

## Civil Society's Passion and Energy on Display at Doha Pre-Forum



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Civil society's vibrant passion and energy was on full display at the first-ever UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Civil Society Pre-Forum, May 3-4 2011, in Doha, Qatar. At workshops, lab sessions, breakfast session as well as in informal gatherings, civil society representatives took the opportunity to talk about their work, its relation to the work of the UNAOC, and make connections for future collaboration. More than 190 CSO representatives, country focal points for the UN Alliance of Civilizations, experts, and government and intergovernmental organization officials participated in the event.

On May 3, an opening plenary sessions at the Pre-Forum provided participants with overviews and a framework for understanding the work of the Alliance. Subsequent parallel workshops on regional and national strategies, education, youth, media, and cultural diversity provided overviews of the Alliance activities in this area and generated recommendations for follow-up activities from the participants. A subsequent plenary session focused on some innovative projects linking culture and development. The session featured organizations such as the international Dialogue Café, the Silicon Valley Diversity Inclusion Consortium, and Human Rights Cities (PDHRE) of Rwanda.

Early in the morning of May 4, a lab session featured the opportunity for many participants to discuss possible collaboration and introduce their projects to each other. A plenary session also engaged in discussions on how to engage civil society in the agenda for the December Doha Forum. Several simultaneous workshops followed with examples from civil society organizations on innovative intercultural actions in the areas of education, media, youth and cohesive diversity, as well as the measurement of intercultural sensitivity and engagement. The concluding plenary session on the challenges of the transformations in the Arab world featured comments from a number of youth participants in these transformations. A number of civil society participants commended the Qatari government and the Alliance for holding the civil society Forum.

Thanking the Alliance and the Qatari government, Helen Thompson, Communications Officer of SAVE/Women without Borders said, “It was such a successful and interesting conference, and brought together so many civil society organizations. SAVE made some great connections, which was really valuable for us.”

In her closing remarks, H. H. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser thanked the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and participants for their great energy in making the pre-Forum a success. She said that the Pre-Forum, by focusing the dialogue on alliances in education, media, youth and migration, “has enabled us to capture the positive points, and crucially – the difficulties and obstacles as well.” Commending the participants, UNAOC High Representative President Jorge Sampaio said, “This extraordinary participation produced sparkling debates and fruitful recommendations.”

For more information please see:

[Doha Civil Society Forum Website http://www.qatar4unaoc.org/](http://www.qatar4unaoc.org/)

[Official Forum Twitter account @qatar4unaoc](#)

[Pre-Forum Press Release](#)

[Program for the UNAOC Civil Society Pre-Forum](#)

[Concept Paper for the Civil Society Pre-Forum in Doha](#)

[Profiles of Participating CSOs](#)