



PRESS RELEASE

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## **The Unity in Diversity Forum: Towards a new momentum for intercultural understanding and cooperation**

The organising committee from the Global Dialogue Foundation are adding the final touches to the three day public forum and are now counting down to the welcome event on Sunday, October 10. Organised under the auspices of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), incoming participants are looking forward to promoting intercultural dialogue in the historical setting of Melbourne's Town Hall.

After an informal welcome and 'multicultural fashion show' on Sunday, participants will have the opportunity to participate in several roundtable discussions and workshop sessions on 'cultural diversity and inclusion in the Asia Pacific', from a media, education, youth or migration perspective. This is reflected in the theme 'Unity in Diversity 10.10.10: Bridging Cultures, Building Peace'.

Even primary school children have a role in the forum; the UNESCO Observatory at the University of Melbourne is contributing an exhibition of artworks by budding young artists that depict "Me and the others." An award ceremony will be held at the Forum on Monday.

Of particular interest is "the Marketplace of Ideas" which provides a platform for established grassroots intercultural initiatives to promote their program to an audience of policy makers, potential sponsors and other interested parties. The most successful projects will be rewarded with support from the 'World Intercultural Fund for Innovation' (WIFI) network, launched at the 2010 UNAOC forum in Rio de Janeiro.

Submissions to 'the Marketplace of Ideas' have been received from a diverse pool of applicants, including the Western Bulldogs and Essendon Football Clubs, the Global Education Project (Victoria), PFI Foundation and Gauhati University in India, the United Nations Associations of Singapore and projects in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka, to name just a few.

Speakers include Jean-Christophe Bas – Senior Adviser in Strategic Partnerships and Development with the UNAOC, Fethi Mansouri – Professor in Migration and Intercultural Research, Director - Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Wesa Chau – Young Victorian of the year, Sacha Payne – SBS news, Dr. M. Syaff'i Anwar - Executive Director of the International Center for Islam and Pluralism Indonesia, Sam Sefuiva from the Human Rights Commission in New Zealand and Vinod Mirchandani from University of Melbourne in India.

"It's a unique opportunity for community organisations in Australia and the Asia Pacific Region to develop new pathways for increased understanding and cooperation among cultures and people and new momentum for developing projects at the community level that support capacity building for self-sustaining progress." said conference coordinator, Peter (Pece) Gorgievski.

More information on registering for the forum, including the full program and list of speakers can be found on the official website at <http://bit.ly/GDF101010>.

Email [info@globaldialoguefoundation.org](mailto:info@globaldialoguefoundation.org) for any enquiries.

Phone Hugh Jorgensen on 0413235541 for media.



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GLOBAL DIALOGUE FORUM