

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM

(v. 27 MARCH 2009)



ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS FORUM

6-7 APRIL 2009, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Sunday, 5 April, 2009

Arrival of the participants

18:30-19:00 **Opening of the Exhibition “They Had Faith in Turkey”**

19:00-21:00 **Welcoming Reception and Cultural Event, hosted by H.E. Mr. Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey**

Monday, 6 April, 2009

07:45-08:45 **Working Breakfasts (simultaneous)**

Breakfast Session 1: Contemporary Society and Religion

Organized by Network of European Foundations & AoC

Breakfast Session 2: AoC-UNESCO Network UNITWIN Chair on Media Literacy and Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Organized by UNESCO & Nordic Information Center for Media and Communication Research

Breakfast Session 3: Launch of UN AoC Research Network

Organized by the AoC 12 University Partners and UNESCO Higher Education Director/Coordinator

Breakfast Session 4: Responding to Intercultural Tensions in the Mediterranean Region

Organized by the UN Alliance, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures and the European Commission

Breakfast Session 5: From Competing Narratives to Cooperative Actions

Organized by the High Representative for the AoC

Breakfast Session 6: Diversity and Development: Leadership challenges for Managing Diversity and Promoting Politics and Policy to Build Shared Societies

Organized by the Club of Madrid

Breakfast Session 7: Promoting Youth Employment Through Education

Organized by the Education for Employment Foundation

09:00-10:00 **OPENING PLENARY**

Welcoming remarks by

H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of Turkey

H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Government of Spain

H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, former President of Portugal

- 10:00-10:15** **Announcements/Video**
- 10:15-11:45** **PLENARY SESSION I: Shaping the Global Agenda in Times of Crisis - Why Does Good Governance of Cultural Diversity Matter?**
 The aim of this facilitated dialogue between global leaders is to discuss the broad issue of growing diversity in the world and to what extent the issue of good governance of cultural diversity is shaping the global agenda. The debate will focus on different perspectives on how the Alliance of Civilizations can assist in practical terms in managing diversity. It will seek to orient Forum participants towards practical and constructive perspectives: what can we do?
- 12:00-13:15** **PLENARY SESSION II: Enhancing Dialogue and Strengthening Cooperation: Connecting Innovative Policies and Initiatives**
 In an increasingly complex and multicultural world, made up of a mosaic of multiple identities, cultures and faith traditions, the challenge of developing an environment that promotes constructive and mutually enriching relations among diverse communities has never been greater. If the potential for fruitful cultural exchanges is significant, the risk for misunderstanding and rising suspicion and tensions across cultural fault-lines is also great. The challenge for countries is not only to develop effective policies aimed at managing cultural diversity, but also to implement them successfully through initiatives that respond to the needs of communities on the ground. How are different countries facing up to this challenge? How can they bridge the gap between theory and practice? What are the innovative practices at grassroots level which can help inspire forward-looking policies aimed at improving understanding and respect among diverse communities? What are the best practices that help operationalize intercultural policies, turning them into concrete actions that improve cooperation between communities in practical ways? Can policymakers take inspiration from successful grassroots initiatives to improve the management of cultural diversity at national and regional level? And, conversely, how can national policies find implementation channels through partnerships with civil society actors in order to improve mutual respect and understanding at community level?
- 13:30-15:00** **Official lunch, hosted by the Prime Minister of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (by invitation only)**
- Open buffet lunch for all participants**
- 15:00-17:30** **High Level Debate of the Group of Friends
 “Reinforcing our Commitment to the Alliance”**
 Members of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends (GoF) – a network of 100 countries and international organizations supporting the Alliance – will be invited to address a set of hot issues related to the work of the AoC. They will hold round table discussions and will share conclusions at the end.
- 15:00-16:30** **Working Sessions (simultaneous)**
- Working Session 1: Learning About and Across Differences**
 Organized in partnership with **Education about Religions and Beliefs Network, ISESCO, and Network of European Foundations**

In today's world, a citizen must be prepared to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. This includes the necessity of learning about different religions and beliefs, ethical perspectives on different issues from diverse backgrounds, and education across cultural barriers. This working session will feature the debut of the AoC's clearinghouse on education about religions and beliefs, the presentation of UNESCO's ethics observatory, an innovative way of learning across cultures virtually, and discussions about the rationale, challenges, and opportunities in learning about and across differences, with special references to the religious "other"/non-religious "other".

Working Session 2: Integrating Migrants – A Challenge for Inclusive Societies

Organized in partnership with the **International Organization of Migration**

The idea is to look at migration from the local perspective discussing the challenges of integration, diversity management and social inclusion, with the participation of those directly involved in integration issues, such as mayors, perhaps of a newspaper director or media person, and an expert/academician to broadly discuss interaction between policy making, public opinion and policy relevant expertise. This session would also be the occasion to inform on the AoC/IOM initiatives in this field, such as a clearinghouse on migration-integration, and promote a knowledge network among local administrators interested to pursue information sharing and capacity development on integration issues.

Working Session 3: Youth: Key Actors and Stakeholders in Advancing Intercultural Understanding and Dialogue

Organized in partnership with the **Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, the European Youth Forum, the Latin American Youth Forum, the West African Youth Network, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, OneVoice Movement, the Commonwealth Youth Program and the Council of Europe**

This working session will provide an opportunity to discuss the various ways in which international organizations, governments and civil society should leverage the active role that young people play in leading major social and political advancements. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on the fact that youth constitute the largest segment of population in several regions of the world and that they are both actors and stakeholders in cross-cultural understanding and global peace. More precisely, this session will allow participants to share potent examples of today's youth contribution to policies and initiatives shaping responses to cultural and religious diversity at all levels. Tested methods and innovative approaches for youth participation will be shared by youth organizations and multilateral organizations in order to generate ideas among those which have not yet harnessed youth's contribution in their efforts to advance cross-cultural understanding. Lastly, gaps and needs regarding youth participation at the local, national and international levels will be identified with a view to ensure that youth leadership and innovativeness in this sector are fully leveraged for the benefit of all societies.

Working Session 4: Reporting Across Cultural Divides: Global Perspectives

Organized in partnership with the **European Commission** and the **Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures**

In recent years, tensions and conflicts occurring across cultural divides have gained increased visibility in the media and among the public in general. In various instances, media professionals have been confronted with the challenge of reporting on issues that threaten to divide people along cultural fault lines. Some of these issues have degenerated into violence, reverberating beyond national boundaries. In a world whose stability is threatened by conflicts that, in the eyes of many, seem to justify the misconceived idea of a “clash of civilizations”, such issues are increasingly likely to erupt, not only in Europe and the United States, but everywhere on the planet. To what extent do these tensions play out differently in diverse cultures? What are the specific challenges media professionals are confronted with in different parts of the world and what strategies have they developed to address them? In particular, this session will seek to address a number of key questions relating to the issue of freedom of expression. Are debates over freedom of expression, its limits and issues such as religious blasphemy political in nature, or are they symptomatic of differences between various sets of values that would be better addressed outside the political realm? What can be done to widen the discussion and encourage fresh perspectives that bring about a better understanding of the rationale for positions held on both sides of the debate? What tools do journalists have at their disposal to address the need to report sensitively and in a balanced way about stories that go to the core of religious and cultural difference? What role, for instance, could tools developed by the Alliance, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the European Commission play in that regard?

Working Session 5: Dialogue Café Project

Organized in partnership with **CISCO**

Café Salam is a radical but simple proposal, initially put forward by Simon Willis, from CISCO, based on the idea that ordinary people have more in common with each other than divisive differences and that given the opportunity they will explore their common interests even across radical geo-political divides. Café Salam aims to create this opportunity by providing access to telepresence, life-size imaging on high definition video screens, offering both the visual and oral impression that people who may be on the other side of the world are actually sitting in the same room as the people. Telepresence screens in Cafés SALAM would enable people from different worlds to chat, hang out together, exchange ideas or co-create in new ways not available through mobile phones, websites or other social media.

This working session will focus on the project and will open a discussion on how the Café Salam’s project align with the aims of the Alliance of Civilizations and complements the Alliance’s goals by envisioning a world in which people from across walks of life are able to share experiences and common interests; by helping to build bridges between people and communities; by promoting cultural dialogue; by creating new opportunities for fostering respect for diversity; breaking down cultural barriers to risk taking; and by engaging a wide range of new partners and stakeholders to achieve common goals.

Working Session 6: Empowering Women to Strengthen their Role in a Culture of Peace

Organized in partnership with **United Nations Development Fund for Women**

Women have always had an essential role at the heart of communities and wider society. As local leaders, they make their communities stronger. Moreover, they have a unique viewpoint on the challenges faced by communities they live in – whether that is the threat of anti-social behavior, young people feeling disengaged, or violent extremism. They are also uniquely placed to help solving these problems.

Unfortunately, all too often their voice goes unheard. Some do not have the confidence or the skills to speak up in forums dominated by men. Others face practical barriers such as:

a) Education – it is important to make learning accessible, taking into account responsibilities and priorities adults may have that are barriers to learning. How to provide resources such as language classes when needed, basic numeracy and literacy skills, and capabilities and qualifications that enable women to be full participants, and realize their full potential in urban societies?

b) Civic Participation – it covers a wide range of activities from volunteering to getting involved in schools, councils and other arenas. What are the economic, political and social barriers that prevent their voluntary activities? Also, what are the examples of successful programs of involving women in voluntary activities?

c) Preventing violent extremism – Women have a key role to play in challenging prejudice and stereotypes both within their communities and in wider society as they are at the heart of communities undertaking a multitude of roles. Resilient communities cannot be built and sustained without their active participation. It may also be important to point out that women are often also the victims of violent extremism and civil war (e.g. rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing).

16:30-17:00 **Coffee Break**

17:30-18:00 **Signature of MoUs**

17:30-19:00 **Marketplace of Ideas**

This session, designed as a TV show, will feature dozen of innovative projects that contribute significantly in intercultural dialogue and cooperation and good governance of diversity. The objective is to shed light on these groundbreaking initiatives and to facilitate their replication in other parts of the World and scale up. The creation of the AoC Fund for Innovation in Dialogue will be announced at this time.

20:30- **Official Dinner, hosted by the President of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül**
(by invitation only)

Open Buffet Dinner for all participants and cultural event

Tuesday, 7 April, 2009

07:45-08:45 **Working Breakfasts (simultaneous)**

Breakfast Session 8: Engaging Non-State Actors

Organized by Religions for Peace, UNPFA and UNAIDS (tbc)

Breakfast Session 9: Culture and Development

Organized by The French Development Agency

Breakfast Session 10: Can New Media help Bridge Cultures?

Organized with UNESCO and Global Voices Online

Breakfast Session 11: Intercultural Dialogue and History in the Context of Globalisation: Towards a Worldwide Network of Historians and History Teachers

Organized by the Council of Europe, North-South Center with the collaboration of the Research Center for Islamic History Art and Culture (IRCICA)

Breakfast Session 12: Expanding International Student Exchange Scholarship Programs: Challenges and Opportunities, specifically across the Islam-West Nexus

Organized by IIE, LAS, AFS, ISESCO, ALECSO (tbc)

Breakfast Session 13: Bridging Divides in the Field of Humanitarianism and Development

Organized by the Humanitarian Forum [and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation-tbc]

Breakfast Session 14: The Youth Solidarity Fund: Celebrating Young Bridge-Builders

Organized by the Alliance of Civilizations

Breakfast Session 15: Alliance's Foundations Network

Organized by Alliance's International Foundations Network

Breakfast Session 16: Media Dialogues Between Regions: The Euro-Mediterranean Experience

Organized by the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures and the European Commission

09:00-10:30

Working Sessions (simultaneous)

Working Session 7: Doing Business in the Multicultural Environment: Good Practices and Lessons Learned

Organized in partnership with the UN Global Compact Office

The session will aim to discuss challenges and role of corporate sector in promoting cross-cultural understanding. An AoC-GC joint publication that presents challenges companies are facing as a result of growing cross-cultural tensions at the global, regional and local levels will be the basis for discussion, showcasing a number of 'good practice' examples of innovative, concrete actions taken by companies to address these challenges and encourage tolerance, as well as cooperative intercultural relations in the business environment. This session will be a conducive platform for the corporate sector to explore concrete ways to collaborate with civil society and for governments to tackle cross-cultural challenges and threats that the era of globalization brings. The participants will be invited to reflect on the following questions: How can business contribute to fostering cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and cooperative relations? What are the cross-cultural challenges and opportunities the corporate sector is facing today as a result of globalization? What are the potential challenges and future threats businesses can anticipate in the following years given the recent developments in the global economy? How and to what extent do global politics and decisions made by governments affect businesses and their reputation overseas? What are the counter-strategies and approaches that may help companies to combat foreign communities' stereotypes and biases against their countries of origin?

Working Session 8: Citizenship for the Information Society: Media Education and Civic Participation

Organized in partnership with **IAMCR (International Association for Media and Communication Research)**, **UNESCO-Information for All Programme** and **AMIC (Asian Media Information and Communication Centre)**

Educators around the world have been championing Media Literacy Education for well over two decades, but in most countries policy-makers shaping national education programs have just recently become aware of the need for Media Literacy.

A truly democratic political system depends on the active participation of its citizens. Active and – most importantly – informed citizens. Media Literacy is one of the principal new tools that provide citizens with the skills they need to make sense of the sometimes overwhelming flow of daily media and, in particular, new media and information disseminated through new communication technologies. Many educators have identified Media Literacy Education a key tool to combat stereotypes and promote intercultural understanding.

The session will be an opportunity to discuss existing education policies being developed around the world that include Media Education and Media Literacy as part of their core curriculum. The working session will also provide an opportunity to reflect on what challenges are emerging from the new media environment (the Information Society) and its effects on youth, education, civic participation and democracy.

Working Session 9: Cities at the Heart of Cultural Diversity – How to Foster City Diplomacy

Organized in partnership with **United Cities and Local Governments**

The majority of the world's population lives in cities. It is estimated that in 2008, about 3.3 billion people lived in cities and town, and this number is projected to reach 4.9 billion (60 percent of the global population) in 2030. This means that cultural diversity has become one of the main features of our cities due to globalization and migration bringing together cultural communities in urban areas who may previously not have had much interaction with each other. Therefore, municipal and local governments play a crucial role in promoting sustainable urban development based on cultural diversity, as a key factor to prevent conflicts and contribute to security and peace.

Promoting a climate conducive for cultural diversity is a key role for local governments. Legitimacy, proximity to citizens and experience in local management make local authorities more attuned to succeed in fostering mutual understanding, confidence and respect among peoples of different cultural and religious traditions. Furthermore, city diplomacy or city-to-city cooperation is a powerful complement to the traditional diplomacy between States. City diplomacy can play a significant role in peace building and conflict prevention.

The AoC can serve as a catalyst to promote initiatives of city-to-city diplomacy, aimed at helping a number of local and municipal authorities lay down conditions for sustainable peace between divided communities and societies.

Working Session 10: Contributions of Entertainment Media to Cross-Cultural Understanding

Organized in partnership with **Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund**

The global network of public and private media partners assembled at this working session would serve as the preliminary AoCMF partners for developing a strategic plan

for the production, distribution and development of media content in three main platforms: film, television and new media. The session will open with a presentation and distribution of a report on research findings from the AoCMF-commissioned Media and Conflict study being conducted at Harvard, MIT and The New School. This study, to be published in November of 2009, will provide strong empirical data in support of proving the link between conflict in polarized societies and negative media images as well as establishing new guidelines for media that can affect a positive change in cultural dynamics. Final research findings will be made available to all global partners to support their efforts. The AoCMF would commit to ensuring follow-up to the commitments made in Istanbul Forum so that a report on progress could be provided to the UNAoC and its partners later in the year and at future AoC Fora.

Working Session 11: The Cost of Conflict in the Middle East

Organized in partnership with **Strategic Foresight Group**

Several leaders around the world have spoken of the need to find new approaches to resolve protracted conflicts. Government and institutions in Turkey, Switzerland, Norway and Qatar – countries that have played an active role in the Alliance of Civilizations – supported a study on Cost of Conflict in the Middle East undertaken by India-based Strategic Foresight Group. More than 50 experts from all major countries in the region – including Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine Territories, Qatar – provided intellectual input into the first-ever effort in 60 years to measure economic, social, political, environmental, human, diplomatic, cultural, psychological, educational and other costs of conflicts in the region on 97 different parameters. The report on Cost of Conflict in the Middle East was launched at the United Nations in Geneva in January 2009 and will serve as a basis for this session, during which its key findings will be highlighted. The panelists will discuss (1) key messages from the report (2) implications of the conflicts in the Middle East for wider relationship between Western and Islamic countries (3) future risks if there is lack of urgency about economic, human, environmental and other costs (4) significance of current positive developments such as the election of the Obama Administration, successful unity talks between the Palestinian factions, stability of the unity government in Lebanon (5) initial first steps to be taken by actors in the region (6) the role of the international community (7) the role of younger generation.

Working Session 12: Islamic and Muslim Contribution to European Culture, Societies and Identities

Organized in partnership with **Organization of the Islamic Conference, the British Council and Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures**

For over 1,300 years, the continent that is now called Europe has been home to peoples with direct or indirect connections to Islam. They have been traders and teachers, converts and conquerors, astronomers and astrologers, architects and builders, gardeners, clerks, translators, philosophers, medics, mystics and more. But in spite of these constructive exchanges and cross-fertilization, findings of polls tracking public perceptions show that mutual perceptions and relations between Muslims and Westerners are generally bad. Moreover, there is a wide ignorance of the major contribution given by Islamic civilization to the European culture, societies and identities. The aim of this session is to outline ways of strengthening the bonds of trust between Muslims and Europeans by creating more understanding and awareness of the many contributions that Islam and Muslims have made in history and in present-day Europe.

- 10:30–11:00** **Coffee break**
- 11:00–12:30** **PLENARY SESSION III: Education for Dialogue: Building Peace in the Minds of People**
 Peaceful and harmonious relationships between communities, nations, and groups need more than political resolutions imposed from the top-down; they also need changes in attitudes from the bottom-up among people at the grassroots level. One of the most important changes in attitudes is the willingness to engage in dialogue with the “other.” The “other” often symbolizes all the threatening aspects of globalization, and generates mutual suspicion. Dialogue presupposes the recognition of the “other” as an equal; the requirement of respectfully listening to counter-narratives of grievances and accusations; and the commitment to move matters beyond the current state of affairs. Education – in both the informal and formal sector - is a crucial agent of society in planting, nurturing, and cultivating a culture of dialogue. These challenges require the emergence of informed and engaged citizens committed to advocate and contribute adequate responses; citizens that have the capacity to cope with the complexity of an increasingly interconnected world; and citizens with the ability to combine harmoniously their own particular identity and global vision. This plenary session will discuss the challenges of forming these “informed and engaged citizens”. The panelists and participants will seek to answer some key questions: How to adapt education curricula and patterns to promote the emergence of informed and engaged citizens? What is the responsibility of policy makers, confronted by the conflicting demands of national interest and global common good? What is the role of the media, foundations, civil society organizations and how can they contribute to better intercultural awareness?
- 12:30-13:00** **Summary and key messages from the Working Sessions**
- 13:00-13:30** **Closing remarks and announcements:**
H.E. Mr. Ali Babacan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain
H.E. Mr. Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, former President of Portugal
- 13:30-14:30** **Press Conference**
- 14:00-15:30** **Luncheon for participants attending the Forum**
- 15:30-17:00** **Boat tour**

Wednesday, 8 April

- 09:00-13:00** **Meeting of the AoC Focal Points**