

Check against delivery



ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

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THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

TALKING POINTS

Pledging Conference

Istanbul,

31 May 2012

Excellencies,

Dear partners of the Alliance,

- First of all, let me express my deep appreciation to Prime Minister Erdogan for hosting this important meeting. I know, Mr Prime Minister, that when you accepted to convene this first ever Partners' Assembly for the Alliance, you made a risky decision because innovation always involves some kind of hazard and exposure to vulnerability.
- May I also commend you, Mr. Secretary General, for your swift understanding of the pressure to change and of the need to innovate, reflected in your presence here? Indeed my deep appreciation also goes to the members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance here represented.
- Let me thank you all for having realized that the future of the Alliance was at stake and for embracing our option to go ahead with the implementation of a new replenishment mechanism. Thanks to this innovative approach the Alliance will be provided with enhanced sustainability. But it will also capture fresh ideas and collaboration from a diverse range of sources.
- Of course successful innovation is not just about coming up with good ideas. The real challenges lie in implementing the best ideas in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Let me however congratulate you all: we managed a winning kick-off; we are on the verge of a turning point of the Alliance, which turn comprises several dimensions.

- Firstly, diversification of the community of donors. This is why we seek to open it up to non State actors with the aim of creating new opportunities for collaboration that align with our strategic objectives, leverage core competencies and have the potential to contribute significant value. Have we reached these goals?
- Yes, we have! This is why I would like to greet all the representatives of the private sector and philanthropies here represented, in particular those who trusted us and are committed to helping us deliver practical outcomes.
- This is a breakthrough – let me welcome you to the new Partners Assembly for the Alliance to which you belong from now on.
- Secondly, we were looking for predictable resources to enable us to plan and to deliver on time.
- Thanks to the commitments made, in particular by a core group of country members, we have also reached this goal. Without undermining the voluntary nature of our Trust Fund, which ensures open participation to all in the Alliance, for the very first time we will be able to plan our activities knowing in advance what are our resources, what are the shortfalls in funding and how to deal with them. This is a big step forward to be able to prioritize actions and deliver on time.
- Greater confidence that the majority of future funding is assured at any given time will have secondary benefits as well. Liquidity management will be more efficient to the extent that the Fund, based on synchronized replenishment pledges, will be able to back its commitments.

- At the same time, the complementary availability of ad hoc resource-mobilizing channels, especially from non-government donors, will allow the Alliance to seek further support for additional programmes, to tap new constituencies and to respond promptly to unplanned contingencies in between structured replenishment processes.

Excellencies, Dear Partners,

- Creating a diverse funding base made up of governments, international organizations, institutional foundations, corporations and individuals is critical to preserving the Alliance's independence, autonomy and credibility. This is why seeking new donors willing to provide financial support - both through direct financial contributions and through in-kind assistance (be it sharing experience, know-how, expertise or creativity) was a key goal of this first Replenishment Session.
- In this regard also, I think we have one another step forward.
- Indeed, I hope that for the next Replenishment Session, to be held as part of the Vienna Forum, this process will be further consolidated. But as a beginning, dear Partners, I think this is rather good.

Excellencies,

- You, who are all prepared to announce a pledge or make a commitment to action, will be part of the newly created Partners' Assembly for the Alliance, the community of donors which will reinforce its governance structure.

- Through this new platform we will meet the expectations of many current and potential donors who expressed the need for a system through which they could exchange views on the operation and effectiveness of the UNAOC Trust Fund as well as on the strategic outlook of the Alliance.
- As some of you well know, so far the Governance of the UNAOC is reflected in a fairly light structure at global level, with a High Representative of the UN Secretary General, a Group of Friends with a three layer structure (Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Representatives at the UN and Focal Points or National Coordinators) from which the Alliance draws its strength, and a Secretariat.
- The new Partners' Assembly will reach out to a wider audience of stakeholders, including those who are not normally involved in the Alliance's consultations within the Group of Friends. The Partners' Assembly will be a framework for all types of donors – governments, intergovernmental institutions, institutional foundations, corporate sector and individuals - to exchange views on the operations and the effectiveness of the UNAOC Trust Fund when considering their future contributions. The Partners' Assembly will also be consulted about the priorities and the strategic outlook of the Alliance, and will have the opportunity to make suggestions for new initiatives
- As designed, the Partners' Assembly is an innovative model of consultation and broad discussion rather than a single 'event'. While culminating in a Partners' meeting every 12 months, in the future to be held back-to-back with the Alliance's annual forums, recommendations start to take their shape from on-line discussions, partner-led consultations, and a variety of internal and external discussions.

- The three primary functions of the Partnership Assembly are:
 - To review and provide feedback on the progress of the Implementation Plans of the Alliance;
 - To develop recommendations on the Alliance's strategy, policy and practice; and
 - To mobilize and sustain political commitment to take actions to achieve the Alliance's goals according to the priorities set up in the Implementation Plans and to ensure sustainable long-term financing.

Excellencies, dear partners,

- The UNAOC has built increasingly fruitful working relations with members and donors over the last years. Within the Replenishment Mechanism these relations will be enlarged and consolidated for the benefit of all.
- This is a win-win situation, as all parties benefit – they will all share greater ownership of the Alliance by providing broader support to its activities and by holding additional responsibilities in its governance. In turn they are expecting to become true vehicles to percolate the Alliance's goals and values across their own activities and channels.
- It is now well recognized that we need multiple stakeholders' platforms for dialogue and collective action if we want to reach out to the grass roots and produce change on the ground.

Dear Partners,

- The Alliance of Civilizations is about bringing positive change in mindsets, shift narratives, attitudes and social behaviour as well as shape inter-group relations for the better.
- We live in a world of increasing interdependence and growing diversity marked by fast changes. As an author put it “today’s emerging landscape is one in which power is diffusing and politics diversifying”.
- In our multifaceted global system, multiple brands of modernity, diverse political cultures, and competing conceptions of domestic and international order seem to be the prevailing feature and even modernization of developing regions is tracking a variety of developmental paths.
- So the question is “how to forge a new pluralistic order – one that preserves stability and a rules-based international system amid increasing diversity of cultures, ideologies and worldviews ?
- The question is also how to “equate legitimacy and responsible governance, how to tolerate political and ideological diversity”, how to strike the right balance between global governance and local distribution of power and shared responsibility in order to effectively tackle many of today’s challenges and ensure security and a brand of globalization in which prosperity is more equitable?
- Ultimately, the question is how to build a new, more just global order made up of pluralist, inclusive and tolerant societies that respect each other and cooperate across divides, divergence and dissent.

Excellencies,

- The Alliance of Civilizations is at the intersection of all these dilemmas and queries.
- Its primary mission is of the utmost importance - to forge collective political will and to mobilize concerted action at institutional and civil society levels aimed at improving understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, helping to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.
- Its particular focus on improving relations within and among Western and Muslim societies and on addressing persistent divides remains a top priority not only in the global agenda but also at country level as so many societies are affected by related tensions.
- Every single day the newspapers and media report about tensions and conflicts, divided societies, segregating cities, individuals and groups facing exclusion and discrimination, cultural clashes, incidents riots, extremism, terror.
- Around the world people feel insecure and fear the other and become increasingly intolerant; the sense of cultural identity and belonging which is unavoidable for human beings remains sometimes well below the line of human dignity.
- Addressing cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as a global issue makes full sense. That is the primary mission of the Alliance. There is a long way to go in order to achieve its goal of building inclusive and tolerant societies.

- The same goes for its particular focus on improving relations within and among Western and Muslim societies.
- All reports show that ten years after nine/eleven tensions, divides and xenophobia are on the rise in a good number of countries and the economic downturn helps to increase intolerance and discrimination.
- Furthermore, at a time when there are so many ongoing changes – but also such great uncertainty – in a number of Arab societies, increased dialogue, interaction and exchanges are needed.
- Valuing diversity, inclusiveness and tolerance is not straightforward. It requires cultural learning, intercultural skills, competence and training. It requires public policies – notably in education, youth, media and migration issues - that shape an intercultural society and foment a culture of dialogue, tolerance and peace.
- All in all, we really need true intercultural strategies built upon a broad vision, where economic and social inclusion policies and policies for cultural diversity are integrated and push each other forward.
- If we want to make cultural diversity a true asset rather than a liability and turn intercultural exchange into an engine for innovation that advances competitiveness in business, for instance, but also produces prosperity and quality of life for societies, we cannot leave it to chance.
- This is why the Alliance of Civilizations aims at influencing policy making and providing a platform to share experiences, best practices and guidance to practitioners. This is why it aims at raising awareness about major dilemmas of our age of diversity and the need to take bold action.

Dear Partners,

- We are now implementing the actions prioritized in the 3rd Implementation Plan for the 2011-2013 period as completed with the Addendum on the Outcomes of the Doha Forum.

- An overview of the various actions is available as well as a new leaflet on the Alliance.

- Put in a nutshell, the priorities for the second semester of this year are:
 - Assisting members in developing further action at country level to achieve the Alliance's goals be it through comprehensive National Plans for Intercultural dialogue and cooperation or through a cluster of long term actions; I am more than happy to announce that ALECSO agreed to host our annual meeting of Focal Points in Tunis in the autumn and that I plan to use this opportunity to take a further step in that direction.

 - Advancing the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean; finalizing the 2nd Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe and holding the 2nd Regional Conference in Belgrade; finalizing the Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Latin America in a Conference to be hosted by Peru; holding Asia-South Pacific regional consultations as a follow up of the Symposium organized by New Zealand in 2008; launching a regional process in Central Asia.

- Regarding our flagship projects, I would like to see advances made in our media projects as well as in our youth-led initiatives that further cross-cultural understanding notably through the Youth solidarity Fund; to organize the autumn edition of the fellowship programme; to hold our summer and winter schools as well as the summer camp in Malta; to follow up and mentor the previous winners of the Intercultural Innovation Award and prepare the 2013 edition; to support further developments of the “Do one thing for Diversity and Inclusion” and the Plural + youth video Festival on migration, diversity and inclusion; to develop the Online Community on Migration and Integration – Building Inclusive Societies (IBIS); to support programming activities of the network of Dialogue cafés; developing as much as possible the cluster of initiatives presented as the Outcomes of the Doha forum, namely the project on “Reconciling Diversity and Cohesion” and “Empowering women through creative industries”.

Dear participants,

- On top of all this, we have indeed the Commitments to Actions that some of you made that will greatly contribute to achieve the Alliance’s goals.
- Looking ahead, I am afraid we will not have that much spare time to enjoy. But so much the better – this demanding agenda testifies to our common will to build a more just, more tolerant and better world for all.
- The predicament we face today is one of no indulgency – so full commitment is required.

- You understood that and I do thank you all for your pledges and commitment to action.
- Many thanks