

**JOINT STATEMENT BY TURKEY AND SPAIN IN RESPONSE TO THE
SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT ON THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
FORUM**

**PERMANENT COUNCIL
(17 January 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegations of Spain and Turkey, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary General for his attendance, in line with the recommendation of the Madrid Ministerial Council, to the First Alliance of Civilizations Forum which was held in Madrid on 15 and 16 January. It was a valuable representation marking the confirmed engagement of this Organization in the work of the Initiative.

We also thank him for his brief remarks today on the Forum and look forward to his detailed report on the outcome of this important meeting which gathered an influential network of political leaders, media heads, youth and civil society leaders, corporate and film industry executives, and religious figures.

We, as the two co-sponsors of this initiative under the UN auspices, are also pleased to announce to the Permanent Council that major initiatives were launched during the Forum in order to achieve the objectives of the Alliance. 5 partnership agreements with various multilateral agencies and organizations and a letter of intent with the Council of Europe were signed. The Delegations of Spain and Turkey will also make a joint presentation of the detailed outcomes of the Forum to complement Secretary General's report.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon once again underlined the significance of the initiative *"to counter extremism and heal the divisions that threaten our world"*. High Representative Jorge Sampaio said in concluding the Forum: *"So many responsibilities ahead of us show that the Alliance is the right initiative at the right moment. Urgent action is needed to stop further degradation of human atmosphere. Let's keep united and firm in our certainty that we can change the world."*

The text of the Press Release about the conclusions of the Forum will be circulated today to the delegations.

We are hopeful and confidently expect that the Chairmanship will seize the momentum created by the Alliance of Civilizations Forum to initiate a process within the OSCE, as tasked by the Madrid Ministerial Council, in which we can collectively consider an appropriate OSCE contribution to the implementation phase of the Alliance of Civilizations based on the Secretary General's report and recommendations, at which time our two Delegations will have a few contributions to make.

Thank you.

MAJOR INITIATIVES LAUNCHED AT THE FIRST ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS FORUM

PRESS RELEASE

MADRID, January 16th 2008 - A 100 million dollar investment in a Global Youth Employment Initiative and a multi-million dollar Media Fund were among the key initiatives that were launched at the first Alliance of Civilizations Forum, which was hosted by the Spanish Government and concluded today in Madrid.

H.H. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser-el-Missned announced a \$100 million investment in Silatech, a global youth employment initiative aimed, she said at “connecting young people to each other, to capital, to industry, to opportunity.” Her Highness added, “By investing in our youth, we are investing in the security of our nations, and only secure and confident nations can build alliances based on mutual respect and common objectives.”

The Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund was launched by HM Queen Noor, who stated: “we are announcing a \$100 million Fund to support the production and distribution of films that entertain as well as enlighten – films that will enhance the connections that already exist between different societies, but are seldom noted on screen and in popular culture.”

Hosted by the government of Spain, the Forum brought together an influential network of political leaders, media heads, youth and civil society leaders, corporate and film industry executives, and religious figures. Over the last two days, they explored ways of building partnerships to promote greater understanding and respect among cultures.

Other initiatives launched at the Forum include:

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.

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, namely among the two banks of the Mediterranean Sea; launching a number of activities within the framework of active and city diplomacy.

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. We have signed 5 agreements - with UNESCO, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, ALECSO and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) - and a letter of intent with the Council of Europe.

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 18 universities** that will serve as nodes to enliven this clearinghouse by initiating exchanges and posting materials on the latest development in media literacy education.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

In his remarks, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: “The Alliance of Civilizations is an important way to counter extremism and heal the divisions that threaten our world.”

The President of the Government of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero stated: “The Alliance of Civilizations aspires to build bridges that can help us to manage the differences existing in the world, particularly those linked to religious or cultural issues.” In his address, the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan noted that Turkey was in itself “an answer to the clashes in the world between civilizations.”

President Sampaio, former President of Portugal and High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, said in concluding the forum: “So many responsibilities ahead of us show that the Alliance is the right initiative at the right moment. Urgent action is needed to stop further degradation of human atmosphere. Let’s keep united and firm in our certainty that we can change the world.”

For information about the Alliance of Civilizations and the Forum, please contact: Emmanuel Kattan (tel: +917 547 0073; kattan@un.org) or Daanish Masood (tel: +917 847 3084; daanishm@unops.org).