



## ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

PRESS RELEASE – 14 June 2007

### ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN LAUNCHED

**President Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, presented today the implementation plan of the Alliance to the UN Secretary-General.**

Based on the recommendations made in the Alliance of Civilizations High-level Group Report, this action-oriented implementation plan outlines the structure that will support the work of the Alliance and its programme of activities for the coming two years.

Speaking in New York today, President Sampaio said: “The aim of the Alliance is to support, through a network of partnerships, the development of projects that promote understanding and reconciliation among cultures globally and, in particular, between Muslim and Western societies. The Alliance does not intend to duplicate or replicate the work others are already doing. Rather, our goal is to help expand efforts that are already underway.”

At a political level, mainly through the High Representative’s role, the Alliance will aim to facilitate the establishment of platforms for dialogue among political, religious, media and civil society personalities who would be prepared to use their influence in advancing the Alliance of Civilizations’ objectives.

The implementation plan sets out a range of projects and initiatives which the Alliance will support and help develop over the next two years, including a media fund to promote productions developed across cultural, religious and/or national lines, a Youth Employment Center aimed at increasing work opportunities for young people in the Middle East and a project aimed at expanding international student exchange programmes.

In addition, the Alliance will seek to establish a rapid response media-based mechanism to provide platforms for constructive debate during times of increased tensions around cross-cultural issues. It will also develop an online clearinghouse of best practices, materials and resources on cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation projects.

In order to foster partnerships around these activities and deepen cooperation on a range of initiatives across different regions, the Alliance has developed a “Group of Friends” network – a growing community of over fifty States and international organizations that support the objectives of the Alliance and has networked extensively with civil society organizations dedicated to expanding cross-cultural and interfaith understanding and cooperation.

The Alliance will also seek to broaden its influence through an international Forum, to be held in Spain on 15-16 January 2008. This event will bring together governments, international and regional bodies, donor agencies, civil society groups, foundations and representatives from the private sector to help develop joint initiatives and promote projects aimed at improving relations among diverse cultures and communities.

The Alliance of Civilizations will be funded through a voluntary trust fund made up of contributions from governments, international organizations and entities, private sector bodies, foundations and individuals.

**Note to Editors:**

The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. A High-level Group was formed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today and to recommend a practical program of action to address this issue. Their report, which was released in November 2006, puts forward a range of practical recommendations that form the basis for the implementation plan of the Alliance of Civilizations.

On 26 April 2007, former President of Portugal Mr Jorge Sampaio was appointed as the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to lead the implementation phase of the Alliance. Under his guidance, the Alliance Secretariat will work in partnership with States, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector to mobilize concerted efforts to promote cross-cultural relations among diverse nations and communities.

**For more information on the Alliance of Civilizations, see:** [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org)

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