



رَابِطَةُ الْعَالَمِ الْإِسْلَامِيِّ
MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE



UNITED
NATIONS

STAFF RECREATION COUNCIL
MULTICULTURAL
STUDY OF FAITHS

CONCEPT NOTE

“Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue: Building Bridges Between East and West”

United Nations Headquarters, New York
14 June 2023, 10:45 AM-1:00 PM

Background

There is a growing concern about the overall rise in instances of discrimination, intolerance and violence, regardless of the actors, directed against members of many religious, ethnic, and other communities in various parts of the world, including cases motivated by Islamophobia, antisemitism and Christianophobia and prejudices against persons of other religions or beliefs. Growing religious and cultural, stigma and manifestations of various forms of discrimination against vulnerable communities, including cultural and religious minorities, are an affront to human rights and international law and the United Nations core values. Such vile acts risk undermining global efforts to rebuild a better world.

State actors and relevant non-state actors, including religious leaders from across the faith spectrum, play a vital role in promoting dialogue among all religious groups leading to improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all mankind. Promoting acceptance and respect of religious and cultural diversity through interreligious and intercultural dialogue will create an environment conducive to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

In support of the dialogue among civilizations, in November 2022, the Muslim World League under the leadership of H.E. Shaykh Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General” launched the “Forum for Building Bridges Between East and West”. The initiative aims to foster mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among the world’s diverse cultures and nations. It strives to contribute to this goal by mobilizing religious, social, economic and political leaders throughout the world to ensure their commitment and willingness to work in order to prevent manipulation of religious, ethnic, national and cultural identities in justifying violence and exclusion of “the other”. It also aims to strengthen public discourses that call for bridging cultural and religious gaps and divides in Muslim and non-Muslim societies.

Format

The proposed event under the above title will take place on Wednesday, 14 June 2023, between 10:45 AM and 1:00 PM in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters of the United Nations.

It will commence with an opening segment from 10:45 AM to 11:00 AM, featuring the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the High Representative for UNAOC and the Special Advisor of the United Nations Multicultural Study of Faiths of the UN Staff Recreation Council.

From 11:40 AM to 12:40 PM, there will be a panel discussion with experts, academia and religious leaders followed by interventions from the floor with participants attending the event.

The event will conclude with remarks by the Secretary General of the Muslim World League (12:45 PM – 1:00 PM).

Guiding Questions

- *Against the backdrop of current crises and tensions around the globe, where religious, cultural and ethnic differences are misused or serve to justify violence, how can religious leaders counter those attempts and promote mutual understanding, respect of religious and cultural diversity, global unity and peaceful coexistence? What are the most prominent examples that are worth highlighting?*
- *How can policymakers, religious and civil society leaders counter hate speech and other forms of polarization? What are the examples of strategies, programmes and initiatives that demonstrate the use of intercultural and interreligious dialogue to bridge the intercommunal gaps and diffuse polarization in various parts of the world?*

Participants

Senior United Nations officials, representatives of Member States / Permanent Missions of Member States to the United Nations in New York, religious leaders from across the faith spectrum, faith-based organizations, civil society organizations and academia.

The event will be webcast by UN WebTV and will be open to United Nations staff and civil society organizations accredited to the United Nations.

About Muslim World League (MWL)

MWL is an international organization, headquartered in Makkah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with members from all Islamic countries and sects. Its objectives are to promote the principles of Islam, provide humanitarian aid, extend bridges of dialogue and cooperation with all, engage in positive openness to all cultures and civilizations, follow the path of centrism and moderation to realize the message of Islam and ward off movements calling for extremism, violence and exclusion for a world full of peace, justice and coexistence. MWL enjoys an observer in consultative status with the ECOSOC, United Nations, and it has collaborated and ongoing

partnerships with UNESCO, UN OCHA, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, UNRWA and UNAOC. MWL is led by H.E. Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General.

About United Nations Alliance Civilizations (UNAOC)

Launched in 2005, UNAOC serves as a soft-power political tool of the United Nations Secretary-General for conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarization at local and global levels. It helps develop more inclusive societies, in which diversity is experienced as an asset.

UNAOC is widely recognized as the UN entity providing a global platform for dialogue between faith actors across the faith spectrum emanating from a recognition that genuine dialogue bridges the divide and overcomes prejudices, stigmatization, misperceptions and polarization. Fulfilling a world of “One Humanity, Many Cultures” is the *raison d’être* of UNAOC. The special status and mandate of UNAOC have been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolutions 64/14 of 10 November 2009 and 69/312 of 6 July 2015. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for UNAOC, leads the initiative since 2019.

About United Nations Multicultural Study of Faiths of the UN Staff Recreation Council (UNSRC Multicultural Study of Faiths)

The United Nations Multicultural Study of Faiths of the UN Staff Recreation Council works to support the United Nations Organization vision and objectives on the importance of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue as a valuable contribution and tool in the efforts aimed at achieving and promoting peace, social cohesion, and the realization of the development goals. UNSRC Multicultural Study of Faiths also works actively in building bridges and strengthening mutual respect for traditions, faiths and religious beliefs to overcome prejudice and polarization. It collaborates and works together with all United Nations Programmes and entities across the UN global system as well as with Member States, UN Missions and accredited stakeholders in order to advance these UN goals in these important areas. Mr. Arthur C. Wilson, serves as Special Advisor for UNSRC Multicultural Study of Faiths.