

**High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly
on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace
and
Informal Interactive Hearing with Civil Society, including Non-Governmental
Organizations and the Private Sector**

Overview:

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/221 of 20 December 2006, (OP. 14) decided “to convene in 2007 a high-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, in coordination with other similar initiatives in this area”.
2. In its resolution 61/269 of 25 May 2007, the General Assembly further decided that the High-level Dialogue would be held on Thursday and Friday, 4 and 5 October 2007 at the ministerial or highest possible level, and that it shall consist of three plenary meetings: one in the morning of Thursday, 4 October and two on Friday, 5 October.
3. The General Assembly also decided to hold in the afternoon of 4 October 2007 an informal interactive hearing with representatives of civil society, including representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly.
4. The objective of the informal interactive hearing is to provide an opportunity for Member States to dialogue with experts from civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector representing diverse regions, cultures and perspectives, with a view to strengthening efforts to promote interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation. The highlights of the hearing will be reflected in the closing remarks of the President of the General Assembly on 5 October 2007. The outcome of the informal interactive hearing will be a summary of the President of the General Assembly for circulation to Member States at a later date.
5. The Office of the President of the General Assembly has formed a ‘Task Force’ to help ensure the effective participation and equitable geographic representation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the interactive hearing. The function of the Task Force is to assist the President of the General Assembly in the organization of the hearing by recommending possible formats and drawing up a list of participants.

Provisional format of the informal interactive hearing:

6. The informal interactive hearing will be held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber and will be opened and presided over by the President of the General Assembly.

7. Following the opening, the hearing will be divided into two consecutive segments on the following tentative topics:

(a) *"Challenges of Interreligious & Intercultural Cooperation Today"*

(b) *"Best Practices & Strategies for Interreligious & Intercultural Cooperation Going Forward"*

Nomination and list of participants:

8. Representatives of civil society organizations, including representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector, wishing to participate in the hearing as a speaker or respondent, must submit a complete Nomination form by Monday, 23 July 2007, in order to be considered.

9. The President of the General Assembly will circulate to Member States by the first week of August the list of invited participants chosen from among the nominated representatives of civil society, including representatives of non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Travel arrangement and visa process:

10. Nominees should obtain timely information on the United States visa application process. If a visa is required, it is best to apply two months in advance of the intended date of arrival in the United States.

Funding:

11. While not guaranteed, funding for travel and accommodation may be available for a limited number of participants. Requests for funding can be indicated on the Nomination form. Priority of funding will be given to speakers from developing countries, and on the basis of need, pending the availability of funds.

Contacts:

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