



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretary General

Vienna, 11 March 2008

To: All Heads of Delegations

Subject: Report on the outcome of the First Annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations and on a possible OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilizations

Please find attached a revised version of the Secretary General's report on the outcome of the First Annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which took place in Madrid, from 15 to 16 January 2008. The revision concerns adding in an annex the text of a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Alliance of Civilizations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which has been proposed for signature by the Alliance of Civilizations to the OSCE and other international organizations.

Please note that the draft MoU is an unofficial translation of the original text, which was drafted in French. It is hereby proposed, should participating States agree to start negotiations, to use this translation as a basis.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE OUTCOME OF THE FIRST ANNUAL FORUM OF THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS AND ON A POSSIBLE OSCE CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

Madrid, 15-16 January 2008

At the Fifteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Madrid, the Foreign Ministers of the OSCE participating States adopted the Decision No. 10/07 on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding (MC.DEC/10/07 of 30 November 2007). The Ministerial Council decided to “consider an appropriate OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilizations’ High-Level Group recommendations, taking into account the Implementation Plan prepared by the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,” and recommended that “the OSCE Secretary General, in consultation with the Chairman-in-Office, attends the upcoming first Annual Forum of the Alliance in Madrid and reports to the participating States.”

I. Alliance of Civilizations – Objectives, activities and structure¹

Since its establishment in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations, and the release in November 2006 of the Report by the High-Level Group formed by the UN Secretary General, the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) has progressed with creating structures and moved into the implementation phase. As a reminder, the High Level Group Report identifies four priority areas for action: education, media, youth and migration.

On 26 April 2007, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as the High Representative (HR) for the AoC to guide the implementation phase of the Alliance. Mr. Sampaio presented the AoC’s Implementation Plan (2007-2009) to the UN Secretary-General on 14 June 2007. The document defines the main objectives, functions and structures of the Alliance, including its envisaged roles in dealing with projects, and outlines the “AoC Programme of Action,” covering the establishment of the Alliance’s organization and its main meetings and fora, as well as listing the projects that the AoC plans to implement or support.

a. Objectives and areas of activity

The AoC aims at improving understanding and co-operative relations across cultures and religions and at contributing to counter polarization and extremism. Being a UN initiative, the AoC provides a universal perspective, while placing a priority on addressing relations between Western and Muslim societies.

¹ Detailed information on AoC and related documents is available at www.unaoc.org.

The AoC Implementation Plan identifies three key objectives as follows:

1. Develop a network of partnerships with States, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector entities that share the goals of the AoC, to reinforce their interaction and coordination with the UN system;
2. Develop, support, and highlight projects that promote understanding and reconciliation among cultures globally and, in particular, between Muslim and Western societies. These projects should be related to the four main fields of action of the Alliance: youth, education, media, and migration;
3. Establish relations and facilitate dialogue among groups that can act as a force of moderation and understanding during times of heightened cross-cultural tensions.

The AoC intends to act as a catalyst for partnerships and activities aiming at promoting sustainable security and peace through dialogue and tolerance. The Alliance describes its role as being a bridge builder and convener between diverse communities; a catalyst and facilitator for projects and partnerships; an advocate for inter-cultural respect and understanding; a platform to increase visibility of likeminded initiatives and a resource promoting exchanges of best practices.

As for projects, the AoC envisages two main categories: “Collaborative Pilot Projects,” in which the AoC acts mainly as facilitator of partnerships, and “AoC Projects,” where the Alliance will lead in launching certain innovative initiatives. With regard to projects implementation, the AoC foresees different degrees of involvement and allocation of resources, ranging from the mere provision of the Alliance’s name, playing the catalyst or facilitator role, to participation in the direct implementation.

In the first stage of the implementation phase, the AoC aims primarily at consolidating its reputation, attracting resources, expanding and strengthening partnerships and influencing the cultural climate and the political priorities of other actors to contribute to reducing cross cultural tensions.

The AoC gives special attention to partnerships with relevant UN agencies, as well as other international and regional organizations, including the OSCE.

b. Structure

In institutional terms, the AoC is effectively developing its capacity by expanding its structures and mechanisms. **The HR for the AoC** provides leadership and vision to the initiative and oversees the implementation of the AoC action plan. The HR is supported by the **AoC Secretariat**, based in New York². The Secretariat is also responsible for partnership development; collaboration with partners and States in implementing local, regional and international activities; information and communication activities; advocacy; resource mobilization and organization of the AoC Annual Forum in co-operation with the host government. **The AoC Group of Friends** (GoF) consists of representatives of States, UN

² As of 13 January 2008, the AoC Secretariat staffing table included 8 staff members, 2 interns and 3 vacant posts.

agencies and other international organizations and bodies that have demonstrated active interest in and support of the Alliance, and provides advice and support in all aspects of the AoC's activities³. Members of the GoF meet regularly to discuss partnerships and joint strategies in support of the AoC objectives. The recent meetings of the GoF took place on 26 September and 14 December 2007.

The AoC Voluntary Trust Fund, established by the Secretary-General as a voluntary UN Trust Fund and administered in accordance with UN Financial Regulations and Rules, is the principal vehicle for funding the AoC. The Fund collects voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, private sector bodies, foundations and individuals⁴.

AoC Annual Forums, are convened by the AoC High Representative and the government of the host country as the annual flagship event of the Alliance gathering representatives from States, international organizations, civil society, media, and funding agencies. The Forums are designed to be action-driven events to provide participants with an international platform to develop joint initiatives and forge partnerships. In addition to high-level debates about emerging trends in relations between diverse cultures and religions, the Forums allow for announcements of new initiatives and project-specific working sessions. They also provide convening space for government agencies, international organizations and civil society bodies working in the area of intercultural and inter-religious engagement to share lessons on best practices and develop joint work platforms. The Forums are also meant to review progress and monitor implementation of the Programme of Action.

II. Outcome of the AoC First Annual Forum and AoC Proposals on Co-operation

The First AoC Annual Forum was hosted by the Spanish Government on 15-16 January 2008 in Madrid. It gathered political leaders, international organizations, donor agencies, NGOs and foundations⁵ to explore ways of addressing the growing polarization between nations and cultures and to develop partnerships promoting cross-cultural understanding. It was preceded by a Youth Forum. The Forum aimed at generating support and ideas for the work of the Alliance, marking the beginning of the implementation phase of the initiative with the launch a number of projects, described below. The second AoC Annual Forum is to be hosted in Istanbul in 2009.

a. Outcomes of the AoC First Annual Forum

In his closing remarks, the High Representative Mr. Sampaio stated that the First Forum of the AoC achieved three main objectives: 1) shaping the Alliance as a key gathering for dialogue among a wide range of actors, 2) enhancing its profile and producing a results-

³ The Group of Friends includes 67 States (of which 31 are OSCE participating States and 9 OSCE Partners for Co-operation) and 13 International Organizations.

⁴ As of 3 January 2008, the Fund collected \$6,939,604 from the following contributors: Spain, Turkey (2005); Turkey, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Syria, Oman, Qatar, Norway, France, Thailand, Belgium (2006); Turkey, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, New Zealand, Denmark, Switzerland, Slovenia, Albania, Bulgaria (2007); Luxembourg (2008).

⁵ About 350 delegates from 63 Countries, including several current and past Heads of State, Prime Ministers and Government Ministers, the Secretaries General of the UN, UNESCO, the OIC, the Arab League and the Council of the EU and other international institutions as well as religious and business leaders, mayors of several cities, NGO leaders, Nobel laureates, artists, experts and representatives of foundations attended the event.

oriented event, intended as an international platform for launching innovative projects, and 3) building new partnerships.

The practical initiatives launched at the Forum included:

1. **Announcement of national and regional strategies for cross cultural dialogue by governments** and multilateral organizations to advance AoC objectives in their respective countries and regions.⁶
2. **Establishment of partnership agreements**, with various multilateral agencies and organizations, which contain specific terms that will enable the AoC to leverage networks, contacts, and competitive advantages of partners in the implementation of its programs.
3. **Announcement of a Global Youth Employment Initiative, called Silatech**, with an investment of \$100 million from H.H. Sheika Mozah bint Nasser-el-Missned and partnerships with the World Bank and the corporate sector, notably with CISCO, which will begin with 5 pilot country programs in the Middle East.
4. **Announcement of a multi-million dollar AoC Media Fund that will be a first-of-its-kind non-profit large-scale media production company** focused on normalizing images of stereotyped communities and minorities in mass media through partnerships with major Hollywood production, distribution, and talent management companies. The Fund was launched with an initial commitment of 10\$ million, and an estimated target of \$100 million.
5. **Launch of the AoC Clearinghouse beginning with a theme of Media Literacy Education**, which will catalogue media literacy programs and related government policies in different parts of the world; and **announcements of partnerships with several universities** that will serve as nodes to enliven this clearinghouse by initiating exchanges and posting materials on the latest development in media literacy education.
6. **Launch of a Rapid Response Media Mechanism** beginning with an online resource that will feature a list of global experts in cross-cultural issues, who are available to comment or to talk to journalists, particularly in times of major cross-cultural crises.
7. **Establishment of a Youth Solidarity Fund** aimed at providing grants to support youth-led programs in the areas of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Moreover, a decision was made to strengthen the network of youth participants that attended the AoC Forum and broaden the network to include other youth.
8. **Creation of a global network of philanthropic foundations and private funders**, which will share information; raise awareness of ongoing initiatives, identify mutual needs; and explore ways to leverage existing resources for greatest impact.
9. **Discussions at the policymaking level** that highlight the importance to move the Alliance forward in 2008 such as: developing joint multi-stakeholders initiatives at the regional level aimed at promoting a better inter-cultural understanding, and preventing the mounting of tensions and the rise of extremism; contributing to the upgrade of the inter-cultural dialogue among the two banks of the Mediterranean Sea; launching a number of activities within the framework of active and city diplomacy.

⁶ Available national strategy documents can be obtained from the AoC website.

10. **Establishment of an Alliance network of good will ambassadors** made up of prominent, high-profile, internationally recognized figures drawn from the worlds of politics, culture, sport, business and entertainment to help in promoting the work of the Alliance, highlighting priority issues and drawing attention to its activities.
11. **Commitment by the United Nations Global Compact to producing a publication** aimed at raising the visibility of **best practices in the corporate sector** toward supporting cross-cultural relations.
12. **Adoption of an action-oriented statement of solidarity and joint commitment by diverse religious leaders** toward providing youth with guidance to counter extremist influence, promoting a sense of shared security in their various constituencies, and elevating the role of women in future religious projects.⁷

The Forum testified an increasing support and interest towards the AoC Initiative by a growing number of States, international organizations, NGOs, media, cultural and religious figures. It also launched several practical initiatives (as listed above) and marked the beginning of the implementation phase of the work of the Initiative.

The debates in the plenary sessions of the Forum concentrated on the necessity of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, on promoting harmony among the different cultures, religions and nations of the world. Relations between Western and Muslim societies, which had been announced as a priority within the AoC universal perspective, were also addressed in the debate, albeit somewhat indirectly.

The working group sessions were dedicated to exchanging practical experiences and work approaches, as well as fostering partnerships and common initiatives in the four priority areas of youth, migration, the media and education. This objective was reached to varying degrees. In particular, the session dedicated to international partnerships was rather focussed on participants becoming acquainted with each other's profiles and broad activities.

Gender issues, democratization, the role of civil society and of human rights were also raised, but not addressed in such an in depth manner as in the OSCE context.

b. The proposal of a Memorandum of Understanding

The building of strategic partnerships with other actors, and specifically with international organizations, constitute the primary focus of the first phase of the development of the initiative, as stated in the Alliance's Implementation Plan and repeated during the Forum. In line with the role of catalyst chosen by the initiative and the need for avoiding duplications and overlapping in order to foster synergies and co-operation, the High Representative proposed and advocated the formalization of relationships with the organizations represented in the Group of Friends.

In line with this approach, in December 2007, the High Representative presented the OSCE with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (see Annex) and requested the OSCE's comments and suggestions.

The draft document, recalling in the preamble the current trends justifying the need for enhanced inter-cultural dialogue by means of intensified collaboration, outlines the

⁷ The text of this statement can be obtained from the AoC website.

principles, the priority areas and the modalities of the co-operation. As for the principles, the parties commit themselves to promoting exchanges of views and joint programmes in the relevant areas, taking into account the respective expertises, striving for added value and co-operating with other partners.

The proposed common **priorities and areas of interest for co-operation** include:

- **Democratic governance of cultural diversity**, encompassing the protection of persons belonging to national minorities, combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia, intolerance, torture and ill-treatment, promoting human rights education, freedom of expression and information as well as promoting local democracy and a political culture conducive to cultural diversity. The possible involvement of the OSCE field missions, ODIHR and HCNM are also mentioned in this respect.
- **Inclusive and participative democratic citizenship**, including the promotion of good governance, equality, gender equality and greater participation by women in public life, as well as the attention to the use of new technologies in the context of democracy and to greater participation of foreigners.
- **Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity**, linked with the promotion of human rights and supporting the ratification and implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- **Education in human rights, tolerance and intercultural competence**, intending to support initiatives to develop the competences required for intercultural dialogue, developing formal and informal education programmes also in the media and in schools.
- **Intercultural exchanges and the promotion of human contacts, particularly among the young**, focussing on supporting youth participation, the creation of spaces for inter-cultural dialogue and the free movement of persons.
- **The media**, foreseeing joint initiatives such as training programmes to increase the media attention to their responsibility to inform; rapid reaction in case of breach of the OSCE commitments in the field of freedom of expression and the promotion of internet as a tool for multi-cultural dialogue.
- **Social cohesion**, by supporting the exchange of good practices, also referring to relevant UN and Council of Europe documents.

As for the **modalities of co-operation**, the proposed MoU envisages regular consultations, at political and working level, agreement on a two-year action plan for co-operation and joint activities, regular exchange of information and definition of common positions and initiatives, periodic meetings and ad hoc consultations at a high political level, co-ordination of operational activities in the priority areas, organization of joint activities and events. The draft Memorandum also envisages the engagement of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and civil society. It requests the AoC and the OSCE to designate focal points responsible for ensuring a permanent liaison between the two institutions. The MoU implementation is expected to be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

At the Forum in Madrid, five organizations (UNESCO, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, ALECSO and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) signed agreements with the Alliance, while the Council of Europe signed a letter of intent confirming the intention to prepare a Memorandum with a view to a decision by the Committee of Ministers of the Council by May 2008.⁸ The draft memorandum being discussed at the Council of Europe and the one signed by the UNESCO correspond in their structure to the one proposed to the OSCE, while being more in conformity with the specific principles, mandates, areas of expertise and priorities of the two organizations. The preambles include a greater recognition of the distinctive roles of the signatories; the areas and the objectives of the co-operation are more targeted, limited in number and reflecting more directly the main concerns and fields of activities of the two organizations, with clearer reference to concrete initiatives. The obligations stemming from the implementation of the Memoranda are explicitly subjected to the application of the Parties' respective rules and to the availability of the appropriate resources. There is no provision foreseeing the subsequent drafting of action plans.

The OSCE's response to HR Sampaio's MoU proposal is a subject to be discussed by the participating States.

III. OSCE activities of relevance to the Alliance of Civilizations Initiative

Already in June 2006, in accordance with the 2005 Ljubljana Ministerial Decision, the OSCE contributed to the AoC with a substantive report describing *itself* as an alliance of civilizations in action, signalling the affinity between the Organization and the goals of the Initiative (SEC.GAL/93/06r1).

The report highlights that the OSCE has developed a broad range of principles, structures, mechanisms and activities, which substantially go in the same direction as the Alliance's goals and priorities, while at the same time pointing out that the OSCE's activities go beyond the four priority areas identified by the Initiative. These include the promotion of the gender perspective and gender mainstreaming; democratization and human rights, attention to the environmental and economic aspects of security and mutual confidence; the fight against terrorism and the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including Roma and Sinti, also in the policing context.

The struggle against intolerance and discrimination remains at the centre of the OSCE's work. The starting point is the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, with its emphasis on promoting the inherent dignity of the individual and the commitment by all participating States to recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, religion or belief acting in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience.

As an organization that deals with security in all of its facets, the OSCE rests on the premises that States and their citizens can only be secure within societies built on foundations that ensure respect for each individual citizen and each community. Since its inception, the OSCE has spearheaded the belief that respect for human rights is part and parcel of security and a fundamental pre-requisite for stable and peaceful societies.

⁸ The texts of these documents can be obtained from the AoC website.

The Organization's broader approach in promoting inter-cultural dialogue is evident from the activities of its field presences, its close relationship with the Mediterranean and Asian Partners, its well established co-operation with NGOs and other international organizations, also specifically on tolerance issues, where it stands at the forefront thanks to the work of the ODIHR and of the three Personal Representatives of the CiO.

a. ODIHR Activities

The ODIHR, through its programmes on tolerance and non-discrimination, democratization, human rights, gender equality and Roma and Sinti is the OSCE institution with the broadest range of activities of direct relevance to the AoC initiative. These have been described at length in the 2006 contribution. In addition, the following new developments may be highlighted.

The ODIHR's TANDIS (Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System) is an important repository of best practices. It was launched in September 2006 and reflects the ODIHR's mandate to collect information and practices related to tolerance and non-discrimination issues, including violent manifestations of intolerance.

TANDIS gives access to information and practices/initiatives within a number of key areas relevant to the mandate and to the work of the ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination programme. The sections on intolerance against Christians or Muslims, freedom of religion or belief, intercultural/interfaith/interethnic dialogue are of special interest to the AoC priority areas. The section with practices/initiatives is furthermore being re-organized to better reflect areas such as intercultural/interfaith/interethnic dialogue and understanding.

TANDIS also provides access to specialized institutions involved in combating intolerance and non-discrimination, action plans to combat discrimination and racism, as well as a collection of relevant reports from intergovernmental organizations. It includes a special section with information for civil society promoting upcoming OSCE/ODIHR events of special relevance to civil society (within the scope of the tolerance and non-discrimination area), as well as tools and guides to promote tolerance and intercultural understanding relevant for civil society.

The ODIHR has an Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief which is comprised of more than 60 experts from across the OSCE region and which offers technical assistance and expertise to participating States in the areas of legislative development, offering comments/opinions on cases and through training/capacity building programmes.

The development of country-specific handbooks on Muslim communities focused on history, culture and politics to support Muslim communities in providing accurate and non-biased information about Islam and their communities is also being supported. The first handbook is being developed in Spain in co-operation with Case Arabe.

The ODIHR's Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools, launched in 2007, is an important tool to develop consensus-based guidelines on teaching about religion.

As for best practises on human rights/tolerance education, a compendium is being developed by ODIHR in co-operation with the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the OHCHR, with a view to being launched at the end of 2008.

The ODIHR also offers technical support to OSCE participating States in implementing their commitment to promote formal and non-formal educational programmes, curricula and teacher training tools and resources in order to: a) foster tolerance, respect for diversity and mutual understanding; b) combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination, including against Muslims; c) teach about remembrance of the Holocaust.

The AoC proposes itself as a clearinghouse of best practices, information and resources on cross-cultural dialogue and co-operation activities related to its objectives and priority areas, for which the outstanding OSCE experience, through the ODIHR's existing initiatives, expertise and know-how accumulated over the years, as well as its active production of handbooks, curricula and programmes and in disseminating best practices in the tolerance and non-discrimination field can be of great benefit to the furtherance of the AoC's aims and goals.

b. HCNM Activities

As an instrument for conflict prevention, set up specifically to address tensions involving different groups and communities, the HCNM has been effectively engaged in fostering dialogue and building bridges between majority and minority communities within States in order to ensure their peaceful and amicable coexistence. The guiding principle being that society at peace with itself is also at peace with its neighbours.

In fulfilling his mandate, the HCNM advises States how to deal with the growing diversity within their borders in a peaceful and democratic way. He supports projects particularly in the fields of education, language teaching and media. In addition, the normative developments, containing recommendations as regards minority language and education, effective minority participation in public life, guidelines on the use of minority languages in the broadcast media and, most recently, policing in multiethnic societies are all relevant for building harmonious civic relations in multiethnic societies.

The HCNM's overarching philosophy of "integration with respect for diversity" may also be useful for the situations involving the so-called non-traditional minorities.

Thus, in its role as a conflict prevention tool, through promoting dialogue and understanding between ethno-cultural groups both within and among States and countering forces of extremism and polarization, the HCNM is an institution of direct relevance to the AoC. Both the normative framework and practical operations developed by the HCNM largely constitute concrete grassroots work that would be of valuable support of the Alliance of Civilisations Initiative.

c. Activities by the OSCE Representative on freedom of the Media

The Office of the Representative of the Freedom of the Media has a key role in safeguarding freedom of expression and free media, promoting self-regulation as the best way to respond to societal challenges and to increase intercultural understanding. Over the years, it has built on a broad network of contacts of relevant media experts as well as self regulation bodies,

press councils, ombudsman etc., which are one of its most valuable resources. These, however, do not engage in cross cultural trainings, networks of religion specialists, etc.

The RFOM's guiding principle is that that education, media awareness and development of Internet literacy should be seen as the most effective way of combating misperceptions, prejudices, ignorance, including hate speech or other offensive content.

The RFOM's relevant activities and guidelines, the 2003 Amsterdam recommendations and the 2004 Internet Cookbook, its regional media conferences, in particular in Central Asia and the South Caucasus and others have been highlighted in the 2006 OSCE contribution and will not be repeated here. These are all aimed at supporting the development of the principle of responsible journalism and media self-regulation and appropriate mechanisms for ensuring increased professionalism, accuracy, and adherence to ethical standards among journalists.

The Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media works under the conviction that in democracies, with free press, self-regulation is the best way to respond to societal challenges and to increase intercultural understanding. Media self regulation proves to be the most efficient (and least intrusive from a free press perspective) to handle/correct journalists' professional mistakes. Attempts to label offending or critical views as punishable 'extremism' or 'blasphemy' as well as misuse of hate speech laws undermine free discussion of issues of public interest. Combating negative stereotypes is best achieved through education and training. Ultimately, the media can be a potent force in challenging stereotyped perceptions and become a channel for new ideas and perspectives.

d. Activities by the field operations

The OSCE field presences, with their invaluable knowledge of the local situations and their consolidated network of reliable contacts with the civil society, are in an ideal position for implementing or identifying beneficiaries and partners for grassroots projects, especially those targeting the youth, also building upon the outcomes of the First Youth Forum convened in Madrid in 2007.

Their range is too broad to be described here. Suffice to say, they have the potential to give an unmatched contribution to the goals and aims of the AoC.

e. Activities by the Secretariat

With regard to **gender issues**, the OSCE has committed itself to promoting and achieving equality between women and men. It has established an OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, adopted by the 2004 Sofia Ministerial Council, as a framework to counter gender discrimination through mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout all levels, policies, and activities of the OSCE.

In this respect, the OSCE seeks to address the persistent incidence of **violence against women** in societies as well as in conflict areas, the massive presence of women among the poorest of the world, their under-representation in decision-making in all areas and at all levels, the continuation of discriminatory laws governing their family life, their access to education, to resources, property and inheritance, as well as emerging challenges such as combating HIV/AIDS.

The OSCE encourages women to participate fully and equally alongside men in building security within their communities. Through the Secretariat's Senior Advisor on Gender Issues, as well as the different units within the OSCE Secretariat along with the Institutions and field operations the OSCE pursues projects and policies that encompass a number of strategies aiming at gender equality. These include ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy framework, ensuring equal opportunity for participation of women in all levels of political and public life, building national mechanisms for the advancement of women and prevention, prosecution and protection of violence against women as well as to encourage women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction and promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic sphere.

The underlying assumption is that including a gender perspective is vital in order to facilitate the development and strengthening of partnerships among those involved in the promotion of intercultural dialogue and in order to overcome the cultural misunderstandings that threaten the security of all.

The OSCE-UNEP-UNDP **Environment and Security Initiative** also conducts a number of activities that use environmental issues to build a peaceful co-existence of civilizations, on the assumption that the preservation of the earth is one powerful potential vehicle of 'bridge building' among civilizations.

The OSCE's experience and work in combating Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) is directly relevant to the AoC. For example, the SR believes that to prevent THB it is critical to fight against discrimination and intolerance towards national minorities and migrants, which creates the attitudes that makes them most vulnerable and easy to exploit for THB. The media is an area where the AoC and the OSCE can learn from each other. For example, the OSCE has supported efforts to help journalists to cover THB sensitively, and not encourage the stereotyping or further stigmatization of victims. The majority of trafficking victims globally are youth and a key approach to CTHB is in the empowerment and education of youth, especially to give them more viable life options.

The OSCE sees CTHB as a cross-dimensional problem with strong potential as an area of co-operation and partnership with different communities supported by the Alliance of Civilizations Initiative. Fundamentally, both the OSCE OSR and the AoC share the common value and goal of building human dignity.

f. External Co-operation

Tolerance and non-discrimination also featured prominently in the OSCE's work with its Partners for Co-operation.

In particular, last December the OSCE gathered, for the first time since 1996, in Tel Aviv for its annual Mediterranean Seminar. The Seminar focused on promoting various aspects of tolerance and non-discrimination, including migration, gender, media and education. For the first time, a significant participation from civil society was ensured, through a preparatory event for Mediterranean NGOs organized by ODIHR on the eve of the Seminar. The recommendations stemming from the Seminar, and from the NGO event, will form the basis of the OSCE's work with the Mediterranean Partners in 2008. The Tel Aviv Seminar followed up on discussion at the 2006 Sharm-el-Sheikh seminar, which had also focussed on tolerance and non-discrimination.

IV. Potential OSCE contribution to the AoC and potential AoC contribution to the OSCE

The Forum in Madrid has well contributed to keeping the momentum for strengthening the AoC initiative. Partnership agreements with relevant international and regional organizations and NGOs, as well as specialized agencies and programmes of the UN System are a testimony to the growing international support for the AoC. There are expectations in the AoC that the OSCE participating States will be considering an appropriate OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilizations' High-Level Group recommendations, in line with the Madrid Ministerial Decision 10/07.

The OSCE, being a broad forum for dialogue, is well positioned to provide political support to the adoption of national and regional strategies for cross-cultural dialogue. It constitutes the natural venue for promoting and facilitating the adoption and exchanges of experiences on such strategies, both within the OSCE region and in the broader area covered by the Partners for Co-operation.

Furthermore, as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE has in the past played a considerable role in disseminating and promoting implementation of a number of UN conventions, resolutions and other documents. These have included, for example, the whole body of UN conventions and resolutions against terrorism, the Aarhus Convention, the Palermo Protocol, the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, to name but a few. A similar role could be played in relation to the Alliance of Civilizations.

There is little doubt therefore that the OSCE has the potential to provide a concrete and substantive contribution to the AoC.

On the other hand, the OSCE might also well benefit from an enhanced co-operation with the AoC by, *inter alia*:

- Providing a boost in the visibility of the Organization's role and activities in contributing to international peace and security.
- Sharing the OSCE's values, standards, norms and commitments in areas such as democratization, promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and gender equality with adjacent regions.
- Building synergies, thus saving resources, through co-operation with other international actors working toward similar objectives.
- Reaching out to more NGOs both from within and outside the OSCE region.

In this context, the participating States may wish to determine the scope and the extent of the Organization's possible involvement with the Initiative. In doing so, the following questions could be addressed:

- Should the OSCE decide to remain involved, what would be the preferred approach? Should the OSCE make reference to AoC considerations into its existing programmes and activities or would it be rather interested in participating with targeted

contributions to specific initiatives of the Alliance (either through Collaborative Pilot Projects or fully fledged AoC Projects) and/or in establishing an institutional partnership with the Alliance?

- In the latter case, would the participating States believe the OSCE should respond positively to the request by the Alliance of signing a Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement, as some other organizations such as the Council of Europe have done or are in the process of doing?

The Human Dimension Committee would be the natural forum for discussing and determining an answer to these questions, and consequently the next steps to be taken by the OSCE.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE ALLIANCE
OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY
AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)**

Preamble

The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE

1. Recognizing that for several years the process of cultural diversification in our societies has accelerated considerably and that globalization, revolutions in telecommunications, the media and transport make national cultural systems increasingly porous,
2. Bearing in mind that for several years wars, occupation and acts of terrorism have increased mutual suspicion and fear within and between societies and that radical groups have exploited this situation by setting up mirror images reflecting a world shaped by mutually exclusive cultures, religions and civilizations that are historically different and predestined to confrontation,
3. Recalling that the diversity of civilizations and cultures is an essential characteristic of human societies and a driving force behind economic and social development of peoples and that the history of intercultural relations is based on centuries of constructive exchange, cross-fertilization and peaceful coexistence,
4. Reaffirming the need to build bridges between societies, to promote dialogue and understanding and to forge the collective political will to address the growing divisions between societies, reiterating a paradigm of mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious traditions and helping to mobilize concerted action to this end,
5. Wishing to establish intercultural dialogue on the universal principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights — as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and other fundamental documents,
6. Recognizing the existence of a greater unity among the participating States in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe based on respect for the shared values of pluralistic democracy, the pre-eminence of the law, human rights and basic freedoms and on pan-European co-operation, thereby promoting democratic stability and security to which the societies and citizens of the European continent aspire,
7. Bearing in mind that encouraging intercultural dialogue and creating the conditions for dialogue is an essential responsibility of the public authorities at all levels, civil society, non-governmental actors, the private sector and every individual citizen,

8. Wishing to intensify co-operation and to safeguard co-ordinated action on questions of common interest,

9. Bearing in mind the Report of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations of 13 November 2006 and the recommendations contained therein, as well as the relevant provisions of the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) and the Charter for European Security adopted in 1999, particularly the human dimension of security,

10. Considering their comparative advantages and specific characteristics and relying on the good relations that exist,

11. Determined to create a framework for co-operation and intensified dialogue,

Have agreed the following:

Aims and principles of co-operation

12. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall develop their relations in all areas of common interest, in particular the promotion and protection of pluralistic democracy, democratic governance and cultural diversity; strengthening democratic and participative citizenship; education in human rights, tolerance and intercultural competence; intercultural dialogue and exchanges; the media; and cohesion and social justice. In doing so, they shall follow the guidelines and recommendations contained in the Report of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations of 13 November 2006 and in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), as well as the relevant provisions of the Helsinki Final Act signed in 1975, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990), the Helsinki Summit Declaration and decisions (1992) and the Charter for European Security (1999), particularly those dealing with the human dimension of security.

13. On the basis of partnership and enhanced complementarity, the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall take all necessary measures to promote their co-operation by means of exchanges of views on their respective activities and the elaboration and implementation of joint strategies and programmes relating to the priorities and areas of common interest mentioned above.

14. The co-operation shall take due account of the comparative advantages, competences and expertise of the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE, respectively — avoiding duplication and encouraging synergies — shall strive for added value and shall seek to make better use of existing resources. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall take appropriate account of their respective experience and activities.

15. They shall extend their co-operation to all areas where such co-operation is likely to bring added value to their activities.

16. They shall encourage co-operation with other partners — including international and regional organizations, public authorities and civil society organizations — with a view to co-ordinating or implementing joint intercultural programmes, projects or initiatives likely to bring added value to their activities and to create new synergies.

Common priorities and areas of interest for co-operation

17. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE reaffirm their commitment to establish close co-operation based on their common priorities and, wherever possible, to strengthen their relations in areas of common interest such as:

- Democratic governance of cultural diversity;
- Inclusive and participative democratic citizenship;
- Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity;
- Education in human rights, tolerance and intercultural competence;
- Intercultural exchanges and the promotion of human contact, particularly among the young;
- The media;
- Social cohesion.

18. Other common priorities and areas of interest may be defined on the basis of joint consultations.

Democratic governance of cultural diversity

19. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall base their co-operation on the principles of indivisibility and universality of human rights, respect for the norms in this area established in the fundamental texts of the United Nations and OSCE, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and other fundamental documents on cultural and religious rights.

20. The co-operation between the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall include protection of persons belonging to national minorities, combating discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance, combating torture and ill-treatment, promoting human rights education, and freedom of expression and information.

21. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall explore the possibilities for working more closely in the development of a political culture conducive to cultural diversity based on the reconciliation of the power of the majority and the rights of minorities. In doing so they shall where necessary make good use of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the OSCE field missions.

22. They shall endeavour to promote local democracy, taking account of the contribution that it can make to the achievement of their common aims. Where necessary, they should make good use of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and its field missions and of all other bodies or institutions dealing with local and regional authorities likely to associate themselves with the implementation of joint co-operation projects.

23. Bearing in mind their common aim of promoting democratic governance of cultural diversity, the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall intensify their joint efforts with a view to enriching pan-European relations.

24. In order to promote democracy and participation by citizens in the OSCE countries, this co-operation could also include neighbouring States.

Inclusive and participative democratic citizenship

25. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall take mutual advantage of each other's respective expertise and activities with a view to promoting and strengthening democracy and good governance, encouraging equality of all citizens — in terms of equality of opportunity but also of gender equality — and greater participation by women in decision-making in public life.

26. They shall co-operate in promoting democracy, participation by citizens, democratic development and good governance. They shall study the use of new technologies in this context.

27. They shall also attempt to promote greater participation by foreign residents in the life of the local community as a means of encouraging social integration and cohesive social links.

Intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity

28. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall co-operate to develop intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity with a view to promoting respect for human rights and mutual understanding between the cultures of the participating countries. This dialogue constitutes an important element in combating all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia.

29. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall promote the ideas and values supporting cultural diversity both in the States concerned and in the relevant international bodies. In this spirit, the OSCE shall promote the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Education in human rights, tolerance and intercultural competence

30. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall co-operate to help construct knowledge-based societies and promote a democratic culture in Europe, in particular by developing education in human rights, tolerance and intercultural competence. They shall support all initiatives to develop the competences required for intercultural dialogue — civic competence, multilingual competence, social commitment, a vision based on mutual respect, solidarity and multiperspectivity.

31. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall endeavour to develop formal and informal education programmes that embrace more of the world and the people in it, in particular with regard to a history of the world from an interdisciplinary perspective, and to cultures, beliefs and religious practices.

32. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall explore the possibility of promoting educational action programmes in the media, in schools and, in particular, in secondary education, with a view to helping to develop a sense of discernment and a critical approach so as to guard against misguided and prejudiced perceptions.

33. They shall support educational networks and student exchanges at all levels, including the possibility of extending them to regions neighbouring Europe.

Intercultural exchanges and the promotion of human contacts

34. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall intensify their co-operation in the area of youth by carrying out and taking part in programmes and campaigns that would give young persons the means to participate actively in the democratic process, and by facilitating exchanges.

35. They shall encourage exchanges of information on good practices regarding the free movement of persons with a view to improving personal contacts, be it through migration or through tourism.

36. They shall endeavour to create spaces for intercultural dialogue in the urban environment and activities that heighten awareness of diverse cultural expressions, mutual understanding and tolerance. For this purpose, the active participation of public authorities, non-governmental organizations, religious communities and trade unions at the national and transnational levels is indispensable.

37. They shall encourage the participation in this type of initiative by civil society organizations and shall emphasize the value of partnerships at the international level.

Media

38. They shall endeavour to develop joint initiatives to increase the attention paid by the media to their responsibility to inform the public on intercultural issues, in particular during periods of crisis. Training programmes on crucial international issues, in particular those in which politics, religion and culture intersect, should be encouraged in journalism schools and journalists' associations.

39. They shall endeavour to ensure a rapid reaction in the event of a serious violation of OSCE principles and commitments regarding the development of the media in participating States and freedom of expression and the media in these countries.

40. They shall urge governments, media organizations and civil society to work together to develop programmes to promote the Internet as a tool for multicultural dialogue and for strengthening solidarity and social cohesion between communities.

Social cohesion

41. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall co-operate in the area of social cohesion, in particular by referring to the relevant United Nations documents, the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe and the arrangements and decisions of the OSCE.

42. Backed by their respective frameworks, they shall support the efforts made by States to exchange information on good practices in respect of social cohesion and solidarity — in particular with regard to combating violence, poverty and exclusion and protecting vulnerable groups — and to devise more effective policies in this area.

Modalities for co-operation

43. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall consult regularly and closely with each other at the political and technical levels on questions relating to the common priority areas described above.

44. They shall establish and agree on an action plan (partnership) for the next two years regarding joint activities and the co-operation to be implemented.

45. This co-operation should include:

- Increased dialogue on the main policy directions so as to define common priorities and develop concerted medium- and long-term strategies;
- Regular exchange of information and definition of common positions and initiatives;
- Co-ordination of operational activities in the priority areas;
- Consultation between networks/departments operating in the same priority areas or areas of interest;
- Partnership with the States that benefit from the joint activities, programmes and other initiatives conducted in this area;
- Organization of joint activities and events.

Meetings and mechanisms for strengthening co-operation

46. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall hold periodic meetings devoted to the main aspects of co-operation and to strategic questions. Ways of taking advantage of a parliamentary contribution to this process shall be studied. Moreover, ad hoc consultations at a high political level could be organized on topical questions of common interest.

47. Regular consultations to strengthen political dialogue between the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and his secretariat on the one hand and the OSCE Chairmanship and Secretary General on the other could be organized.

Inter-institutional co-operation

48. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is invited to co-operate in order to develop the parliamentary dimension of the interaction between the Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE.

49. The contribution by civil society to the OSCE and to the Alliance of Civilizations with a view to achieving their shared aims shall be actively encouraged.

Institutional presence

50. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall designate a Focal Point responsible for ensuring a permanent liaison between the two institutions. If necessary they shall study ways of increasing and strengthening their collaboration as much as possible in New York and/or Vienna.

Joint programmes

51. The co-operation within the joint programmes — which could include thematic religious programmes — shall be on the basis of a partnership for two years agreed between the two parties.

Visibility of the partnership

52. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE undertake to improve their co-operation regarding communication with a view heightening awareness and understanding of their shared values and their partnership by the general public and specialized groups. They shall consult on the timetables for their respective awareness-raising campaigns and shall study ways of organizing joint events.

53. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall take all necessary measures to develop as far as possible the visibility of their joint activities — in particular the joint programmes — to citizens of their member/participating States, with particular emphasis on the States benefiting from this co-operation.

Monitoring

54. The Alliance of Civilizations and the OSCE shall regularly evaluate the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding. In this light of this evaluation they shall decide by common accord, at the latest in 2012, to revise it if necessary so as to include new priorities in their co-operation.

Signed in duplicate (French and English) on ...

For the OSCE

Secretary General
Marc Perrin de Brichambaut

Signed in duplicate (French and English) on ...

For the Alliance of Civilizations

Jorge Sampaio
High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations