

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

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Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly, at the Fourth Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

His Highness Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, The Amir of Qatar,
Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, The Chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science
and Community Development,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,
High Representative President Sampaio,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be at this Fourth Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, here in my home country. I seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of my country for convening this important Forum at this historic juncture in the region.

The Alliance's activities, starting from the beginning, have promoted respect for diversity and pluralism, regardless of religion, race or ethnicity.

These values are a coherent expression of the founding principles of the United Nations itself. In today's interconnected world - and as we witness a period of unprecedented change - embracing difference and fostering tolerance is a more pressing obligation than ever before.

In my capacity as President of the United Nations General Assembly, I am pleased to recall that the Assembly, through its resolution in 2009, welcomed the Alliance and expressed its support for its work.

Still relatively young among United Nations initiatives, the Alliance has emphasized the good governance of cultural diversity as an important strategy for peace.

2015 is close upon us. As we redouble efforts to deliver on MDGs, the international community has started to reflect on the post-MDG agenda for development.

I am convinced that the coming agenda will need to appropriately reflect the strategic link between the importance of cultural diversity, peace and development. Inspired by the work of this Forum, I intend to highlight the contribution of the Alliance in meeting these goals.

In this respect, the General Assembly's continuing attention during the last decade on the full and effective implementation of its Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture of Peace bolsters our efforts.

The Doha Forum - the fourth in the Alliance's short history - should be a turning point for the Alliance. By emphasizing the crucial connection between cultural diversity, peace and development, the Forum will advance the Alliance's visibility and highlight its relevance to the global agenda.

Considerable efforts have been made by Qatar during the past year, to inject new ideas and expertise in preparation for the Forum.

I am encouraged that, next to the strong emphasis on cultural diversity and development, Qatar is placing great importance on the participation of large groups of youth and civil society representatives in this Forum.

I also appreciate the high attention paid to the youth and education sectors, and to new information and communication technologies. Great efforts have also been made to mobilize the arts for intercultural harmony, through the Doh' Art Festival.

I am a firm believer in the need for youth participation in efforts to advance cross-cultural understanding and sustainable development.

In cooperation with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, I intend to organize in March 2012 an interactive debate of the General Assembly on this topic.

This event will aim to support ongoing initiatives within the United Nations to foster intercultural dialogue, especially those of the Alliance.

During this interactive debate, we will focus on concrete approaches to fostering positive and collaborative relations among cultures. Also, special attention will be given to the many successes of young people in exploring innovative means to foster intercultural dialogue for the benefit of all.

We will also discuss how decision-makers in government can harness the energy, expertise and creativity of youth for the elaboration and implementation of national policies and programs related to cultural diversity.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The time is ripe for exploring new means and partnerships that enhance intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

I strongly believe that the Alliance can play a major role in providing fresh and innovative ideas to the international community.

Let us all strive to advance the global agenda.

By working together, we can build a better and more peaceful future for our planet.

On my part, I will continue to exert every effort to this end.

Thank you.