



**Global Dialogue
Foundation**
Unity in Diversity

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

*Bridging cultures, civilizations & ethnicities
towards peace & prosperity*

GDF Open Forum: UNAOC - Civil Society



Picture: APG Foto, Northcote Town Hall, Open Forum partner meeting

Event date: 6 October 2011

Venue: Northcote Town Hall, Victoria (City of Darebin)

Theme:

Strengthening the role of communities, business and non-government organisations in the cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies

Special guest speaker:

The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal

Speakers:

MC - Ms. Wesa Chau - Young Victorian of the Year 2010

Cr. Diana Asmar, Mayor - City of Darebin

Mr. Peter (Pece) Gorgievski - Chief Executive Officer, Global Dialogue Foundation

Mr. Vasan Srinivasan - President, Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

Cultural displays:

Indigenous performance: by Mia Mia Gallery

Indian performance: by Meghala Bhat Lakshminarayana.

Event partners:

- City of Darebin
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
- Diversity Council Australia
- Australian Multicultural Foundation
- Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

Summary:

Under the auspices of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Global Dialogue Foundation (GDF) has been 'championing' citizen diplomacy to promote cross-cultural understanding.

Following two international Unity in Diversity forums, presented by GDF and partners in Australia and India during 2010 and 2011 respectively, the GDF/UNAOC Open Forum held at the Northcote Town Hall in Victoria, on 6 October 2011, provided a unique opportunity to open up the UNAOC to Australian communities and make a decisive contribution to launching UNAOC Civil Society chapter in Australia.



Picture: APG Foto, His Excellency. Dr. Jorge Sampaio

Addressing over 130 different cultures, communities, businesses and various civil society organisations during the event, the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, (former President of Portugal), said that Multiculturalism in Australia developed over many decades should be valued.

Participants engaged in a conversation with the High Representative on the relevance of grassroots action and ongoing participation in the mission of the UN Alliance of

Civilizations, which is to promote cross-cultural understanding and to strengthen civil society organisations across the world.

During his address, the UN High Representative commended the pioneering achievements of Australia as an example the world needs to know about.

Most of the 180 participants came from multicultural communities throughout Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. Among the cultures and ethnicities represented were;

- Australian-Aboriginal
- Albanian
- Brazilian
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Croatian
- Egyptian
- Filipino
- Finnish
- Greek
- Indian
- Italian
- Jewish
- Macedonian
- Scottish
- Slovenian
- Somali
- Sri Lankan
- Sudanese
- Tongan
- Turkish... and many others



Picture: APG Foto, Northcote Town Hall - Open Forum, Strengthening the role of community, NGO's and business in cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies

Among organisations represented were:

- Australian Federal Police
- Victoria Police,
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Victorian Parliament
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Department of Education and Early Child Development
- Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Immigration Museum
- AFL Club
- Rotary clubs,
- Diaspora organisations.



Picture: APG Foto, Mr. Vasan Srinivasan, President - Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

Responding to the UN High Representative and introducing audience interaction, Mr. Vasan Srinivasan - President of the Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria, said, “There are different colors, languages, beliefs, faiths. To bring us together, we need many Mahatma Gandhi’s. So, you have taken that role, to me as a Gandhi, trying to create the Unity in Diversity. I really appreciate your step. I really appreciate that you have taken the time to come here, to talk with us, to mingle with us, to understand the Australian multicultural society of Melbourne.”

The new logo of Global Dialogue Foundation Unity in Diversity was unveiled. Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Peter (Pece) Gorgievski said, “The organisation was established in close partnership with the UN Alliance of Civilizations to champion ‘citizen diplomacy’. A series of programs that promote cross-cultural understanding at the ground-level are now being established under the Alliance’s umbrella.”

Earlier in the week, Global Dialogue Foundation arranged for Dr. Sampaio to visit the Ecumenical Migration Centre in Fitzroy, Victoria, where newly arrived youth complete their training in employment-seeking skills. This provided a first-hand look at Australian programs that have a long-term approach to multiculturalism.

GDF is also piloting programs in India. The positive response received from communities and non-government organizations both here and in India reinforces for us the real demand for this grassroots movement at a community level.

Speech transcripts

H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, <http://www.globaldialoguefoundation.org/files/PresSampaioaddress1.pdf>

Mr. Vasan Srinivasan, <http://www.globaldialoguefoundation.org/files/VasanSrinivasanaddress.pdf>

Audio recording: <http://www.gdfunityindiversity.org/apps/podcast/>

Photo gallery: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/globaldialogue/sets/72157627849277704/>