72. The European Commission, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance initiated a joint project aimed at supporting journalists reporting across the Mediterranean region. The partners organize regular task force meetings and workshops for journalists, alongside meetings with intercultural analysts, opportunities for networking between journalists from both sides of the Mediterranean and awards for journalists reporting across cultures.

Media literacy

73. The Alliance continued to develop its various media literacy initiatives to help young people and citizens in general navigate an increasingly complex media world and provide them with tools to become discerning and critical media users and producers. Currently there are 33 partners and almost 1,600 registered users, both groups periodically participating by updating the database with new content. With the support of partners the Alliance-UNESCO-European Commission publication *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World* has been widely distributed.

74. The Network of Universities on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue, a network of eight universities in Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Jamaica, Morocco, Spain and the United States, has been established by the UNESCO University Twinning and networking scheme and the Alliance of Civilizations.

General collaboration in the media field

75. As part of the overall media work carried out by the European Union, a dialogue was established between the Alliance and the European Union regarding media communication in the field of prevention and radicalization. Furthermore, the Alliance developed a fruitful dialogue with the European Network of Experts on Radicalization, sharing ideas and insights on its own experience in organizing diversity training for journalists in Pakistan, Indonesia, the United States, Europe and the Arab world.

Migration/integration field of action

Online community on migration and integration

76. Since the launch of the website “Migration and integration: building inclusive societies” (www.unaoc.org/ibis) in May 2010, the Alliance has been providing information on good practices of integration of migrant populations. It highlights successful models of integration to counter stereotypes and promotes further involvement of all stakeholders in integration. A series of discussions was launched

on the website to exchange past and present experiences related to migration and integration.

77. In order to capitalize on the special experience of Australia in multiculturalism and to connect the website to its users, the Alliance is co-organizing an event in Melbourne in October 2011, which the High Representative will attend.

PLURAL+ youth video festival

78. The Alliance, in partnership with IOM, continued developing PLURAL+, a youth video festival on migration, diversity and social inclusion. PLURAL+ has the support of many international partners. An award ceremony was held on 12 November 2010 at the Paley Center for Media in New York.

79. Award-winning videos are being distributed on DVD, broadcast on television stations and the Internet and screened at video and film festivals and conferences around the world. Distributors include RAI Education (Italy), Al Jadeed TV (Lebanon), United Nations Television, the Permanent Conference of Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators, the Chinh India Youth Festival, the Habana Film Festival, the Roots & Routes International Film Festival, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan and BaKaFORUM 2011.

Migration/integration series of events

80. In December 2010, the Alliance and Unitas Communications organized a discussion on the reasons immigration is perceived as negatively affecting coexistence in Europe, and why Islam is often depicted as incompatible with Western values. The event was broadcast live for a worldwide audience. Muddassar Ahmed (Unitas) participated in the conversation with Roger Cohen (International Herald Tribune), along with participation from an in-house and online audience.

Reconciling diversity and social cohesion in European societies

81. As proposed by the High Representative at the beginning of 2011 to Governments of European countries, the Alliance is preparing a new regional initiative entitled "Reconciling diversity and cohesion: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in the European Union". The initiative, still in preparation, will be hosted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation at its new cultural centre on 15 November 2011.

Other cross-cutting initiatives

Marketplace of Ideas

82. The Marketplace of Ideas showcases the most innovative and successful grass-roots initiatives aimed at promoting mutual understanding among people and cultures around the world. By connecting these initiatives to policymakers, potential donors and the media, the Alliance helps them to scale up and replicate, thereby significantly increasing their impact.

83. Ten organizations among hundreds of applicants were recognized as Marketplace of Ideas winners during the Rio de Janeiro Forum and their leaders invited to present their project (World Faith; Euro-Mediterranean Academy for Young Journalists; Forgotten Diaries; Melantjong Petjinan Soerabaia; Akili Dada;

Universal Forum of Religions; Peaceworks; RandomKid; United Religions Initiative; Undergraduate ParliaMentors; Three Faiths Forum; Bridge the Gap TV). Partners from the private sector such as Vivendi, Deloitte Touche and Tohmatsu, the Global Dialogue Foundation, the British Council and Euronews have supported this initiative.

84. The Alliance has developed a promising partnership agreement with the BMW Group to create the World Intercultural Fund for Innovation. The Fund will support the most innovative grass-roots initiatives for cross-cultural bridge-building and connect them with partners to help them scale up and replicate.

Fellowship programme

85. In September 2009, the Alliance launched its fellowship programme, aimed at facilitating the exposure of emerging leaders from North America, Europe and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society and religion in one another's countries and generating knowledge exchange, understanding and productive partnerships across borders. In the long run, through this programme the Alliance will create an informal network of emerging and influential leaders who will bring fresh perspectives to relations between the different countries and regions and who will advocate new approaches.

86. The programme is developed in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, the Qatar committee of the Alliance of Civilizations and the Institute of International Education (United States).

87. The pilot phase was completed in March and April 2010 with 12 emerging leaders from the United States and Europe travelling to Egypt, Morocco and Qatar and 12 emerging leaders from 7 countries in the Arab world travelling to Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

88. The second phase of the fellowship programme will begin in the latter part of 2011. In the context of the Arab Spring, this programme takes on special importance in providing a unique opportunity for emerging leaders to learn and connect with their peers.

Dialogue Café

89. After the public launch of the "Global network of Dialogue Cafés" project at the Istanbul Forum, the first two Cafés opened in May 2010 in Rio de Janeiro and in Lisbon, on the occasion of the Third Forum, thanks to a partnership with Lisbon Municipality, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Candido Mendes University in Rio, and the use of the European network GÉANT.

90. In September 2010, a third Dialogue Café was opened at the Waag Society in Amsterdam. Work is proceeding for a further expansion in the European-Mediterranean to cities such as Florence, Ramallah, Tel Aviv, Paris, Lille and Belgrade. Possible Dialogue Cafés in Doha, Cairo, Istanbul, London, Montenegro, Tunis and Oslo are also being considered and funding sought.

Alliance of Civilizations summer school

91. The Alliance of Civilizations summer school brings together young people from various ethnic, cultural, academic and professional backgrounds. Its purpose is

to share world views, knowledge and experiences; to create a network of “Alliance of Civilizations young voices”; and to agree on a number of projects to be developed through the network of the “Dialogue Café”.

92. The 2010 summer school was hosted by the University of Aveiro, Portugal, with 115 youth from 44 different countries. To make its organization possible, a multi-stakeholder platform was created by international organizations, Portuguese foundations, universities and think tanks, faith-led organizations and corporations.

93. In view of the success of the 2010 session, the High Representative decided to make the summer school a regular activity and to explore the possibility of organizing sessions on thematic issues for well-targeted audiences such as young journalists, diplomats, teachers, etc.

94. The 2011 summer school will take place in Lisbon from 28 August to 3 September 2011. It will be hosted by the University of Lisbon and will be organized in cooperation with a number of partners, such as the League of Arab States and the Euro-Mediterranean University.

City-to-city cooperation

95. The Alliance promoted and/or participated in a number of events involving local governments, municipalities and mayors: the Shanghai World Exhibition 2010 (Global South-South Creative Week, session on “Creativity and transfer: an engine for better, more lovable cities with better lifestyles for all”); the second Euro-Arab Cities Forum, held in Malaga, Spain on 25 and 26 February 2011; and the International Conference on the Inter-Ethnic City, organized by Italy in Rome on 1 June 2011.

96. At the Euro-Arab Cities Forum, the High Representative proposed to set up a special fund for Euro-Arab city cooperation in the new context of the Middle East and North Africa region, a proposal which was hailed by the participants.

97. At the International Conference on the Inter-Ethnic City, the possibility of creating new facilitating roles and the idea of having an “inter-ethnic guarantor” who would advise municipalities on multicultural issues were discussed. Participants agreed to pursue efforts to place urban transformation on the agenda of selected United Nations agencies and programmes, with a view to taking action, including a possible General Assembly resolution.

Providing a space for discussions on sensitive issues

98. The Alliance has increasingly been seen as a platform for civil discussions of sensitive issues, including religious minorities, religious freedom and tensions in religiously pluralistic societies. A number of relevant initiatives were organized on this topic.

99. Under the auspices of the Alliance, a seminar on religious tolerance, traditional conflict resolution and federalism was held on 11 and 12 November 2010 in Addis Ababa, as a contribution of Ethiopia to the Alliance. The High Representative participated in it through a video message.

100. The 2010 Lisbon Forum, held on 4 and 5 November 2010, focused on freedom of expression, conscience and religion. It comprised four main working sessions: religious pluralism in democratic societies; the role of religious leaders in the

promotion of a culture of peace; the prevention of radicalization and religious extremism; and international cooperation for the promotion of religious freedom. At the outcome of the Forum, a number of recommendations were made (for a full overview of the debates, see Lisbon Forum at www.coe.int).

101. Under the auspices of the Alliance, Spain and Italy, in cooperation with the European University Institute, convened an international seminar entitled “Religious freedom: human rights, social inclusion and political participation: the case of Christian communities” in Florence on 13 and 14 June 2011. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Franco Frattini, and Spain, Trinidad Jiménez, and the High Representative, who sent a video message, shared their views with participants. The recommendations by three panels will feed future work, including in the context of the Doha Forum.

Engaging parliaments in the Alliance’s agenda

102. The Alliance is increasingly aware of the desirability of involving national and international parliamentary institutions. Focal points discussed their possible role in drawing up national plans.

103. The High Representative met with several national parliamentary leaders and addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (June 2010) and a committee of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (January 2011). Furthermore, he met with the Speakers of Kuwait and Malta and discussed a joint initiative on the role of parliaments in fostering pluralism and good governance of cultural diversity.

104. The cooperation with the International Parliamentary Union inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro (May 2010) continued, in particular through regular contacts at the secretariat level, including on a larger parliamentary contribution to the Doha Forum.

V. Preparation of the Fourth Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations

105. At the invitation of the Government of Qatar, the Fourth Forum will be held from 11 to 13 December 2011 in Doha. It is expected to be a turning point for the Alliance in terms of raising its visibility, integrating it more into the global agenda and reinforcing commitments for action. Further to a suggestion made by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah to the High Representative, the Forum will explore how the advancement towards the goals of the Alliance can contribute to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Preparatory work began in January 2011, with the help of a few experts commissioned by Qatar and the benefit of a dialogue with the Group of Friends, including the focal points. Civil society representatives also contributed their views at a pre-forum held in Doha on 3 and 4 May 2011.

VI. Outreach

106. The Alliance has benefited from extensive outreach efforts on numerous projects carried out in the past year. Improved communications materials, featuring projects and people's testimonials, were used to give a good sense of the Alliance's activities and objectives. The High Representative and the secretariat also provided briefings to many constituencies. The High Representative has written a number of articles and given numerous speeches about the Alliance all around the world.

107. Two major advocacy campaigns were supported or promoted by the Alliance. The first was developed in the framework of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. The second was aimed at celebrating the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (21 May). It was launched together with UNESCO and a wide range of corporations through Facebook (www.facebook.com/DoOneThingforDiversityandInclusion), inviting people from around the world to "Do one thing for diversity and inclusion". This campaign has been a huge success with more than 60,000 visitors.

108. The Alliance has also significantly expanded its reach by promoting or being associated to an increasing number of events organized at the local level by local partners, namely in Australia, China, India, Egypt, Ethiopia, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. These kinds of joint ventures, by engaging local partners, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations, offer an opportunity to develop concrete initiatives that contribute to enhancing cultural understanding and cooperation.

109. With the completion and launch of the new Alliance website (www.unaoc.org), Web traffic has increased, reaching 5,500 visitors in June 2011 and 24,000 page views. The newly created Alliance Facebook page is currently at over 500 "likes" and the Alliance has over 900 followers on Twitter.

VII. Governance: Trust Fund and secretariat

110. In spite of the steady expansion of the Alliance's role and activities, the resources at its disposal continued to be significantly short of the target level, erratic and almost impossible to predict. While core operations and modest programmes could be maintained, more significant programmes were exposed to various cutbacks or had to be postponed. For the 2010 budget year, actual expenditures had to be kept in the range of US\$ 4 million, against a modest target of US\$ 5.2 million.

111. The High Representative, therefore, elaborated a strategy to reform the ad hoc system of voluntary contributions. He proposed a funding model based on periodic replenishments, designed to increase the predictability of the Trust Fund's resource mobilizing efforts, to diversify the array of donors by bringing in the private sector and philanthropy, and to secure funding for the Alliance's activities well in advance. The first replenishment session, scheduled for the second half of 2011, will address the funding needs for calendar years 2012 and 2013. The High Representative further proposed to develop a loose mechanism of consultation with the community of donors, through which they can be informed about the funds and have a say in their management. He accordingly made suggestions to the Group of Friends for a partners' assembly.

112. The overall increase in and further diversification of the workload of the secretariat means that more staff must be taken on. The practice of seconding officials, inaugurated by Switzerland, should be further developed by countries and organizations. The delegation of certain tasks to more appropriate and skilled members and partners might also offer a solution. The High Representative is developing specific proposals in the framework of the third implementation plan (2011-2013).

VIII. Conclusion

113. Building upon the trends and initiatives summarized in the present report, the Alliance's programme of action for the next two years (June 2011-June 2013) will notably take into consideration the five following points: the new context in the Middle East and North Africa region; the ongoing debates in Europe about how to reconcile diversity and cohesion in European societies; the topical issue of the influence of religion on peace, security and development in our global age; reinforcing the Alliance as a United Nations soft-power tool for dialogue and peace by working more closely with non-State actors; and the request made by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah of Qatar, who will host the Fourth Annual Forum, to have it focused on the connections between the mission of the Alliance and the Millennium Development Goals agenda.

114. The new context in Egypt and Tunisia is not without relation to the *raison d'être* of the Alliance. These changes make the Alliance more valid and its mission more opportune than ever. It is valid because although operating in different contexts and facing different challenges, all peoples are longing for freedoms, democracy, dignity and social justice, showing that these are universal demands across divides and fault lines. These ongoing changes also make the Alliance even more opportune because the formation of tolerant values is central to the smooth running of a democratic system.

115. The second point regards the growing diversity in societies and the ongoing debate about how to respond to it, notably in Europe. In our age of anxiety, the widespread social malaise in Europe is mainly focused on migration, portrayed as one of the main threats of our times (for national security, but also in social and cultural terms), and on the integration of migrants, most often viewed as posing a challenge to national cultures and identities. These developments fuel growing intolerance, polarization and extremism, including Qaida-affiliated extremism. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that new radical right-wing parties, or the "hard right", are also on the rise across Europe. The tragic events in Norway make it clear that action has to be taken and preventive strategies have to be implemented in order to counter home-grown terrorism, racism and hatred. As proposed by the High Representative in January 2011, a new regional initiative on "Reconciling diversity and cohesion: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in Europe" will be developed in coming months.

116. The third point regards the influence of religion on peace, security and development in our globalized times. Because most of the present tensions and conflicts also have a religious dimension, special attention will be given to religious diversity, religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue in the Alliance's initiatives, following a trend inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro and continued in the

2010 Lisbon Forum and the international seminar held in Florence in June 2011, and building further upon the outcomes of these initiatives.

117. The fourth point regards the need to reinforce the Alliance as a United Nations soft-power tool for dialogue and peace by working more closely with non-State actors. This requires not only setting up and consolidating a civil society network, but also developing cooperative means of framing the agenda, persuading and eliciting positive attention. Building upon its credibility, its culture of dialogue and values, the Alliance has significant resources to produce “soft power”. A priority is to reinforce its action at the grass-roots level, in particular, in divided societies and changing societies, where more soft-power initiatives are necessary to defuse tensions, build consensus and dialogue, heal past grievances and help people to live together in the present and move together as a society into the future.

118. The fifth point is related to the preparation of the Doha Forum. The Forum will disclose the missing links between culture and cultural diversity and development, building upon the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2), which clearly recognizes that “human beings must respect one other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted”.

119. In the light of all the above, the third implementation plan (June 2011-June 2013) is expected to mark a further step in the implementation of the Alliance’s mission and goals and be mainly focused on delivering.
