



United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



## DOHA PRE-FORUM 2011

Consultation with civil society organizations

**Connecting the UNAOC's mission and the MDG: an Agenda for Collaborative Action**

**Doha, 3-4 May 2011**

The Doha Pre-Forum 2011 with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) is co-organized by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Drafting Committee of the Doha Forum, in partnership with the Human Rights National Committee of Qatar, the Arab Democracy Foundation, Silatech and the Doha Center for Media Freedom.

## **Background**

The Fourth Annual Forum of the UNAOC will be held in Doha on December 11 to 13, 2011. It will bring together world leaders – UN Secretary-General, Heads of States and Governments, heads of international organizations, Ministers, civil society activists, scholars, Nobel laureates, corporate executives, religious leaders, – and thousands of actors and organizations from around the world actively involved in enhancing intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

Designed as a turning point for the UNAOC's agenda, the Doha Forum will focus on how to build further upon the close link between the UNAOC's mission and the Millennium Development Goals agenda. With this new approach the aim is to make the UNAOC able to contribute fully to promoting, encouraging and realizing human rights and fundamental freedoms as the sole foundation of development, justice and peace in the world.

As clearly emphasized in the second Implementation Plan (2009–2011) of the UNAOC (see [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org)), engagement with civil society organizations as indispensable partners is important to deliver results on the ground and to catalyze action with countries, mobilize broad-based movements and hold leaders accountable for their commitments.

Therefore, in order to make a step forward towards this goal, a Pre-Forum fully dedicated to CSOs will be organized for the first time. Indeed, most, if not all the UNAOC programs, are developed in partnership with civil society organizations; civil society organizations are participating regularly in the UNAOC events and initiatives, namely in its Annual Global Forums. Still, a comprehensive and enhanced working relationship is to be developed in order to create a true platform for long term and sustainable exchanges between the UNAOC and CSOs to reinforce each other and reach out the grass roots level.

Currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> Implementation Plan for the UNAOC for the next two years is being prepared as well as a new approach to the agenda of the UNAOC, focused on concrete achievements which is expected to be endorsed at the Doha Forum in December 2011. At this critical point of time for the Alliance, wider consultations with civil society organizations are of an utmost importance to voice their expectations, bring in their suggestions and secure a strong commitment to achieve common goals.

Furthermore, the ongoing changes and democratic transitions that a number of UNAOC countries is experiencing makes this consultation even more timely as a unique opportunity to appreciate the needs, perspectives and solution of CSOs' work. For this reason, in this Pre-Forum a special emphasis will be placed on developing further cooperation with and among the Arab societies following the objectives and the

priorities identified in the UNAOC Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean to which the recent developments in the region give extra urgency.

Against this backdrop, the pre-Forum is a unique opportunity to make a difference.

### **Objectives of the Doha Pre-Forum**

With a view to preparing the Doha Forum and incorporate the CSOs' views and recommendations in its outcomes, the main objectives of the UNAOC Pre-Forum are the following:

- To reflect together on how to reinforce the role of the UNAOC as a tool aimed at promoting, encouraging and realizing human rights and fundamental freedoms as the sole foundation of development, justice and peace in the world.
- To reflect together on how to address the main challenges, risks and opportunities posed by cultural diversity and intercultural understanding as key dimensions of peace and development, with a special focus on the ongoing changes in some Arab societies.
- To update the CSOs' representatives about the mission, ongoing activities and future projects of the UNAOC and open up new avenues for further engagement of CSOs.
- To explore new and innovative ways of interaction and collaboration among CSOs by providing a platform for sustainable exchanges with a view to making the Doha Forum an opportunity to announce new initiatives engaging CSOs.
- To increase public understanding and awareness and citizens' involvement in addressing cultural diversity and intercultural understanding.

### **Participants**

Up to 150 participants will take part in the Pre-Forum. They will include namely representatives of the local CSOs (grassroots organizations; minority or migrant agencies; faith based groups; arts and culture; youth; sports clubs), international NGOs, foundations and corporations, either existing partners and interlocutors of the UNAOC, or those organizations, which have never been engaged with the Alliance so far.

An open call for application is attached to this announcement (*deadline to apply: 10 April 2011*). Participants will be selected on the basis of predetermined criteria, in particular for their experience and innovative achievements in the field of intercultural understanding, taking into consideration geographical and "sector" representativeness, as well as priority areas of action for 2011 of the UNAOC.

Further to representatives of CSOs, experts, members of the UNAOC and representatives of the UNAOC Youth Movement, including the network of alumni, are also expected to attend the sessions and share their experiences.

## **Format and Methodology**

The format of the two-day program will be informal and interactive in order to facilitate exchanges, creative thinking and further collaboration between the UNAOC, CSOs and other partners.

The agenda will combine plenary sessions, breakout sessions, workshops and IdeasLab. Plenary sessions will set the frame, introduce and present cross-sectoral perspectives and global challenges in the field of the UNAOC as well as topical developments in the world, namely in Arab countries as well the debate on diversity and social cohesion in Europe, for further examination within the subsequent breakout sessions. Workshops will focus on NGOs' practical experience to identify good practices. IdeasLab sessions are small-group discussions that offer participants an opportunity to focus on a subtopic and collaboratively discuss opportunities for action with other members. These sessions will be organized at the request of the participants and announced in advance for sign-up.

A series of background and working documents will be shared with participants ahead of the event in order to prepare the discussion and to make the meeting as effective as possible. Participants will also be invited to submit statements in advance that will be posted on a secure website to permit interactive discussions at the forum.

Working languages are Arabic and English.

## **How to Proceed?**

Please fill in the attached form and send it by **10 April 2011** to [rsyp.doha@unaoc.org](mailto:rsyp.doha@unaoc.org), together with a copy of your passport and a digitalized ID photo. Please ensure that the size of your application does not exceed 2MB. Incomplete or late applications will not be taken into consideration.