



UN Secretary General emphasizes role of Alliance as “soft power” mobilizer at UNAOC Ministerial Meeting

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Speaking at the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Group of Friends Ministerial meeting Friday September 23, 2011, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon emphasized the role of the Alliance in mobilizing “soft power” to deal with the major challenges of today’s world.

The Secretary General said that the UNAOC had the mandate to marshal the power of peaceful citizens to confront challenges such as conflict and intolerance.

High Representative of the UNAOC, President Jorge Sampaio, in his opening remarks, urged the assembly of the Group of Friends to make 9/11 and ensuing hostility and intolerance a matter for history books. He

asked the assembly to “take bold action to develop a new agenda for living together in a shrinking world.”

Opening remarks were also made by the President of the 66th session of the General Assembly and the Foreign Ministers of Spain, Turkey (original co-sponsors of the UNAOC, and Qatar (the host of the 2011 Forum).

More than 100 countries and international organizations attended the meeting. Ministers, Permanent Representatives, heads of International organizations or their designees expressed their views on the Doha Forum, the need for combating intolerance and radicalization, and their own examples of building bridges between cultures. They provided broad support to the Third Implementation Plan presented by the High Representative.