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## **Ban issues call for religious leaders to foster dialogue between cultures**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

27 April 2010 – Religious leaders have a vital part to play in promoting dialogue between different cultures and societies at a time when globalization has left many people feeling discontented, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has told an international gathering of leaders.

In a [message](#) to the two-day World Summit of Religious Leaders, which concludes today in the Azerbaijani capital, Baku, Mr. Ban said that “when we build a culture of understanding and uphold human dignity, we build a better world.”

He noted that “we live in a changing and interconnected world,” where local events can have an impact globally and international events can also have a local impact.

“Globalization continues to transform our societies, bringing gains for many but leaving too many others untouched and discontent. These 21st-century facts compel us to strengthen cooperation – to expand the space for dialogue.”

The Secretary-General stressed that the entire United Nations system supports efforts to promote dialogue between cultures and religions, adding that the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative has part of those efforts since 2005.

“As religious leaders, you have an essential role to play in ensuring that the values of equality, tolerance and mutual respect, which lie at the core of all the world’s greatest religions, are defended, promoted and used to truly enrich our societies.

"You can encourage dialogue that respects the importance of tradition but also embraces change. You can foster contacts and create conditions that will lead to sustainable peace, social justice and cultural cohesion."

The World Summit of Religious Leaders was organized by the Inter-Religious Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

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