MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

THE IBERO-AMERICAN GENERAL SECRETARIAT

AND

THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

United Nations
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

Istanbul, April 6, 2009

Memorandum of Understanding between

the Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Alliance of Civilizations

---

Preamble

The Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Alliance of Civilizations,

1. Recognising that increasing cultural diversity is an essential characteristic of every society, and a driving force for economic and social development;

2. Reasserting the need to build bridges between cultures and societies through dialogue and co-operation, and to forge a collective political will to strengthen mutual respect, tolerance and understanding among people of different ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural background;

3. Convinced of the need for intercultural dialogue to be based on the principles of the indivisibility and universality of human rights, and on observance of the human rights standards of the United Nations;

4. Affirming the need to consolidate common respect for the shared values of pluralist democracy, the rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms;

5. Wishing to work together with a view to support the ratification and implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

6. Bearing in mind the principles of intercultural dialogue as established for the Alliance of Civilizations by the High Level Group's report of 13 November 2006;

7. Recognising the role of the Ibero-American General Secretariat as a member of the "Group of Friends" of the Alliance of Civilizations;

8. Having regard to their respective competences, specific characteristics and programmes of activities, and building on their existing good relations;

9. Wishing to intensify co-operation and mutually benefit from each other's experience concerning matters of joint interest;

Have agreed as follows:

Objectives and Principles

10. The Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Alliance of Civilizations (hereinafter referred to together as "the Parties") will enhance their co-operation in all fields of joint interest.

11. On the basis of partnership and complementarity, the Parties will take all necessary steps to further their co-operation through the exchange of information concerning their respective activities, and through the development of joint action as set out below.

12. The cooperation will aim for added value and to make the best possible use of existing resources. Measures implementing this Memorandum of Understanding will be subject to the application of the Parties' respective rules and policies and also subject to the availability of the appropriate financial and other resources.

Priority areas of co-operation

13. The Parties will ensure that their co-operation will further their aims and objectives, notably the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; the fight against all forms of discrimination on any ground; the equal dignity of every

human being and gender equality; inclusive and cohesive societies; the democratic governance of cultural diversity; intercultural dialogue and exchange; and the strengthening of democratic citizenship and participation.

14. The Parties are committed to developing joint activities in fields of common interest wherever appropriate and feasible. Priority areas of co-operation between the Parties, to be carried out especially in the Ibero-American sphere, include:

- *Human rights and democracy.* The Parties will explore possibilities for joint action aimed at strengthening human rights, integrating minorities and indigenous peoples, and the values underpinning intercultural dialogue, such as the democratic governance of diversity.

- *Education.* The Parties will co-operate in such areas as education for democratic citizenship, human rights, tolerance, mutual respect, intercultural awareness, and global education. They are committed to initiate and support educational programmes which are inspired by the principles of equal rights, inclusiveness, fairness and multiperspectivity, and which foster cultural sensitivity and critical thinking. Within their areas of competence, the Parties will promote interaction among educational institutions, educational staff and students namely within the Ibero-American region.

- *Youth.* The Parties will intensify their existing co-operation through activities designed to give all young people the means to play an active role in political and social life without discrimination, and to contribute actively to intercultural dialogue. They will foster non-formal education and training of youth workers in human rights and intercultural dialogue, and facilitate youth exchanges. The Parties will promote the development of youth policies with a particular emphasis on intercultural dialogue by encouraging co-operation between policy-makers, researchers, young people and youth workers.

- *Culture.* The Parties will investigate the possibility of co-operation in cultural, audiovisual and heritage policies, including the exchange of information on good practice and policy strategies at local level, as well as the joint development of existing tools for information and co-operation.

- *Media.* The Parties will seek to co-operate in the promotion and defence of freedom of expression and information, and freedom of the media. They will explore the possibilities of promoting the access of all persons to media, and to new information and communication services. They will explore co-operation in the area of media literacy development programmes. They will seek to foster awareness among media professionals of the need for intercultural dialogue and co-operation across ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries. They will also explore ways of collaborating on the development and expansion of a rapid Response Media Mechanism, aimed at providing the media community with direct access to a broad network of experts capable of commenting on global matters and issues that have the potential of polarizing communities across cultural divides.

- *Migration and social cohesion.* The Parties will co-operate in the field of social cohesion on the basis, *inter alia,* of the relevant instruments of the United Nations. They will particularly promote the inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups in society, such as indigenous peoples, the fight against discrimination, and measures aiming at strengthened democratic citizenship and participation.

15. Other areas of co-operation may be determined by mutual agreement.

Co-operation arrangements

16. The Parties will consult each other at both political and Secretariat level. Ad hoc consultations at a senior political level may be organised on topical issues of joint interest. The Parties will designate "focal points" within their Secretariats to be responsible for permanent contacts between them.

17. The Ibero-American General Secretariat in collaboration with the Focal Points of the countries members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance is expected to play a significant role in the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding.

18. The Parties will regularly assess the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding, and agree in writing upon modifications as necessary.

Visibility

19. The Parties will take measures to enhance the visibility of their co-operation and joint activities to the general public. The Parties mutually will support each other in their relations with the media and with regard to web contents.

Done in two copies (Spanish and English), on 6 April 2009 in Istanbul

For the Ibero-American General Secretariat

Enrique Iglesias
Secretary General

For the Alliance of Civilizations

Jorge Sampaio
United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations