ALLIANCE OF **CIVILIZATIONS**

Report of the High-level Group
13 November 2006

United Nations

Part I

I. BRIDGING THE WORLD'S DIVIDES

1.1 Our world is alarmingly out of balance. For many, the last century brought unprecedented progress, prosperity, and freedom. For others, it marked an era of subjugation, humiliation and dispossession. Ours is a world of great inequalities and paradoxes: a world where the income of the planet's three richest people is greater than the combined income of the world's least developed countries; where modern medicine performs daily miracles and yet 3 million people die every year of preventable diseases; where we know more about distant universes than ever before, yet 130 million children have no access to education; where despite the existence of multilateral covenants and institutions, the international community often seems helpless in the face of conflict and genocide. For most of humanity, freedom from want and freedom from fear appear as elusive as ever.

1.2 We also live in an increasingly complex world, where polarized perceptions, fueled by injustice and inequality, often lead to violence and conflict, threatening international stability. Over the past few years, wars, occupation and acts of terror have exacerbated mutual suspicion and fear within and among societies. Some political leaders and sectors of the media, as well as radical groups have exploited this environment, painting mirror images of a world made up of mutually exclusive cultures, religions, or civilizations, historically distinct and destined for confrontation.

1.3 The anxiety and confusion caused by the "clash of civilizations" theory regrettably has distorted the terms of the discourse on the real nature of the predicament the world is facing. The history of relations between cultures is not only one of wars and confrontation. It is also based on centuries of constructive exchanges, cross-fertilization, and peaceful co-existence. Moreover, classifying internally fluid and diverse societies along hard-and-fast lines of civilizations interferes with more illuminating ways of understanding questions of identity, motivation and behavior. Rifts between the powerful and the powerless or the rich and the poor or between different political groups, classes, occupations and nationalities have greater explanatory power than such cultural categories. Indeed, the latter stereotypes only serve to entrench already polarized opinions. Worse, by promoting the misguided view that cultures are set on an unavoidable collision course, they help turn negotiable disputes into seemingly intractable identity-based conflicts that take hold of the popular imagination. It is essential, therefore, to counter the stereotypes and misconceptions that entrench patterns of hostility and mistrust among societies.

1.4 In this context, the need to build bridges between societies, to promote dialogue and understanding and to forge the collective political will to address the world's imbalances has never been greater. This urgent task constitutes the *raison d'être* of the Alliance of Civilizations. Launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2005 on the

co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey, the Alliance of Civilizations affirms a broad consensus across nations, cultures and religions that all societies are bound together in their humanity and interdependent in their quest for stability, prosperity and peaceful co-existence.

1.5 The Alliance seeks to address widening rifts between societies by reaffirming a paradigm of mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious traditions and by helping to mobilize concerted action toward this end. This effort reflects the will of the vast majority of peoples to reject extremism in any society and support respect for religious and cultural diversity. To guide this initiative, the Secretary-General has established a High-level Group of eminent persons. This is their report.[1] On the basis of its analysis, it evaluates relations between diverse societies and examines the emergence of the contemporary trend toward extremism with special attention to relations between Western and Muslim societies, bearing in mind that such characterizations do not reflect the vast diversity within each. It recommends a practicable program of action for states (at national, regional, and local levels), international organizations, and civil society, which it hopes will assist in diminishing hostility and in promoting harmony among the nations and cultures of the world.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 An Alliance of Civilizations must by nature be based on a multi-polar perspective. As such, the High-level Group has been guided in its deliberations by principles which set out the framework for promoting a culture of dialogue and respect among all nations and cultures. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 which seeks to free humanity of fear and misery, as well as the other fundamental documents on cultural and religious rights[2] are the basic reference for these principles as listed below.

2.2 An increasingly interdependent and globalized world can be regulated only through the rule of law and an effective multilateral system, with the United Nations system at its core. This requires adherence to international law and covenants including all rights and responsibilities governing the conduct of war as articulated in International Humanitarian Law (particularly the Geneva Conventions), respect for the institutions that establish them, and support for mechanisms that adjudicate violations of these norms.

2.3 A full and consistent adherence to human rights standards forms the foundation for stable societies and peaceful international relations. These rights include the prohibition against physical and mental torture; the right to freedom of religion; and the right to freedom of expression and association. The integrity of these rights rests on their universal and unconditional nature. These rights should therefore be considered

---

[1] This report reflects the consensus view of the members of the High-level Group; it does not imply universal agreement on all points.
[2] See reference documents featured on the Alliance of Civilizations website (www.unaoc.org)

United Nations

inviolable and all States, international organizations, non-state actors, and individuals, under all circumstances, must abide by them.

2.4 Diversity of civilizations and cultures is a basic feature of human society and a driving force of human progress. Civilizations and cultures reflect the great wealth and heritage of humankind; their nature is to overlap, interact and evolve in relationship to one another. There is no hierarchy among cultures, as each has contributed to the evolution of humanity. The history of civilizations is in fact a history of mutual borrowing and constant cross-fertilization.

2.5 Poverty leads to despair, a sense of injustice, and alienation that, when combined with political grievances, can foster extremism. Eradication of poverty would diminish those factors linked to economic marginalisation and alienation and must therefore be aggressively pursued, as called for in the Millennium Development Goals.

2.6 Terrorism can never be justified. In order to succeed in enabling international institutions and governments to stop terrorism, we need to address all the conditions conducive to it, recognising the links between peace, security, social and economic development, and human rights. In this regard, the recently approved UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy represents an important landmark.

2.7 Democratic governance that is representative of citizens and responsive to their needs and aspirations provides the most effective means for individuals to achieve their full potential. To be successful, democratic systems must emerge organically from within each society's culture, reflecting its shared values and adapted to the needs and interests of its citizens. This is only possible when people are free and feel in control of their destiny.

2.8 Religion is an increasingly important dimension of many societies and a significant source of values for individuals. It can play a critical role in promoting an appreciation of other cultures, religions, and ways of life to help build harmony among them.

III. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Overview

3.1 Political and technological developments during the twentieth century raised the hope and possibility for an unprecedented period of harmony between nations and a vast improvement in global well-being. Indeed, much has been achieved. Multilateral cooperation and civil society activism paved the way to a number of positive developments in international relations, including a ban on the use of landmines, the establishment of international criminal tribunals, and the initiation of a wide range of cooperative initiatives aimed at eradicating diseases or fighting poverty. Despite these achievements, however, a general malaise continues to be felt in many quarters regarding the state of the world. There is a widespread perception that the multilateral institutions

established to advance universal principles and to improve general well-being are ineffective mainly due to the lack of support of the most powerful countries and a real fear that the prospect of a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous future for today's youth is at risk. In some cases, this pessimism is the result of particular local, national, or regional dynamics, but there is also a broader global context that must be considered.

3.2 In social, political and economic terms, the West is both driving globalization and yet seemingly threatened by some of its trends. Western powers maintain overwhelming political, economic, and military power in the world, including disproportionate influence in multilateral political and economic bodies. Porous borders, mounting population flows from poor to rich countries, un-integrated immigrant communities and cross border spillovers of economic, environmental, health and even physical security factors have highlighted both the interdependence of societies and the widening gaps between them.

3.3 In terms of economic well-being, income inequality has continued to rise in recent decades and current studies indicate that increased integration into the world economy has actually exacerbated the divergence in the economic growth of countries. Thus over half of humanity still leads a life of deprivation, and the gap between poor and rich, both among and within nations, seem inexorably on the rise. Health and education systems in developing countries remain inadequate. Destruction of the environment is intensifying, proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons seems to escape effective control, and global arms sales – both official and illegal - evade monitoring.

3.4 In terms of political well-being, there is a growing perception that universal principles of human rights and democratic governance are only vigorously defended in those cases where they are viewed by some states to be in their own interests – a selective approach that undercuts the legitimacy of the multilateral institutions mandated to articulate, advance, and advocate for those principles. Eloquent statements in support of democracy lose their relevance when democratically elected governments are shunned and sometimes subverted by powerful countries.

3.5 The mechanisms and technologies by which communities interact with one another appear to have developed faster than our collective political will to use them for the benefit of all. This environment offers a fertile ground for the emergence of identity-based politics, which can, in turn, lead to violent tensions among communities and fuel hostile relations among them.

Identities and Perceptions

3.6 Diverse cultural identities are an integral part of the richness of human experience and as such must be respected and promoted. In particular, traditions and customs play a key role in the development and transmission of modern identity. But the inexorable push toward a "globalized" world has challenged group identities in many parts of the world, including Latin America, Africa and Asia. The advances of the latter half of the twentieth century opened up the possibility that diverse nations and cultures would communicate more easily, negotiate their interests on a more level playing field, and pursue common

United Nations

goals while maintaining their distinctive identities and belief systems. What many feel has emerged instead is an international system that offers the prospect of economic well-being for some in exchange for greater conformity and homogenization of cultures, complete with the dislocation of families and communities brought about by urbanization, the negation or appropriation of traditional lifestyles, and environmental degradation. Where communities feel they are faced with marginalization, foreclosed options for the future or even oppression and eradication, some inevitably respond by asserting their primary identities more forcefully.

3.7 In democratic societies, when groups sharing a history of discrimination or victimization make claims for equal rights and political participation, they may be addressed peacefully through, for example, affirmative action. In political systems which offer no channel for grievances to be heard, political and militant groups often emerge, advocating the use of violence to achieve redress. Perceived as liberation movements by some, they are considered as threats to national security by others. At the extreme end of the spectrum, radicals vying for economic or political gain can exploit feelings of humiliation or deprivation to attract recruits for political parties or militant groups formed along religious or ethnic lines. Slanted projections in the media, sometimes with substantive analysis but more often in superficial and simplistic terms, aggravate mutually negative perceptions.

Emergence of Extremism

3.8 The exploitation of religion by ideologues intent on swaying people to their causes has led to the misguided perception that religion itself is a root cause of intercultural conflict. It is therefore essential to dispel misapprehensions and to give an objective and informed appraisal of the role of religion in modern day politics. Indeed, a symbiotic relationship may be emerging between religion and politics in our time, each influencing the other. As an example from the past, the seemingly secular colonial enterprise of the 'civilizing mission' or the nineteenth century conviction of 'manifest destiny' in reality had deep religious roots. Conversely, the overtly religious platforms of some contemporary movements conceal political ambitions that appropriate religion for ideological ends.

3.9 From the mid-nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, many intellectual and political elites assumed that modernization would extinguish religion's vitality. As people became wealthier, enjoyed greater political freedom, and attained higher levels of education, the argument went, secularization and secularism as a legal and political principle would also advance, relegating religion to a much less significant role in world events. But in recent decades almost every major world religion has challenged this assumption, and has established a role in politics. There is increasing support in many societies for a greater role for religion in public life. Most express this desire in peaceable ways, persisting in a world that many view to be increasingly hostile to faith. But a tiny proportion of religiously motivated groups worldwide take part in acts of violence.

3.10 At this juncture, it is important to clarify our understanding of certain commonly used terms. "Fundamentalism" is a Western term coined by Protestant Christians which is not readily applicable to other communities. It is frequently used to describe movements which are disturbed by the marginalization of religion in secular society and seek to reinstate its central role. Even though all these movements are in fact highly innovative and even unorthodox, they often call for a return to the roots of religious tradition and a literal adherence to basic texts and principles irrespective of historical factors. Notwithstanding the imprecision with which the term is used, what is important to note here is that such movements exist across most faith traditions. Moreover, they are not by nature violent. What is common to them is a deep disappointment with and fear of secular modernity, which many of them have experienced as invasive, amoral, and devoid of deeper meaning. Extremism, on the other hand, advocates radical measures in pursuit of political goals. It is not, by nature, religious, and can also be found in secular movements. In some cases, fundamentalist and extremist ideologies can be used to justify acts of violence and even terrorist attacks on civilians.

3.11 It is imperative to recognize that none of the world religions condones or approves the killing of innocents. All promote the ideals of compassion, justice and respect for the dignity of life. However, in a wide range of recent conflicts in many parts of the world religion has been exploited to justify intolerance, violence and even the taking of life. Recently, a considerable number of acts of violence and terrorism have been committed by radical groups on the fringes of Muslim societies. Because of these actions, Islam is being perceived by some as an inherently violent religion. Assertions to this effect are at best manifestly incorrect and at worst maliciously motivated. They deepen divides and reinforce the dangerous mutual animosity among societies.

3.12 Extremism and terrorism are not motivated solely by exclusivist interpretations of religion, nor are non-state actors alone in employing them. Indeed, secular political motives were responsible for some of the most horrifying reigns of terror in living memory, such as the Holocaust, the Stalinist repressions in the Soviet Union, and more recent genocides in Cambodia, the Balkans, and Rwanda, all perpetrated by state powers. In sum, a cursory look at the twentieth century indicates that no single group, culture, geographic region, or political orientation has a monopoly on extremism and terrorist acts.

3.13 Wherever communities believe they face persistent discrimination, humiliation, or marginalization based on ethnic, religious, or other identity markers, they are likely to assert their identity more aggressively. As long as the source of resentment persists, and particularly when it is aggravated by increased humiliation or by despair in the normal political process, moderate leaders will always struggle to match the allure of those who stoke feelings of collective anger and offer fellowship and redress through exclusivist ideologies, adversarial politics and violence. Effective counter-measures cannot rely solely on attacking adherents of such ideologies – in fact such tactics are likely to inflame the very sentiments they seek to eradicate. The only durable solution lies in addressing the roots of the resentment and anger that make exclusivist and violent ideologies attractive in the first place. Nowhere have exclusivist ideologies, adversarial perceptions,

cultural arrogance, and media stereotypes combined more dangerously with conflicts bred of perceived and real injustices than in relations between Western and Muslim societies.

IV. THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

Historical Narratives

4.1 Building on the efforts of the Dialogue Among Civilizations[3] and other related initiatives[4], the Alliance of Civilizations must examine - within a multi-polar and comprehensive approach - the state of relations between diverse contemporary societies, their world-views and the reciprocal perceptions that shape these relations. The analysis here focuses on relations between Western and Muslim societies though the approach taken by the High-level Group to this issue may serve as a reference for the bridging of other divides in the interest of establishing peace and harmony.

4.2 Notwithstanding historical periods of tension and confrontation between adherents of the three major monotheistic religions – conflicts which themselves were often more political than religious in nature – it is important to note that peaceful co-existence, beneficial trade and reciprocal learning have been hallmarks of relations between Christianity, Islam and Judaism from their earliest period until today. During medieval times, Islamic civilization was a major source of innovation, knowledge acquisition, and scientific advancement that contributed to the emergence of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment in Europe. Historically, under Muslim rule, Jews and Christians were largely free to practice their faiths. Many rose to high political positions and Jews in particular took refuge in Muslim empires at different times in history to escape discrimination and persecution. Similarly, in recent centuries, political, scientific, cultural, and technological developments in the West have influenced many aspects of life in Muslim societies and many Muslims have sought to immigrate to Western nations in part for the political freedoms and economic opportunities found there.

Relations Between Societies of Western and Muslim Countries

4.3 Selective accounts of ancient history are used by radical movements to paint an ominous portrait of historically distinct and mutually exclusive faith communities destined for confrontation. Such distorted historical narratives must be countered. More important for the purposes of this report is the fact that this history does not offer explanations for current conflicts or for the rise in hostility between Western and Muslim societies. On the contrary, the roots of these phenomena lie in developments that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning with European imperialism, the

---

[3] See the Global Agenda for the Dialogue Among Civilizations (A/60/259).

[4] In particular, the Declaration and Program of Action for a Culture of Peace referred to, together with the Dialogue Among Civilizations and the Alliance of Civilizations, in paragraph 144 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome of the UN General Assembly.

United Nations

resulting emergence of anti-colonial movements, and the legacy of the confrontations between them.

4.4 The partition of Palestine by the United Nations in 1947, envisaging the establishment of two states - Palestine and Israel - with a special status for Jerusalem, led to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, beginning a chain of events that continues to be one of the most tortuous in relations between Western and Muslim societies. Israel's continuing occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and the unresolved status of Jerusalem - a holy city for Muslims and Christians as well as Jews – have persisted with the perceived acquiescence of Western governments and thus are primary causes of resentment and anger in the Muslim world toward Western nations. This occupation has been perceived in the Muslim world as a form of colonialism and has led many to believe, rightly or wrongly, that Israel is in collusion with "the West". These resentments and perceptions were further exacerbated by Israel's disproportionate retaliatory actions in Gaza and Lebanon.

4.5 In another critical context, the Middle East emerged as a vital source of energy crucial for prosperity and power. Cold War powers vied for influence in the strategic and resource rich countries of the region, often in the form of military and political interventions that contributed to stunting those countries' development and eventually backfired on the powerful countries with repercussions that continue to be felt today. One of these events was the 1953 coup in Iran, the aftermath of which demonstrated both the limitations and the dangers of foreign interference in a country's political development.

4.6 The Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 opened another line of confrontation. As part of the Western policy of supporting religious opposition to contain Communism, the US and its allies, including some Muslim governments in the region, bolstered the Afghan resistance - the "mujahedin" - eventually forcing the Soviet retreat in 1989. After a period of instability, the Taliban regime seized control of the country and supported Al Qaeda, fomenting deep hostility against the West and setting in motion a chain of events which were to scar the start of the new Millennium.

4.7 The terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al Qaeda on the United States in September 2001 drew near universal condemnation irrespective of religion or politics and demonstrated the depth of this extremist group's hostility. They provoked a forceful retaliation against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Later, these attacks were presented as one of the justifications for the invasion of Iraq, whose link with them has never been established, feeding a perception among Muslim societies of unjust aggression stemming from the West.

4.8 In the context of relations between Muslim and Western societies, the perception of double standards in the application of international law and the protection of human rights is particularly acute. Reports of collective punishment, targeted killings, torture, arbitrary detention, renditions, and the support of autocratic regimes contribute to an increased sense of vulnerability around the globe, particularly in Muslim countries, and to a perception of Western double standards. Assertions that Islam is inherently violent and

related statements by some political and religious leaders in the West – including the use of terms such as "Islamic terrorism" and "Islamic fascism" - have contributed to an alarming increase in Islamophobia which further exacerbates Muslim fears of the West.

4.9 Conversely, violent attacks targeting civilian populations in the West, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, and torture, have led to an atmosphere of suspicion, insecurity and fear in the West. Many in the West also perceive double standards on the part of Muslim leaders. Indeed, while Western military operations are widely condemned by Muslims, this is not the case with intra-Muslim conflicts. Sectarian violence between Shias and Sunnis in certain Muslim countries and the atrocities committed against civilians in Darfur, for instance, has not led to widespread condemnation in the Muslim world.

4.10 These reciprocal perceptions of double standards contribute to the climate of suspicion and mistrust that undermines relations between Muslim and Western societies.

Trends in Muslim Societies

4.11 Late in the colonial age, many Muslim thinkers urged their communities to adapt to changing times. Following independence, several Muslim leaders embarked on a program of modernization to bring development to their populations. These policies were often viewed by religious parties as driven by a secularization agenda. More recent decades have witnessed the growth of a diverse array of religio-political movements – loosely termed "Islamist" – that have gained credibility and popular support in part by providing sorely needed social services, especially in health and primary education, to deprived sectors of society. They stand in contrast to many of the ruling regimes which are widely viewed as having failed to provide sufficiently for the economic and social welfare of their populations.

4.12 In evaluating the relations between Western and Muslim societies, it is important to note that Islamist activism does not necessarily produce Islamist militancy within societies and the latter does not automatically lead to violent confrontation with the West. It is the invasion of certain Muslim countries by Western military forces and their continued presence in these countries, combined with the suppression of political movements in the Muslim world, that are among the reasons for violent manifestations. As evidenced throughout history and across many countries, political repression as well as the prolongation of occupation helps entrench violent resistance. This raises the issue of the dynamics at play within the Muslim world that are affecting relations between Muslim societies and the rest of the world.

4.13 The current predicament from which much of the Muslim world suffers cannot be attributed solely to foreign interference. An internal debate between progressive and regressive forces is playing out on a range of social and political issues throughout the Muslim world as well as on interpretations of Islamic law and traditions. In simplified yet evident terms, resistance to change in several Muslim societies is at the root of their disadvantaged position relative to other societies that are advancing rapidly in the

United Nations

contemporary age. There appears to be a growing realization among Muslims that the authoritarianism and conformity that have marked many of their societies in past centuries are severe detriments to them in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world. It seems apparent that all Muslim societies would benefit from increased dialogue and debate to identify those factors internal to their own societies which have inhibited their development and full integration into global political, economic, and intellectual communities, and to generate ideas on how to overcome these barriers.

4.14 In some cases, self-proclaimed religious figures have capitalized on a popular desire for religious guidance to advocate narrow, distorted interpretations of Islamic teachings. Such figures mis-portray certain practices, such as honor killings, corporal punishment, and oppression of women as religious requirements. These practices are not only in contravention of internationally-agreed human rights standards, but, in the eyes of respected Muslim scholars, have no religious foundation. Such scholars have demonstrated that a sound reading of Islamic scriptures and history would lead to the eradication and not the perpetuation of these practices.

4.15 Many of these practices relate directly to the status of women. In some Muslim societies, ill-informed religious figures, in some cases allied with unenlightened conservative political regimes, have succeeded in greatly restricting women's access to public and professional life, thereby hampering their prospects and potential for self-fulfillment. The effect on those women, on society at large, and on future generations, has been to inhibit economic and social development as well as democratic pluralism. This problem can only be overcome through laws that ensure full gender equality in accordance with internationally-agreed human rights standards. Such measures are most likely to succeed if supported by religious education that is based upon a sound interpretation of religious teachings. It must be noted, however, that in many parts of the world, including Western countries, much progress is still needed with regard to the status of women.

4.16 Who prevails in these intra-Muslim struggles is central not only to the future of Muslim societies, but also to their future relations with the rest of the world, which is why we take up this matter here. Clearly these tensions can only be settled by Muslim societies themselves. While there is no obvious role for non-Muslims to play, Western activists and governments in particular should avoid certain actions that have negative repercussions on debates taking place in Muslim societies. Propagation by Western media and official authorities of over-simplified explanations that either blame Islam as a religion or that falsely pit secularists against religious activists has a detrimental effect. This includes media coverage that gives time and space only to the most extreme of the religious voices in the Muslim world and to the most anti-Muslim ideologues in the West to counter them. Similarly, some media produced in Muslim countries that presents mostly or entirely negative portrayals of other communities feeds polarization. The use of expressions such as "Islamic terrorism" in the West and "modern Crusaders" in the Muslim world exacerbates the mutual hostility.

4.17 Among the intra-Muslim debates that most directly affect relations with Western societies is that over the concept of "jihad". The notion of jihad is a rich one with many shades of meaning, ranging from the struggle between good and evil that is internal to every individual (often referred to as the "greater" jihad in Islam) to the taking up of arms in defense of one's community (the "lesser" jihad). Increasingly, this term is used by extremists to justify violence with little consideration for the historical context and the related religious exigencies that most Muslim scholars agree should inform its application. When such exhortations to violence by radical factions are picked up and amplified by media and Western political leaders, the notion of "jihad" loses the multiple meanings and positive connotations it has for Muslims and becomes associated with only violent and negative meanings which have been wrongly attributed to the term.

4.18 For many Muslims, the only perceived successes in shaking off occupation or political domination by Western countries over the past thirty years have been those led by religio-political-military movements and non-state actors. The ability of such groups, which are perceived to be militarily, economically, and politically overwhelmed by Western nations, to succeed through asymmetric warfare in resisting invasion and occupation, generates feelings of solidarity and support. Fear of Western domination is so acute and widespread that support for resistance movements exists even among some who do not share the broader political or religious ideologies of these groups, or who are concerned about what the long-term effect of their ascendance might be on political and social liberties. It is therefore not surprising that among the most alienated and frustrated segments of Muslim societies where feelings of powerlessness and victimization are most acute, the revolutionary rhetoric of the most radical religio-military movements find some traction and support.

4.19 Moreover the actions of such groups, all of which emerged in the context of political opposition, stand in stark contrast to the perceived failures of official regimes in many Muslim countries. Indeed, many of these regimes are viewed as unable to resist foreign interference or as being closely allied with certain Western nations that are perceived to support the occupation of Muslim countries or the repression of fellow-Muslims.

4.20 In this context, there is a growing perception within and beyond the Muslim world that distinctions need to be made between, on the one hand, national movements which resist foreign occupation and, on the other hand, terrorist groups with global ambitions. This view is not shared by all in the international community. Resistance groups should be encouraged to pursue their goals through non-violent participation in political processes and democratic representation. For global terrorist groups, a "clash of civilizations" is a welcome and potent slogan to attract and motivate a loosely knit network of operatives and supporters. We must make it clear that, in our view, no political end, whether arising from historical injustice or contemporary provocation, and whether committed by resistance organizations, global militant groups, or by states, can justify the targeting of civilians and non-combatants. Such actions must be condemned unequivocally.

United Nations

V. TOWARDS AN ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS:
GENERAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Middle East

5.1 With regard to relations between Muslim and Western societies, we must acknowledge the contemporary realities that shape the views of millions of Muslims: the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the violence in Afghanistan, and the increasingly violent conflict in Iraq.

5.2 We must stress the increasing urgency of the Palestinian issue, which is a major factor in the widening rift between Muslim and Western societies. In this regard, it is our duty to express our collective opinion that without a just, dignified, and democratic solution based on the will of all peoples involved in this conflict, all efforts – including recommendations contained in this report – to bridge this gap and counter the hostilities among societies are likely to meet with only limited success.

5.3 Our emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not meant to imply that it is the overt cause of all tensions between Muslim and Western societies. Other factors also create resentment and mistrust, including the spiraling crisis in Iraq, the continued instability in Afghanistan, issues internal to Muslim societies, as well as terrorist attacks on civilian populations in many countries. Nevertheless, it is our view that the Israeli-Palestinian issue has taken on a symbolic value that colors cross-cultural and political relations among adherents of all three major monotheistic faiths well beyond its limited geographic scope.

5.4 Achieving a just and sustainable solution to this conflict requires courage and a bold vision of the future on the part of Israelis, Palestinians and all countries capable of influencing the situation. We firmly believe that progress on this front rests on the recognition of both the Palestinian and Jewish national aspirations and on the establishment of two fully sovereign and independent states living side by side in peace and security.

5.5 Reaching this objective will require Israel not only to accept but to facilitate the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. The peace accords involving Israel, Egypt and Jordan demonstrate that such constructive steps taken in line with international law are workable. Moreover, the terms of reference agreed to by all parties at the Madrid Conference in 1991, the peace initiative by President Clinton in 2000, and the peace proposal by the Arab League in its meeting in Beirut, Lebanon in 2002, make it clear that the framework for a broad-based accord does exist and the political will can be generated.

5.6 Of primary importance in this regard is the mutual recognition of the competing narratives that emerged following the establishment of the state of Israel. In the eyes of most Jews and Israelis this event was the result of a long-standing aspiration to build a

Jewish homeland and was immediately followed by an attack from neighboring Arab countries. For Palestinians and a majority of people in the Muslim world, however, the establishment of Israel was experienced as an act of aggression that led to the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and to the occupation of their lands. It is worth noting that these competing narratives are mirrored in divergent interpretations of recent history: different ways of describing conflicts, occupation, and peace negotiation efforts.

5.7 <u>A White Paper on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict</u>. The competing narratives of Palestinians and Israelis cannot be fully reconciled, but they must be mutually acknowledged in order to establish the foundations of a durable settlement. To this end, we recommend the development of a White Paper analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict dispassionately and objectively, giving voice to the competing narratives on both sides, reviewing and diagnosing the successes and failures of past peace initiatives, and establishing clearly the conditions that must be met to find a way out of this crisis. Such a document could provide a firm foundation for the work of key decision-makers involved in efforts to resolve this conflict. A level-headed and rational analysis would make it clear to the Palestinian people that the price of decades of occupation, misunderstanding and stigmatization is being fully acknowledged, while at the same time contributing to exorcize the fears of Israelis. This effort would strengthen the hand of those who seek a just solution to this conflict while weakening extremists on all sides, as they would no longer be the champions of a cause they have been able to appropriate because its story had been left untold or deliberately ignored by the community of nations.

5.8 <u>A re-invigorated multilateral peace process</u>. As a further step in a renewed effort to solve the problems that lie at the heart of the Middle East crisis, the High-level Group calls for the resumption of the political process, including the convening, as soon as possible, of an international conference on the Middle East Peace Process, to be attended by all relevant actors, with the aim of reaching a comprehensive peace agreement.

5.9 <u>International compacts with Iraq and Afghanistan</u>.[5] The international community should respond with a sense of responsibility to the political and humanitarian crisis in Iraq. The High-level Group expresses its full support for the efforts of the Arab League to build domestic political consensus in Iraq and for the full implementation of the International Compact with Iraq. Similarly, though in a different regional context, the High-level Group expresses its full support for the recently initiated International Compact with Afghanistan.

5.10 <u>Political pluralism in Muslim countries</u>. One of the contributing factors to the polarization between Muslim and Western societies and to the rise in extremism in these relations is the repression of political movements in the Muslim world. Therefore, it is in the interest of Muslim and Western societies alike that ruling parties in the Muslim world

---

[5] The *International Compact with Iraq* sponsored by the Government of Iraq, the United Nations, and the World Bank was initiated at the Abu Dhabi Preparatory Meeting, 10 September 2006. See www.iraqcompact.org. The *Afghanistan Compact,* resulting from consultations between the government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, and the international community, was launched at the London Conference on Afghanistan, 31 January – 1 February, 2006. See www.fco.gov.uk.

provide the space for the full participation of non-violent political parties, whether religious or secular in nature. To this end, foreign governments should be consistent in their support for democratic processes and not interfere when the results do not fit their political agenda. This call for expanded political pluralism applies not only to countries in the Middle East or in the larger Muslim world, but to all nations.

Other General Policy Recommendations

5.11 <u>A renewed commitment to multilateralism</u>. As noted throughout this report, many of the problems facing the international community can only be addressed effectively within a multilateral framework. It is therefore incumbent upon States to reinforce multilateral institutions – particularly the United Nations - and to support efforts at reform that will strengthen the capacity and performance of these institutions.

5.12 <u>A full and consistent respect for international law and human rights</u>. Polarization between communities grows when universal human rights are defended – or perceived to be defended – selectively. Therefore, establishing genuine dialogue among nations requires a common understanding of international human rights principles and a universal commitment to their full and consistent application. In particular, this dialogue must be founded on respect for human rights (including freedom of conscience, freedom of expression and protection from torture and other inhuman or degrading treatment), as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, and other basic documents, as well as on a recognition of the authority of international criminal courts.

5.13 <u>Coordinated migration policies consistent with human rights standards</u>. Migration is most effectively managed when policies are coordinated between countries of origin, transit and destination for migrants and when they are consistent with international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international agreements which guide the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons.

5.14 <u>Combating poverty and economic inequities</u>. An Alliance of Civilizations can only be fully realized within an international framework that includes the commitment of all countries to work toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The urgency of this matter can hardly be overstated. Global inequalities are growing at a staggering rate. In Africa, half the population lives under a dollar a day. Although the continent accounts for nearly a sixth of world population, it represents less than 3% of global trade and lags behind in other areas, including investment, education and health[6]. These problems must be tackled urgently, as the increasing gap between rich and poor plays an important role in fueling resentment and eroding global solidarity.

---

[6] According to the 2005 Human Development Report, produced by the United Nations Development Program, Africa received US$13 billion in foreign direct investment, compared to US$216 billion for the EU, US$147 for Asia and US$95 for North America. Moreover, 18 of the continent's 53 countries experienced a decline in standards of living between 1990 and 2003.

United Nations

5.15 <u>Protection of the freedom to worship</u>. Freedom of religion and freedom of worship are fundamental rights to be guaranteed by all countries and faith communities. Therefore, particular attention must be paid to the respect for religious monuments and holy sites, as they have a significance that goes to the core of individual and collective religious identity. The violation and desecration of places of worship can grievously damage relations between communities and raise the risk of triggering widespread violence. In line with the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2001[7], therefore, we believe that governments should take a strong stand against the desecration of holy sites and places of worship and take responsibility for their protection. We also call upon civil society and international organizations to help promote a culture of tolerance and respect for all religions and religious sites.

5.16 <u>Exercising responsible leadership</u>. Many of the issues feeding tensions between communities arise at the crossroads of politics and religion. One of these issues is the impact of inflammatory language sometimes used by political and religious leaders and the destructive effect such language can have when disseminated by the media. Such language fuels the spread of hatred and mistrust resulting in Islamophobia, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. In the current climate of fear and suspicion that grips communities throughout the world, leaders and shapers of public opinion have a special responsibility to promote understanding among cultures and mutual respect of religious belief and traditions. Given the influence and the respect they command, it is their duty to avoid violent or provocative language about other people's beliefs or sacred symbols.

5.17 <u>The central importance of civil society activism</u>. While political steps are necessary in order to advance each of the policy recommendations noted above, political action taken without the support of civil society often falls short of affecting lasting change. The High-level Group therefore calls for a greater role and involvement of civil society in the mechanisms for the advancement of its recommendations and, in particular, for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

5.18 <u>Establishing partnerships to advance an Alliance of Civilizations</u>. The High-level Group recommends the development of partnerships in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations with international organizations that share its goals, and the reinforcement of their interaction and coordination with the UN system. Special attention should be given to those international organisations that are part of the UN family and those organizations that have already been cooperating with the High-level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations, namely: the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the League of Arab States, the Islamic Scientific Educational and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), as well as other international and national organizations, public or private.

---

[7] See UN Resolution on "Protection of Religious Sites" (A/RES/55/254) adopted by the General Assembly on 31 May 2001.

United Nations

5.19 The primary purpose of the analysis in Part I of this report - both at the global level and at the level specific to relations between Muslim and Western societies – is to lay the basis and assert the moral grounds for concerted action at institutional and civil society levels to foster cross-cultural harmony and to enhance global stability. The remainder of this report (Part II – Main Fields of Action) explores the primary means by which such action could be taken - analyzing the key roles that education, youth, migration and media are currently playing in relations between societies and proposing actions that could be taken in each of these sectors to improve relations.

PART II

VI. MAIN FIELDS OF ACTION

6.1 Resolving the most contentious and symbolic political conflicts has been stressed in Part I of this report because we deem this to be of primary importance in removing the obstacles to the establishment of an Alliance of Civilizations. At the same time, we recognize that mutual fear, suspicion, and ignorance across cultures has spread beyond the level of political leadership into the hearts and minds of populations – so much so that the notion that there are essential and irreconcilable differences between cultures and religions now arises regularly as an explanation for a range of cultural and political conflicts. This disturbing phenomenon must be addressed pragmatically.

6.2 In particular, education, youth, media and migration policies can play a critical role in helping to reduce cross-cultural tensions and to build bridges between communities. The purpose of Part II of this report is therefore to provide and overview of these areas and to put forward actions that could be taken in each of them, acknowledging efforts already underway, and proposing ways to expand, strengthen, connect, and build upon these efforts. High-level Group members firmly believe that there already exists significant concern across the international community with the rising tide of lethal conflicts and a broad-based popular desire for universal human security and prosperity. What is required is to strengthen the avenues for its expression and advancement, and this is an effort to which all sectors of society can contribute.

Education

6.3 Education systems today face the challenge of preparing young people for an interdependent world that is unsettling to individual and collective identities. Education about one's own history fosters a sense of community and solidarity, but it must be balanced by knowledge of global issues and an understanding and appreciation of other societies and cultures. Education in its various forms – including music, sports, art, drama and film – can help build bridges between communities and people. Such broad perspectives encourage young people to steer away from the kind of exclusivist thinking which holds that one group's interests may be advanced at the expense of others or that one group's victimization justifies the victimization of others. Non-formal education can play a key mobilizing role in pursuit of these objectives.

6.4 Civic and peace education: Civic education offers ways of addressing issues of identity and fostering respect for diversity. Radical ideologies promote a world of mutually exclusive identities. Such approaches can be countered by developing respect for different cultures through an understanding of shared values and ideals. Citizens should be exposed to these principles, enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, if they are to function effectively in a pluralistic world.

6.5 <u>Global and cross cultural education</u>: Nations with increasingly multi-religious and multi-ethnic populations must recognize the need for more inclusive education about the world and its peoples. In the past few decades, many prominent universities and research centers around the world have been advancing efforts to develop "world history" or "history of humanity" programs with multi-polar approaches. Growing efforts to teach interdisciplinary world history in colleges and schools contribute to developing knowledge and appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of global cultures, and to building a sense of shared human experience.

6.6 <u>Exchange programs, particularly at the post-graduate and scientific level</u>: Recent experience has shown that exchange programs at the scientific level – i.e. involving post-graduate students and professors – can have wide-ranging impact. Not only do they help to overcome cultural misunderstandings, but they also contribute to the transfer of knowledge which is a key factor in the promotion of development. Significant progress would be achieved by ensuring that exchange programs include a greater degree of reciprocity so as to ensure an increase in North to South flows of scientific exchange and knowledge transfer.

6.7 <u>Media literacy education</u>: The constant exposure of populations to media presents an educational challenge, which has increased in the electronic and digital age. Evaluating information sources requires skills and critical thinking and is an educational responsibility the importance of which is often underestimated. Separating fact from opinion, evaluating text and image for bias, and to constructing and deconstructing a text based on principles of logic are teachable skills. Media literacy instruction is not widely recognized for its importance as an aspect of civic and peace education and therefore few instructional programs have been developed as part of basic modern education.

6.8 <u>Education and religion</u>: The right to choose and practice one's faith without coercion is enshrined in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and within most religious traditions. Education systems, including religious schools, must provide students with an understanding and respect for the diverse religious beliefs, practices and cultures in the world[8]. Not only citizens and religious leaders but the whole society needs a basic understanding of religious traditions other than their own and the core teachings of compassion that are common to all religions.

6.9 <u>Education and development</u>: Access to education still eludes a large number of young people and women, particularly in developing nations.[9] In those countries where poverty

---

[8] The inadequacy of current educational approaches to Muslim-Western relations is reflected in a number of polls. A December 2005 Gallup poll of Americans found that, when asked what they admire about Muslim societies, the most frequent response among respondents (32%) was "nothing" and the second most frequent (25%) was "I don't know". See "Americans' Views of the Islamic World", Gallup Poll News Service, February 8, 2006.

[9] According to the United Nations Population Fund's assessment of progress toward the second Millennium Development Goal publicized on the occasion of World Population Day, 11 July, 2006, while there has been a steady and continuing increase since 1995 in the global figures of young people who complete primary school, there remain 130 million children who are not in school and 133 million who are illiterate.

forces parents to make choices between their children, girls are often the first to be pulled out of school. Efforts to expand access to education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels must continue to build upon the Millennium Development Goals, utilizing innovative distance learning as well as traditional means of expanding educational opportunities.

6.10 New technologies and access to the internet: Poor penetration of computers and lack of access to the internet in developing countries – known as the digital divide - reinforce inequities and hinder cross-cultural learning.[10] Without broadly accessible internet access, particularly in school systems, populations in these regions will be unable to participate fully in what is becoming the primary means for accessing information and for cross-cultural interaction in the world. Expanding internet access in developing countries is necessary if youth from these regions are to gain access to a wider array of information and the means for communicating with people of other national, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. These efforts need to be combined with support for – or creation of - tools and e-spaces which foster inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

6.11 Education for employment and for life: The challenges of development continue to focus many educational reform efforts almost entirely on the need to prepare young people for employment. This emphasis has resulted in imbalances in the education system, with sharp division between technical, scientific, and math education on one side and social sciences and the humanities on the other, with the latter de-valued as economically unproductive. This bifurcation of knowledge marks a break from the growing consensus among scholars regarding the importance of integrative and multi-disciplinary approaches to education, which prepare students for the complexities, ambiguities and constant change that characterize life in a multicultural world.

Youth

6.12 Expanding opportunities for youth mobilization: The global growth of youth movements and organizations in recent years offers new opportunities for youth mobilization. Student exchange programs, sports activities and political involvement can provide new opportunities for promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect for diversity. Moreover, supporting young people's participation in decision making processes can benefit society as a whole, since young people are a source of innovative ideas and provide energy for positive change. In this regard, it is extremely important to recognize youth not only as a source of mobilization, but as autonomous actors and partners.

6.13 Exchange programs: Youth exchange is an effective method for overcoming cultural barriers, enhancing intercultural awareness and fostering individual development. There is an urgent need to dramatically scale up youth exchange programs between young

---

[10] While the United States and Europe (with East Asia) have the highest rates of computer ownership and internet hosts, the penetration of computers in the Middle East and North Africa is only 18 per 1,000 persons, compared to a global average of 73.8. See the *Pocket - World in Figures - 2005 Edition*, The Economist in Association with Profile Books LTD, London, 2004.

United Nations

people of different cultural backgrounds - drawing on the successful models and lessons learned from the European and the Euro-Mediterranean experiences[11] and with particular emphasis on exchanges between Western and Muslim countries.[12]

6.14 <u>Socio-economic alienation</u>: Youth unemployment is two to three times greater than national unemployment levels worldwide. For young people in certain predominantly Muslim countries, the problem is particularly acute. The Middle East and North Africa region has the lowest rate of youth participation in the labor force: 40%, compared to a global average of 54%. Strategies to enhance youth economic participation such as school-based career guidance, national youth employment strategies and the promotion of youth enterprise are important means by which to combat youth unemployment.

6.15 <u>Cultural alienation</u>: Various factors play a role in the cultural alienation of young people including the lack of role models and reduced opportunities to express issues relevant to young people in their own cultural and religious contexts. In the cultural arena, there is a great imbalance between products that are representative of Western youth and those which are mainly targeted at non-Western audiences. This not only affects possibilities for meaningful cultural dialogue but it also has a detrimental affect on how young people view themselves and their own culture.

6.16 <u>Promoting participation</u>: Involving young people in community councils, youth organizations and governing bodies of civil society organizations and institutions, can provide young people with unique platforms to take on constructive roles in their communities. Globally, youth representation experienced renewed growth in recent years through the convening of regional youth platforms. These networks provide opportunities for initiatives such as an Alliance of Civilizations to gather input from, and assist in the mobilization of youth from diverse cultural, religious, and national backgrounds.

Migration

6.17 <u>The dynamic dimension of migration</u>: Virtually every state is both a country of origin and of destination for migrants. In a world of porous borders, rapidly evolving modes of transportation and communications, and globalized economies, diverse populations are destined to interact through continued migration, presenting new challenges, particularly for host countries. How this dynamic is portrayed in the media, discussed by political and cultural leaders, and managed by policy-makers will determine whether populations view increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat.

---

[11] Cf. particularly the Erasmus, Leonardo, and Socrates programs as well as the EuroMed Youth Program, all led by the European Union.

[12] A recent survey conducted by AEA Consulting (New York) of exchanges involving the United States noted that 30% of all international cultural exchange grants in the U.S. go to exchanges with Europe (the highest proportion spent on exchanges with any region) while only 6% (the lowest proportion spent on exchanges with any region) go to exchanges with the Middle East. See "Cultural & Artistic Exchanges Between the West and Predominantly Muslim Countries: Working Paper, May 13 2006 Meeting of the UN Alliance of Civilizations" on the Alliance of Civilizations website (www.unaoc.org).

6.18 <u>Proactive strategies for addressing migration</u>: Coordinated strategies at the national, regional and international levels are indispensable to prevent the inhuman and discriminatory treatment of migrant populations. The solution is not to build walls around nations. The most promising approaches appear to be those collaborative efforts taken by countries of origin, transit and countries of destination for large immigrant populations to deal with the reasons for mass migration. In this regard, significant progress would be achieved if wealthier countries met their commitments of increased investment in the developing world, as this, together with good governance and capacity building efforts in developing countries, would help improve economic conditions in those countries.

6.19 <u>Benefits of migration</u>: Migrants make important contributions to the economic, social and cultural development of the societies in which they settle. At the same time, immigrant workers provide a significant economic boon – though often at the cost of considerable personal sacrifice - to their home countries. Furthermore, remittances constitute a large percentage of the foreign exchange receipts of labor exporting countries.

6.20 <u>Challenges of migration</u>: The integration of immigrant communities can raise a number of challenges including difficulties for immigrants in accessing education and social service systems and in overcoming restrictions in housing and job opportunities, barriers to becoming full citizens, and experiences of racism. However, the integration of Muslim immigrant populations in the US and Europe presents particular challenges, especially since the events of 2001. These populations who began to experience more discrimination nowadays in Europe and, in the United States, are increasingly fearful of encroachments on fundamental civil liberties. However, the challenges faced by Muslim immigrants are more pronounced in Europe than in the US. Indeed, Muslim immigrants to the US, on average, have higher levels of education and are more affluent than non-Muslim Americans.[13]

6.21 <u>Combating discrimination</u>: Important steps toward the development and implementation of policies that facilitate immigrant communities' participation in the mainstream of society have been taken through the adoption in 1997 of the European Employment Strategy, which seeks to remove barriers to employment for migrant workers and ethnic minorities, and through the establishment of the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). These experiences should be expanded and enlarged, beyond the European context.

6.22 <u>Supporting expanded inclusive dialogue at all levels</u>: Establishing coherent integration strategies requires regular dialogue among representatives of government and immigrant communities, civil society representatives, religious organizations and employers, engaging at local, regional, national and international levels. While informal and ad hoc engagement is valuable, institutional structures that support dialogue on a

---

[13] See Georgetown University's Project on Muslims in the Public Square (Project MAPS), and Nimer, Mohamed, The <u>North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada</u>, New York, NY, Routledge, 2002 for data on income and education levels of U.S. immigrants from predominantly Muslim regions.

United Nations

regular on-going basis can ensure the efficacy of such approaches in promoting greater integration. Such efforts help achieve a balance between the demands of integration and the need to maintain one's cultural and religious identity.

6.23 Leadership: Political, civil society, and religious leadership in the West can help set the tone within which debates regarding immigration take place by speaking forcefully and publicly in defense of the rights of immigrants wherever they are endangered and by acknowledging the contributions that immigrants make to the life and livelihood of their communities.

Media

6.24 How the media shape our views: The media in all its forms holds the potential to serve as a bridge between cultures and societies. The frequently stated goal of the media is to inform and educate viewers and readers. Yet, some of the strongest pressures in today's world – political control and market forces – hamper the production of both quality news and entertainment programming that present a well-balanced portrayal of foreign cultures. Increased access of Muslim populations to news produced by Muslim sources has raised popular awareness of events in Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. News that highlights the victimization of fellow Muslims fosters public sympathy and solidarity. In the West, an appreciably more nationalistic and at times anti-Muslim tone has become evident in news and commentary, especially since the events of 11 September, 2001.

6.25 Press freedom and responsibility: Journalism in many countries is subject to a lack of press freedom; where such freedom exists, market forces and nationalistic sentiments often result in the irresponsible practice of these freedoms. Objective reporting and the presentation of a diversity of perspectives are needed to prevent stereotypes and misrepresentations from blocking the flow of reliable information.

6.26 The impact of entertainment media: Entertainment media also fuels hostile perceptions.[14] There is an urgent need for balanced images of ordinary Muslims in Western mass media. There are however emerging positive signs that since 11 September, 2001, Muslims living in the West are becoming more involved in Hollywood and film productions in Europe in order to generate more accurate depictions of themselves and their faith.

6.27 The internet and the digital revolution: Accompanying these trends in both the West and in the Muslim world is the advent of "new media". The internet and the development of digital media production and distribution have opened new avenues for media consumers to become media producers and disseminators and have provided means for vastly increased people-to-people communication. While the internet can be used for destructive purposes, it also has a wide range of positive applications: its openness makes

---

[14] A survey of 900 American films with Arab characters found that the vast majority were outright crude or racist caricatures. See Shaheen, Jack G. Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People. Olive Branch Press, New York, NY, 2001.

United Nations

it an ideal network for social interaction, and a unique forum for exchanging ideas and information. In that regard, the internet offers an effective mechanism to bridge cultural and religious divides, linking activists capable of promoting dialogue and understanding.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this section are addressed to the UN system, States, including their parliaments and all levels of government (national, regional, local, and municipal), intergovernmental organizations; non-governmental organizations and societies at large. They are proposed with recognition of the many initiatives and efforts already underway in these fields. Their advancement would necessarily require the development of partnerships in the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations as noted in paragraph 5.18.

Education

Given substantial activity in the field of education relevant to the goals of the Alliance, recommendations in this field are geared toward the adaptation and expansion of existing efforts, rather than the initiation of new activities.

1. *Governments, multilateral institutions, universities, education scholars and policy-makers should work separately and together to expand global, cross-cultural, and human rights education.*

The following steps should be taken:

   a. Governments should ensure that their primary and secondary educational systems provide for a balance and integration of national history and identity formation with knowledge of other cultures, religions, and regions.

   b. Specialized agencies, such as UNESCO and ISESCO should collaborate with educational research centers and curriculum developers on a regional basis to make existing resources in this field (such as the History of Humanity series and the Regional Histories Project) "classroom-ready" and to develop and implement a strategy for their dissemination and use by member states.

   c. Similarly, a strategy for the dissemination of human rights education materials should be developed, drawing on the work already achieved by UNESCO and ISESCO and on successful initiatives such as the Human Security Network's "Manual on Human Rights Education".

   d. Public and private donors should provide research grants and funds for conferences and cross-regional exchanges to teacher training institutions where specialists in world history and geography are developing content, pedagogy, and teaching resources for world history curriculum.

United Nations

e. Public and private donors should support scholarly institutions to re-issue those parts of the Islamic heritage that deal with pluralism, rationality, and the scientific method, and to make them available on-line in multiple languages.

f. Public and private donors should support education efforts aimed at the general public in the West and in predominantly Muslim countries by funding arts performances, film festivals, educational tours, and scholarly/educational conferences that disseminate information on the richness of diverse cultures and on the importance of cultural interactions.

g. Develop a joint public-private sector fund to support scholars engaged in teaching and researching cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

2. *Media literacy programs should be implemented in schools, particularly at secondary level, to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage by media consumers.*

A useful starting point can be found in projects such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's initiative to promote media awareness and development of internet literacy to combat misperceptions, prejudices and hate speech.

3. *Religious leaders, education policymakers, and interfaith civic organizations should work together to develop consensus guidelines for teaching about religions.*

There are several important international interfaith initiatives and numerous education policy centers that research models for teaching about religion in schools.[15] Those involved in on-going efforts should collaborate to develop consensus among religious leaders and educators on the need to teach about world religions in various educational settings, and to collect and disseminate best practices, consensus guidelines and instructional resources toward this end. The goal would be to provide base-materials that could be used by schools and religious training centers to teach about major faith traditions. Guidelines and mechanisms should be established to ensure that religious schools are registered with authorities and that their curricula do not foster hatred of other communities. At the same time, no steps should be taken in this regard which might curtail freedom of education or freedom of worship.

4. *Governments and international organizations should work together to convene curriculum-review panels consisting of curriculum experts and representatives of the major faith traditions to review widely used educational curricula, ensuring they meet guidelines for fairness, accuracy, and balance in discussing religious beliefs and that they do not denigrate any faith or its adherents.*

A reciprocal review mechanism would develop guidelines for fairness, accuracy, and balance in teaching about other religions and cultures, help guarantee consistency in their

---

[15] A partial listing includes the Tripartite Commission, the TRES Network in Europe, Religions for World Peace, and the International Institute for Education.

United Nations

application across diverse regions, and encourage countries to work together toward these goals in their education systems.

5. *Member states and multilateral organizations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union should work together to implement educational efforts to build capacity for intercultural tolerance and respect, civic participation and social engagement.*

The following steps should be taken:

a. Disseminate educational materials through educator networks, teacher training initiatives, and through the convening of curriculum administrators. Valuable examples of materials to be distributed include UNESCO instructional materials and programs such as the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), Culture of Democracy, Different Aspects of Islamic Culture, Tolerance: The Threshold of Peace, and Cultures of Peace.

b. Identify and fund initiatives that engage youth and adults in responsible citizenship and build capacity for democratic participation, including regular school curricula, after-school programs, and civic associations. These programs should include education on human rights and the rule of law, and should develop instructional materials for media literacy as a bulwark against radicalization through the media.

c. Engage the talents of youth and adults in constructive social action through service learning programs and initiate service learning components connected to degree and certificate programs.

6. *Governments together with international organizations, governments and technology firms, should collaborate to expand internet access, with particular attention to predominantly Muslim countries.*

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) could take the lead in articulating an ambitious but conceivable goal for its member states to pursue – i.e. there should be computers with internet access in every primary, secondary, and university level classroom in the Muslim World by 2020 – and convening the technology firms, investors, and other partners who could assist in the realization of this goal. Principal implementing partners of relevant existing pilot programs and technology firms with programs in developing countries should be consulted and lessons learned should be disseminated through the OIC to the governments of each of its member states. The OIC should also collaborate with the Internet Governance Forum, established in the wake of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, to develop ways of accelerating the availability and affordability of the internet in Muslim countries. In addition, collaboration with programs such as the One Laptop per Child initiative, which aims at improving the learning opportunities of millions of children in the developing world, should also be pursued.

United Nations

7. Governments should restore holistic and integrated education approaches as part of educational reform.

Educational reform efforts in many developing countries have emphasized technical and skills-based education in an effort to stem high unemployment rates. While this is a positive development, in some cases the focus on strictly job-related education has diminished the attention paid to the humanities and social sciences and limited the availability of instruction in these fields in many developing countries. A well-rounded holistic education is invaluable for the development of critical thinking, interpretive, and adaptive skills which are increasingly important in a world of increasing complexity and diversity. Educational reform efforts should therefore seek to maintain a balance in educational content, particularly at primary and secondary school levels.

Youth

1. A Global Youth Alliance should be established as a mechanism through which youth can contribute to the implementation of all of the recommendations set forth in this report (not just those under the "youth" theme).

Supported by a Global Youth Solidarity Fund, this initiative could begin with the convening and mobilization of various youth networks and associations to promote dialogue, alliance and a culture of peace. These organizations have already begun working together to organize meetings that would provide the opportunity for young people of diverse backgrounds to set an agenda for action which they can then present to global leaders to win their support and assistance. In addition, a survey has been conducted identifying 468 youth organizations from 125 countries that could be engaged as implementing partners.

2. The United States, the European Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference should set a joint goal of taking the number of youth exchanges that occur between their countries from the bottom of the list of inter-regional exchanges to the top. Priority should be given to extended-stay exchanges, group exchanges, and exchanges subsidized enough to allow participation from strata of society other than elite populations.

Successful programs should be expanded to fit this priority – i.e. the Erasmus Programme and the Universia network should be enlarged to encompass predominantly Muslim countries; the EuroMed Youth Programme should be expanded beyond the immediate Mediterranean region to include every country in Europe and the Middle East; and the American Peace Corps Program should increase operations in predominantly Muslim countries. As more governments support exchanges, more private donors are likely to follow suit. To ensure that the quantity of exchanges does not outstrip the quality, some of these resources should be devoted to the following three accompanying objectives:

a. Increase structural support provided by universities and other host-institutions for such exchanges;

b. Train youth exchange facilitators by civil society organizations with experience in the principles of non-formal education and learning.

c. Produce and disseminate the results of research into pedagogical approaches needed for successful exchanges. Partners could include the European Commission, Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, and non-governmental organizations with research and practice component to their work.

3. *Religious leaders and civil society activists should establish a network of websites that link youth to religious scholars who can speak in constructive ways to the contemporary challenges facing youth today.*

Such sites could feature discussion groups led by religious scholars, provide interpretations of religious history and scripture that challenge exclusivist approaches, promote ideas and tools for young people to get involved in their communities, and present links to youth advocacy networks. While this may involve the creation of new websites, the effort should begin by convening managers of existing sites such as Beliefnet, Islam-Online, and MuslimHeritage with concerned civil society and religious leaders to establish criteria for network membership and to strategize on how to reach at-risk youth.

4. *Muslim and Western public and private donors should work together to establish a Cultural Fund and Networking Service to connect young Muslim artists, writers, musicians, film makers, etc. with their Western counterparts and leaders in the culture industry.*

The objective would be to facilitate the dissemination of contemporary Muslim culture to other societies and, in doing so, to promote the cause of dialogue and understanding.

5. *A coalition of key stakeholders should be established to develop a consensus youth employment strategy. A coalition of multilateral agencies and civil society organizations with experience in fostering youth employment should be convened and supported to pilot broad-based youth employment initiatives, particularly in countries where youth unemployment and alienation and are major problems.*

Consultations with the Youth Employment Network[16] and non-governmental organizations in this field indicate that such an initiative would be welcomed and that models of "one-stop-shopping" for youth employment (including job training, resume-writing and interview skills-development, job-seeking and placement, career counseling, and micro-credit financing) have proven successful at national levels.

---

[16] The Youth Employment Network is a joint initiative of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Labor Organization.

United Nations

6. *Public and private donor agencies should support girls' and young women's associations, networks, and organizations which advance girls' education, develop platforms for women's participation in all aspects of society, or implement other projects which enhance women's status.*

In many parts of the world, progress towards gender equality remains painfully slow. Seventy percent of the 130 million children who are out of school are girls. Women account for two thirds of the 960 million adults in the world who cannot read and of the world's one billion poorest people, three fifths are women and girls[17]. Initiatives at local, regional and national level can help redress the balance. In particular, supporting civil society organizations that aim to provide better learning opportunities, greater job prospects and improved living conditions to women can go a long way to address these injustices.

Migration

Recommendations in this field are made with the understanding that governments with significant immigrant populations are already working in earnest to facilitate integration. Recommendations here are the result of our discussions and are made with a view to supporting existing efforts in this field. Initiatives that support successful integration include the *Handbook on Establishing Effective Labor Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination*[18] and the Global Forum on Migration and Development proposed at the time of the writing of this report by the UN Secretary-General.

1.   *Governments with significant immigrant populations should expand incentives, support mechanisms, and funding for schools and associations that work with schools to involve students in service-learning and civic education programs.*

2.   *Municipal governments and local foundations should expand support for the establishment of youth community organizations.*

Both such programs help situate young immigrants in the broader communities outside of the schools and provide direct experience in social interaction and civic activism with other youth which can reduce feelings of alienation.

3.   *Public and private donors should increase funding of civil society institutions that work with immigrant communities to develop support mechanisms that allow for greater parental involvement in schools and that provide information and education to empower immigrant communities.*

Such mechanisms would address those barriers (i.e. language barriers, transport difficulties and costs, taking time from work and household care, and inexperience with parent involvement in schools) which often limit or prevent parental participation in

---

[17] 2005 United Nations Development Program Annual Report.
[18] Developed jointly by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International organization on Migration, and the International Labor Organization.

United Nations

schools. Such efforts could substantially contribute to reducing the social alienation of immigrant youth by minimizing their experience of living in "two different" worlds – one inhabited by their families, particularly their parents, and the other by their peers and teachers in school. Developing mentoring programs to help immigrants better understand laws, customs, and how to get involved in society would help maximize integration. Similarly, creating a multi-lingual alert system to advise immigrants about changes in laws affecting them would be useful.

4. *The European Union should work with member states to standardize and integrate data collection across the continent which monitor immigrants' access to, and experience of, the labor and housing markets as well as health, social, educational and other community services.*

The availability of such data would enable the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), related research institutions, and governments to track the progress of efforts aimed at combating discrimination against immigrant communities. This would in turn help to identify those policies and initiatives of governments, corporations, and civil society institutions that have been successful in fighting discrimination so that they can be recognized (possibly even awarded in a highly public way by the European Union), further researched (perhaps included in annual "country reports", and possibly replicated elsewhere.

5. *Public and private donors that are concerned with interfaith relations and/or immigrant integration should expand funding for dialogue and community organizing within immigrant communities.*

Increased support for such initiatives would enable the emergence of immigrant community leadership (including religious leaders) who have successfully integrated into American and European societies as well as the development of associations and networks that can serve as representational bodies to engage in cross-cultural and interfaith dialogues with other communities or with government agencies.

6. *Immigrant community leaders and host country authorities should work together to produce material (including, for example, internet newsletters, public service announcements and circulars) aimed at promoting respect for diversity and good community relations.*

7. *American and European universities and research centers should expand research into the significant economic, cultural, and social contributions of immigrant communities to American and European life. Likewise, they should promote publications coming from the Muslim world on a range of subjects related to Islam and the Muslim world.*

Such research would support those in the political and media sectors seeking authoritative data on the integral roles played by immigrant communities. Vocal public leadership in support of immigrants reduces the feelings of alienation in immigrant communities and

allows debates over integration policies to proceed while minimizing the specter of racist and xenophobic sentiments clouding them. Developing a media campaign to combat discrimination through ongoing messages about immigrants and highlighting the benefits of the country's diversity, contributions of immigrants, and the danger of stereotypes is critical. The media campaign should also emphasize that all who live in the country have the right to demand and obtain good services, complain about discrimination, and seek appropriate redress.

8. *Governments should participate in the Global Forum on Migration and Development in order to increase cooperation and develop an integrated approach to migration and development.*

This consultative forum will allow governments to establish a common understanding on the areas of migration policymaking that have the greatest potential to contribute to development. It will also foster a better appreciation of the advantages that migration brings to host countries.

Media

1.   *Media professionals must develop, articulate, and implement voluntary codes of conduct.*

The power of words and images in shaping our understanding of the world cannot be overestimated. Media professionals must use that power responsibly. In this regard, accurate reporting is of primary importance. But it is not enough. Journalists and producers must also be alert to the impact that editorial decisions and opinions implicitly conveyed in reporting can have on the public's perception of an issue. Standards have been articulated by associations such as the International Federation of Journalists, but are not implemented and enforced by professional associations with the consistency and rigor with which, for example, the legal and medical professions apply their professional guidelines and codes of conduct. Adherence to such standards is particularly critical during times of crisis when popular emotions and fears are heightened and in covering the intersection of religion and politics. Increased attention to the responsibility of the press need not, and should not, detract from advocacy for the freedom of the press.

2.   *Training programs should be developed, with those Schools of Journalism interested, to help widen journalists' understanding of critical international issues – particularly in those fields where politics and religion intersect – and enhance their capacity to inform the public accurately and in a balanced way.*

3.   *Leaders in the fields of academia, religion, politics, civil society, and culture should generate media content (op-eds, commentaries, and video- and audio-taped statements) that helps to deepen inter-cultural understanding, especially in times of crisis.*

United Nations

Supporters of improved cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding should take advantage of "teachable moments" when relations between Western and predominantly Muslim societies are in the news and producers and editors are seeking content. Rapid responses to crises disseminated to editors and producers globally could influence whether populations think in constructive or polarizing ways about the relevance and meaning of these events. The prominence of the commentators, the timeliness with which they are provided, and the provision of materials in local languages would maximize their use. Successful models of such systems exist, but not on a global scale.

4.   *Public and private donors should direct greater resources toward the production of media aimed at improving popular attitudes between different cultures.*

Greater funding should be provided for programming aimed at improving understanding between different cultures and societies. By supporting the production of pilot programs which, if successful, lead to broadcaster-funding for series, such funds could serve as a catalyst for multiple media programs without requiring large-scale investments. Four kinds of media production should be prioritized:

a. Producers who have obtained a broadcaster's support and are engaged in a joint venture or co-production across cultural or religious lines;

b. Producers seeking to create educational media content to be conveyed via innovative and popular entertainment formats and/or broadcast during major events that attract world attention (i.e. the World Cup, the Olympics, etc.);

c. Productions aimed at youth populations that counter prevailing stereotypes, such as video games, cartoons, and youth-oriented websites that enable sustained constructive cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue;

d. Production of TV–series in multiple languages addressing historical, social, and psychological aspects of relations between societies with the aim of fostering mutual understanding.

5.   *Civil society and mass media leaders with a shared interest in the impact of TV and film on cross-cultural relations should be encouraged and supported to produce films and other media content with the aim of improving understanding between different cultures.*

Producers and script-writers – particularly but not exclusively those of Hollywood – together with civil society actors, and public health researchers should be supported to work together to gauge the influence of film and TV on attitudes and behavior and to increase the portrayal of normalized Muslim and other under-represented or negatively stereotyped communities in popular media.[19]

---

[19] The East-West Institute and the Harvard School of Public Health are already working toward this end and are thus likely partners to advance it.

6.   *Governments, media organizations and civil society should work together to develop programs that promote the internet as an instrument of cross-cultural dialogue.*

The internet is a key tool of information, providing a window to global media coverage and a wide range of resources. That is why it is critical, in our view, that access to the internet be significantly broadened (see Education Recommendation no. 6). But the internet can also be used and abused to disseminate racist stereotypes and intolerance that can inspire hatred and violence. To help counter this phenomenon, initiatives using the internet as a tool for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding should be actively promoted.

7.   *A collaborative and reciprocal initiative for monitoring media coverage of Islamic-Western relations should be started to provide a comprehensive review of media outlets and to reward efforts that aim to improve coverage of relations between Muslim and Western societies.*

Critical reciprocal reviews and awards presented by a broadly representative coalition of monitoring agencies – such as those run by the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and select civil society organizations - would generate a higher public profile and greater legitimacy than individual efforts that focus on only one communities' media.

8.   *Public and private donors should establish a "Risk Fund" to temper the market forces that encourage sensationalistic and stereotyped media and cultural materials.*

Theaters for film and stage, museums, publishing houses, and other cultural venues should have access to a fund that helps insure against losses when they want to feature movies, plays, and other cultural products that humanize and normalize the views of populations in the West and in predominantly Muslim societies about one another. These could include, for example, stories of successful and prominent Muslim women to be shown in the West, stories about prominent Jewish human rights and social justice advocates to be shown in the Muslim world, as well as classics of Muslim and Western literature that counter prevailing stereotypes.

9.   *The Alliance of Civilizations should take advantage of major media, cultural and sport events for the promotion of its objectives.*

Attainment of the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations will be hampered if they remain restricted to States and international organizations. It is essential to mobilize international public opinion. Cultural and sporting events present unique opportunities to reach out to large audiences. It is therefore advisable to seize the opportunity that such events provide to promote the objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations contained in this report represent the main content of the plan of action requested by the UN Secretary-General in the Terms of Reference he established for the High-level Group. Based on the strong positive reaction to the Alliance of Civilizations already received from diverse governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society leaders[20], the High-level Group anticipates considerable support and interest from these quarters in advancing these recommendations. Indeed, some recommendations have been proposed with the knowledge that related initiatives are already underway or in the planning stages. To make the most of these efforts, to increase their collective impact, and to build momentum for the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report, we recommend that the United Nations take the following steps:

1. The UN Secretary-General should appoint a High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations to oversee the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report and ensure the visibility and continuity of the Alliance of Civilizations. The High Representative could also be available to the UN Secretary-General to help defuse religious and cultural tensions among communities in times of crisis. A roster of eminent persons would assist the High Representative in fulfilling these duties.

2. A small support office should be established to support the High Representative. The first task of this office would be to draw up a detailed implementation plan to advance of the recommendations in this report. The plan should include:

   a. Establishment of partnerships and agreements with various public and private institutions at international, national, and local levels to advance specific projects together.

   b. Participation in major conferences and meetings already planned for the coming years, which will provide opportunities to develop, strengthen, and publicize the various initiatives and activities of the Alliance of Civilizations.[21]

3. A Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations should be established under UN auspices to provide a regular venue for representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector to forge partnerships and to express commitments for action.

4. Self-organized *Alliance Councils* at national, regional, and/or local levels, should be encouraged and promoted in order to ensure the widespread participation and

---

[20] See the website of the Alliance of Civilizations (www.unaoc.org) for expressions of support by states, international organizations and civil society organizations.
[21] A tentative list of such events can be found on the Alliance of Civilizations website (www.unaoc.org)

involvement of civil society. These bodies could serve as focal points for the implementation and coordination of Alliance-related activities.

5. Inscription of a new item relating to the Alliance of Civilizations on the agenda of the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly should be considered.

6. An Alliance of Civilizations Fund should be established to support global cooperation on cross-cultural issues and to promote initiatives aimed at encouraging dialogue and building bridges among communities.

7. The Alliance of Civilizations website (www.unaoc.org) should be further developed into a major tool in the promotion of cross-cultural dialogue.

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP

25 August 2005

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has launched an initiative, co-sponsored by the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey, for an Alliance of Civilizations.

Context

- The initiative responds to a broad consensus across nations, cultures and religions that all societies are interdependent, bound together in their development and security, and in their environmental, economic and financial well-being. The Alliance seeks to forge collective political will and to mobilize concerted action at the institutional and civil society levels to overcome the prejudice, misperceptions and polarization that militate against such a consensus. And it hopes to contribute to a coalescing global movement which, reflecting the will of the vast majority of people, rejects extremism in any society.

- Events of recent years have exacerbated mutual suspicion, fear and misunderstanding between Islamic and Western societies. This environment has been exploited by extremists throughout the world. Only a comprehensive coalition will be able to avert any further deterioration of relations between societies and nations, which could threaten international stability. The Alliance seeks to counter this trend by establishing a paradigm of mutual respect between civilizations and cultures.

High-level Group

- To guide this initiative, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the co-sponsors, has established a High-level Group of eminent persons with the following objectives:

    - To provide an assessment of new and emerging threats to international peace and security, in particular the political, social and religious forces that foment extremism;

    - To identify collective actions, at both the institutional and civil society levels, to address these trends;

    - To recommend a practicable program of action for States, international organizations and civil society aimed at promoting harmony among societies.

- Toward this end, the High-level Group will consider practical strategies:

  - To strengthen mutual understanding, respect and shared values among different peoples, cultures and civilizations;
  - To counter the influence of groups fomenting extremism and the exclusion of others who do not share their worldviews;
  - To counter the threat to world peace and stability posed by extremism;
  - To foster awareness in all societies that security is indivisible and is a vital need for all, and that global cooperation is an indispensable prerequisite for security, stability and development.

- The High-level Group will present a report containing analysis and a program of action for States, international organizations and civil society with practicable measures designed, *inter alia*:

  - To emphasize the importance of mutual understanding, and to propose specific mechanisms by which it can be advanced, including but not limited to developing better international cooperation frameworks and using mass media (including the Internet) to foster and frame public debates in constructive ways;
  - To cultivate cooperation among current initiatives aimed at enabling those in the mainstream majority – who are overwhelmingly moderate and reject the views of extremists – to set the agenda;
  - To establish partnerships that will help diverse societies to better understand their differences while emphasizing and acting on their commonalities;
  - To propose measures through which education systems can foster knowledge and understanding of other cultures and religions;
  - To reach out to the youth of the world, in order to instill the values of moderation and cooperation, and to promote appreciation of diversity;
  - To promote awareness that security, stability and development are vital needs for all, and that global cooperation is necessary to achieve them, and to present practical proposals for advancing mutual security.

- The High-level Group will present its report in the second half of 2006 to the Secretary-General, who will determine, in consultation with the co-sponsors, the appropriate way to present the program of action to the international community. Implementation of the program could then be overseen by a smaller group of similar stature.

Support structure

- A secretariat headed by an experienced director will prepare studies, analyses and proposals for the consideration of the High-level Group. It will also cooperate with similar initiatives and draw on work accomplished or under way in other fora.

ANNEX 2: MEMBERS OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP

Co-Sponsors		
1.	Prof. Mehmet Aydin (Turkey) Co-chair	Minister of State of Turkey and Professor of Philosophy
2.	Prof. Federico Mayor (Spain) Co-chair	President, Culture of Peace Foundation and Former Director-General, UNESCO
Middle East		
3.	Seyed Mohamed Khatami (Iran)	Former President of Iran
4.	Her Highness Sheikha Mozah (Qatar)	Consort of the Emir, State of Qatar. Chairperson, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development
5.	Dr. Ismail Serageldin (Egypt)	President, Bibliotheca Alexandrina
North Africa		
6.	Dr. Mohamed Charfi (Tunisia)	Former Education Minister of Tunisia
7.	Mr. André Azoulay (Morocco)	Adviser to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco
West Africa		
8.	Mr. Moustapha Niasse (Senegal)	Former Prime Minister of Senegal
Southern Africa		
9.	Archbishop Desmond Tutu (S. Africa)	The Rt. Hon. Archbishop of Cape Town
West Europe		
10.	Mr. Hubert Vedrine (France)	Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, France
11.	Ms. Karen Armstrong (UK)	Historian of Religion
East Europe		
12.	Prof. Vitaly Naumkin (Russia)	President of the International Center for Strategic and Political Studies and Chair, Moscow State University
North America		
13.	Prof. John Esposito (US)	Founding Director, Prince Al-Waleed bin-Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (Georgetown University) and Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World
14.	Rabbi Arthur Schneier (US)	President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation and Senior Rabbi, East Park Synagogue
Latin America		
15.	Mr. Enrique Iglesias (Uruguay)	Ibero-American Secretary-General and Former President of Inter American Development
16.	Prof. Candido Mendes (Brazil)	Secretary-General, Académie de la Latinité
South Asia		
17.	Dr. Nafis Sadik (Pakistan)	Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General
18.	Ms. Shobhana Bhartia (India)	Member of Parliament, India; Vice Chairperson and Editorial Director, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi
South East Asia		
19.	Mr. Ali Alatas (Indonesia)	Former Foreign Minister of Indonesia
East Asia		
20.	Prof. Pan Guang (China)	Director and Professor, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

The following documents on the Alliance of Civilizations and the work of the High-level Group, including speeches, statements, and background research is available on the Alliance of Civilization website: www.unaoc.org.

1. Statement by the Prime Minister of the Spanish government, H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero to the United Nations General Assembly proposing an Alliance of Civilizations, September 2004.

2. Paragraph 144 of the UN Summit (14 September 2005) on the Objectives of the Millennium +5, welcoming the Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

3. Concept Paper on the Alliance of Civilizations.

4. Speeches by the Co-sponsors and of the UN Secretary-General at the first meeting of the High-level Group in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

5. Meetings and hearings of the High-level Group.

6. Paper by H.E. Mr. André Azoulay and H.E. Hubert Védrine on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

7. Conferences and meetings related to the Alliance of Civilizations.

8. List of governments, organizations, and declarations of support for the Alliance of Civilizations.

9. Reference documents, international declarations, and projects related to the Alliance of Civilizations.