



*Address by*

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**The Director General of the Islamic Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization  
(ISESCO)**

*At the opening of*

**the third meeting of the Focal Points of  
the Alliance of Civilizations**

**Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco: 10-11 November 2009**

*Excellency Mr Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,*

*Excellency Mrs Latifa Akherbash, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,*

It is my pleasure to welcome you at ISESCO at the opening of the third meeting of the Focal Points of the Alliance of Civilizations. Allow me at the outset to express thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Mr Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, who graciously accepted to preside over this international meeting, to which we wish every success.

*Excellency Mr Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Last month in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, ISESCO held as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers a roundtable on “**Fostering Dialogue and Cultural Diversity-Baku Process: New Challenge for Dialogue between Civilizations**”, with the participation of the representatives of the Council of Europe. The final communiqué adopted by the OIC Culture Ministers and representatives of the Council of Europe’s Member States underlines, among other things, the need to explore new approaches to achieve the alliance of civilizations and dialogue of cultures, and to provide new opportunities for cooperation among States, based on the means and potentials offered by culture, arts, heritage and all forms of cultural expression.

**The vision of the Islamic world to the alliance of civilizations**, as I propounded it in the first and second sessions of the International Forum for the Alliance of Civilizations in Madrid (2008) and Istanbul (2009), gained further momentum in the Baku Conference. It is a forward-looking vision that captures the spirit of Islamic civilization with its incontestably substantial contribution to the shaping of universal civilization.

The issues to be debated in this meeting reflect the positive evolution in the idea of the alliance of civilizations. Indeed, this idea has moved from the theorizing stage to concrete actions, through the implementation of the second plan for the alliance of civilizations (2010-2012), and strengthening of the role of the relevant regional strategies

and plans. The human path towards the alliance of civilizations has just begun, and the major objectives set for the alliance have started to materialize, despite the grim and disturbing circumstances engulfing this stage of history. And therein lies the proof that with good will, hope and confidence in the tremendous human potential for renewing the universal civilizational edifice, the parties active in this vital field have managed to iron all difficulties and problems.

*Excellency Mr Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The alliance of civilizations that we are pursuing based on intercultural and interfaith dialogue should translate into enhanced peace and security in the world. Otherwise, it will be emptied from one of its prerequisites. Just as dialogue paves the way towards rapprochement and coexistence based on mutual understanding and respect, so the alliance of civilizations should seek to gradually remove the causes for tension and conflict between civilizations, cultures and religions. It is a sad fact that the world of today is filled with hatred, racism, discrimination and divisions, which all provoke tensions and crises, and obstruct the efforts led by the wise and even-handed people of the world towards establishing peace and security, upholding international laws without discrimination and ensuring progress and prosperity of societies.

This is the true message of the alliance of civilizations as we strive to promote it in today's world, and in the future we are building on our firm belief in the alliance principles and objectives and our commitment to translate it into concrete action. We are hopeful that this international meeting will bear tangible fruit for the world's peoples and go beyond singing the praises of the alliance.

The eyes of the world are today on ISESCO, which is playing host to this international meeting. ISESCO is the cultural conscience of the Islamic world and seeks, among other things, **“to consolidate understanding among peoples inside and outside the Member States and contribute to the achievement of world peace and security through various means, particularly education, science, culture and communication; [...] promote dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, and work towards spreading the values of justice and peace along with the principles of freedom and human rights, in accordance with the Islamic civilizational perspective.”**

I take this occasion to reaffirm ISESCO's determination to foster the values of the alliance of civilizations, and to continue to disseminate the culture of dialogue among civilizations. This is the privileged option of our peace-loving Islamic world, who contributes to the making of peace based on justice and international legality.

***Excellency Mr Jorge Sampaio, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,***

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and gentlemen,***

ISESCO which strongly believes in the idea of dialogue between cultures and espouses the alliance of civilizations has achieved some progress in this respect: It held a number of international conferences and symposia on the issues of dialogue and alliance, bringing together distinguished thinkers, academics and journalists from the Islamic world and the West; and released tens of books and studies dealing with such issues in a comprehensive, open-minded manner.

I am pleased on this occasion to commend the initiatives taken by heads of some Member States, governments, and local community organizations in the Islamic world towards enhancing intercultural dialogue and disseminating the culture of the alliance of civilizations. On top of these are the respective initiatives of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and particularly the initiative of the Tunisian Republic which hosted three major conferences held by ISESCO on dialogue under the patronage of H.E. President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who personally presided over their inauguration. These initiatives take on a great importance as they go hand in hand with the efforts of international community towards fostering the values of the alliance of civilizations.

***Excellency the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations,***

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and gentlemen***

The world today needs to urgently find a just, comprehensive solution to the Palestinian people's suffering under a wicked occupation depriving them of their right to a free and decent life like other peoples in the world. This only leads to more conflicts and exacerbates friction between civilizations. Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands constitutes a breach of international law, contributes to the spread of anarchy and undermines world peace and security. I therefore call on the world's major powers and all peace-loving forces to do their best to put an end to this conflict resulting from the Israeli expansionist occupation, and to endeavor for a prompt establishment of the independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

I am pleased to welcome you again and to reassure you that ISESCO is putting all its means at your disposal to make this meeting a success.

Wasslamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarkatuh.