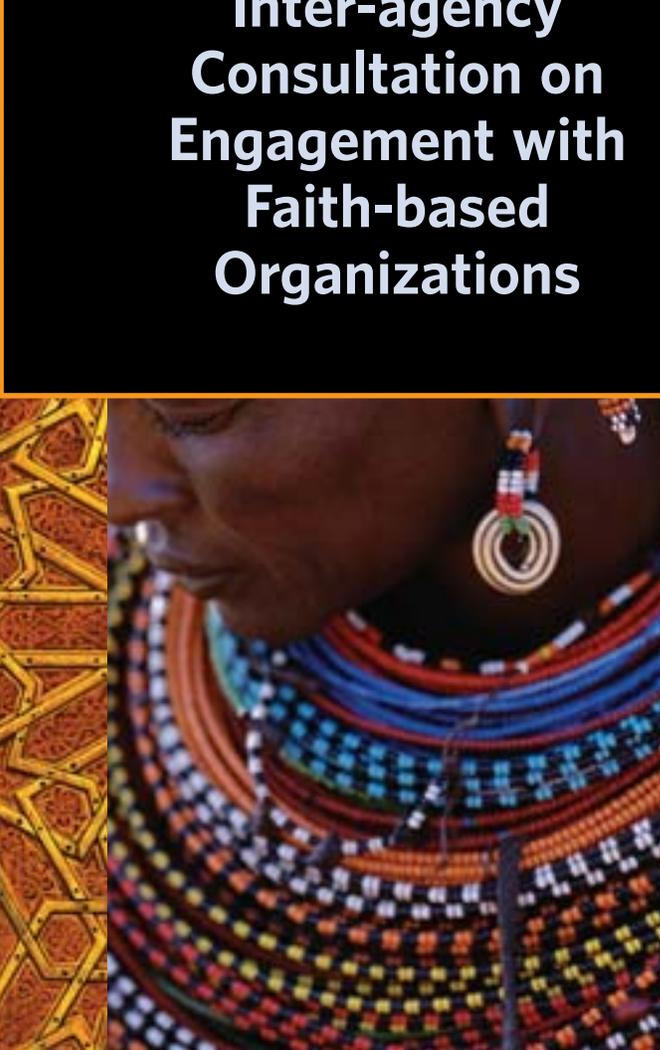
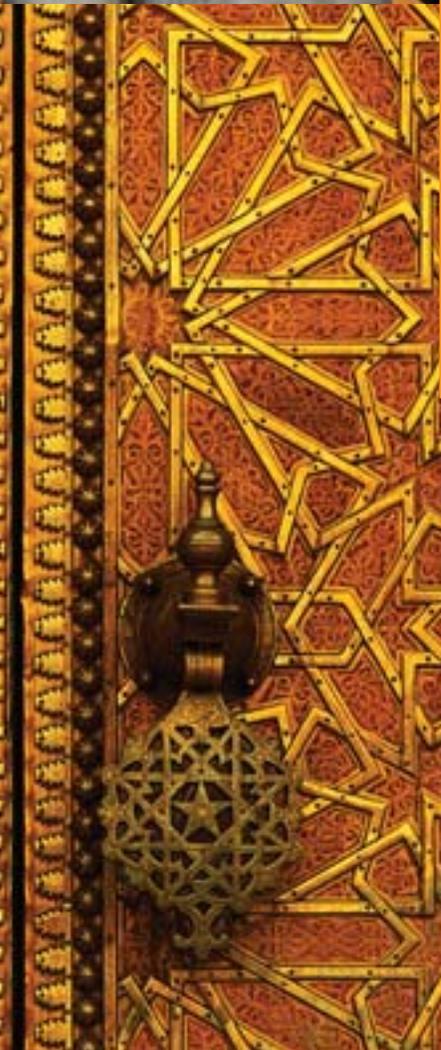




PROCEEDINGS REPORT

United Nations
Inter-agency
Consultation on
Engagement with
Faith-based
Organizations



United Nations Inter-agency Consultation on Engagement with Faith-based Organizations

9 JULY 2008
PROCEEDINGS REPORT



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FOREWORD

For some time, United Nations agencies have been engaged in processes to strengthen partnerships with faith-based communities to advance the United Nations mandate on human rights. This report provides an overview and highlights of those engagements.

By all accounts, the Inter-agency Consultation on Engagement with Faith-based Organizations, hosted by UNFPA, provided United Nations agencies with a valuable forum for the exchange of experiences, lessons learned, and potential strategies for moving forward to enhance partnerships with faith-based organizations on a range of issues.

Within UNFPA, these discussions take place in the broader context of work on culture, and the development of culturally sensitive approaches to population and development. Such initiatives are informed by an important rationale to create *ownership* of human rights in local communities. It is by facilitating the inclusion of local agencies in the development process that UNFPA endeavours to develop policies that have substance, meaning and staying power within the communities in which they are implemented. UNFPA believes faith-based organizations represent important agents of change in many developing countries, and are therefore key to that process.

The drive to see people's lives transformed through the implementation of dynamic and sustainable human rights initiatives can be found as a working premise of all development agencies within the United Nations. Indeed, it was with this motive that our partner agencies (the Alliance of Civilizations, DESA, UNAIDS, UNDP/HARPAS, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Bank) came together to strategize on how best to enhance our partnerships with faith-based organizations.

We hope United Nations agencies will find the substance and recommendations of the report to be of value and assistance as we continue our endeavors to strengthen the bridges toward a common shore of sustainable human development.

Appreciation must be extended to all United Nations colleagues for their insights and collaborative input at the Inter-agency Consultation. A particular vote of thanks goes to UNFPA Senior Culture Advisor Azza Karam for spearheading this initiative, and our project coordinator and rapporteur, Rebecca Barlow, for her careful compilation of the proceedings, and Melissa D'Agostino for overseeing the printing of this report.

Aminata Toure
*Chief of the Gender, Human Rights and Culture
Branch, UNFPA*

SUMMARY OF OPENING REMARKS

Good morning. It is my pleasure to welcome all of you here today. It is great to see so many of our agencies come together to share and discuss best ways of involving faith-based organizations in our work. It is my strong personal belief that we must continue to forge strong partnerships with this key segment of civil society.

When I had my job interview with former Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the post of UNFPA Executive Director, he asked me what I thought I could bring as an added value to the organization. I explained to him that I intended to promote culturally sensitive approaches to development and humanitarian work, especially in UNFPA. This is why this theme is personally important to me. This is, if you like, part of the legacy that I would like to be remembered for in the United Nations. This is why I am particularly happy to see other agencies involved in this effort as well.

I firmly believe that a deep knowledge and understanding of local culture is necessary if we want to achieve sustainable development and bring positive change in people's lives. This is particularly true when promoting gender equality and human rights. Involving faith-based organizations in development is an important part of this approach.

About 70 per cent of people identify themselves as members of a religious or spiritual community. Culture and religious beliefs are the very essence of our individual and collective identities. Religious values and practices are deeply entwined in the fabric of daily life. They do not exist in isolation of social, economic and political processes, and conditions in local communities and the world as a whole.

We therefore need to better understand these values and practices and bring them into play in the context of development and humanitarian programmes. In fact, this is critical to ensuring both ownership and sustainability of these efforts. Leaders of churches,

mosques, temples and other religious communities play a powerful role in shaping attitudes, opinions and behavior. They have a large constituency including women and youth; they have outreach and networks, and they are credible to their people.

We know that faith-based institutions provide 50 per cent of the health and education services in poor communities. In sub-Saharan Africa, 40 per cent of the health-care infrastructure is operated by faith-based groups. In Uganda, for example, faith-based organizations provide 55 per cent of health services and 75 per cent of pre-services. All over the world, faith-based organizations are the oldest social service networks; they are therefore natural partners in promoting social and economic development.

At UNFPA, we know from years of experience in population and development that promoting women's empowerment and sexual and reproductive health requires the engagement of all segments of civil society and broad-based ownership. This is also true when assisting a country in census preparations, another area of our work, especially in remote or difficult to reach villages.

Our mandate touches on some of the most sensitive and intimate spheres of life. Faith-based organizations have the legitimacy and the moral ground to bring these issues into the public arena. Over the years, UNFPA has partnered with religious institutions and faith-based organizations to fashion ground-breaking initiatives to advance common goals. Many faith-based organizations have been close partners in efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS, to encourage safe motherhood, and to uphold the dignity of women and men.

In UNFPA work around the world, the organization has found that building alliances with and involving members of religious traditions are factors that can actually determine a programme's success or failure.

"I firmly believe that a deep knowledge and understanding of local cultures is necessary if we want to achieve sustainable development and bring positive change to people's lives. Involving faith-based organizations in development is an important part of this approach."

*—Thoraya Ahmed Obaid,
Executive Director, UNFPA*

This is especially critical in traditional societies, where the assertion of women's rights to reproductive health, including determining the number and spacing of their children, is seen as a threat to the social cohesion of the family and the larger public social contract of the community and the nation. Cooperation with religious institutions and faith-based organizations is a process of mutual learning, which helps both sides to better understand each other. UNFPA has learned that dialogue and joint work has dispelled fears and brought deeper understanding and trust.

We are at a time when there is "an urgent need to build bridges", as Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said. At the United Nations, we must promote an "intercultural dialogue that stresses common values and shared aspirations".

Religion counts because the dialogue within the United Nations between North and South, and East and West, has been about culture and religion, as well as about the politics of power. The tension ends up being a political confrontation on the surface, but with religious and cultural currents that carry it along. That is why it is important to discuss these issues openly.

Particularly since the events of September 11, the UN has moved beyond calling for dialogue to taking real

action. Many Member States are calling for the engagement of faith-based organizations in social and economic development processes. This is increasing as UN bodies identify an increasing number of examples from countries where faith-based organizations are playing significant roles in development, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and peacemaking.

There is no doubt there is now an opportunity, and responsibility, to strengthen and expand UN partnerships with faith-based communities. Discussions at the Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement mark the beginning of a process of engaging with faith-based organizations collectively, as the UN family. Joint efforts to seek closer cooperation with faith-based organizations and religious leaders that believe in the development of people and the attainment of social justice hold the potential of much success.

I thank you all for coming. I look forward to reading your conclusions, shared lessons and insights. And I wish you much success in your discussions today. Thank you.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid
Executive Director, UNFPA

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement took place at UNFPA headquarters on Wednesday, 9 July 2008.¹ The meeting comprised representatives from various United Nations agencies that have some experience and insight regarding programmatic engagement with faith-based organizations (FBOs).² For the purposes of the consultation, and in line with the perception and work of a number of United Nations entities, the following understanding of FBOs was used: FBOs are religious and religion-based groups or congregations, specialized religious institutions, and registered or unregistered non-profit institutions that have a faith-based character or mission. Spiritual organizations are considered FBOs as well. This report also discusses engagement with religious leaders (RLs) and indigenous peoples.

The objectives of the Inter-agency Consultation were:

- To share the status of respective outreach and engagement with FBOs
- To reflect on lessons, challenges and best practices learned from FBO engagements
- To consider action toward parameters and strategies of engagement with FBOs

The Inter-agency Consultation highlighted the fact that a significant degree of outreach and a range of activities are already being undertaken toward United Nations engagement with faith-based communities. The following organizations have established working links with FBOs and/or RLs:

- Alliance of Civilizations
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Programme / HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (UNDP/HARPAS)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

¹ Appendix 1, Meeting agenda.

² Appendix 3, List of meeting participants.

- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS)
- The World Bank

In addition, the Office for ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) Support and Coordination at the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is mandated to play a focal role on the issue of faith-based engagement within the United Nations system.

Participants at the Inter-agency Consultation also raised a number of issues and challenges encountered in their experience in FBO engagement to date. These were identified as:

- Countering a long-term trend of internal unease
- Increasing awareness and assessment of the multiplicity of initiatives
- Formulation and systemization of guidelines for FBO engagement
- Broadening political engagement with FBOs
- Dealing with skepticism among FBOs
- Ensuring and assessing faith-based representativeness
- Including women of faith

The Inter-agency Consultation also brought to light many useful illustrations of effective engagement with faith-based communities, as well as valuable lessons learned.

For example, in the experience of HARPAS:

- Bringing people living with HIV and AIDS to the negotiating table to share their stories is an effective way to shift the positions of conservative clerics and imams.

- Sharing accurate information—including scientific data and the assessment of health workers—with faith-based communities also has demonstrated the ability to shift positions on HIV and AIDS.
- It is advantageous to identify progressive role models from within faith-based communities. Not only can they be helpful in accessing wider constituencies, but they can also help to establish dialogue and constructive debate with more conservative RLs.

UNAIDS also offered valuable ideas and suggestions on how to continue to move beyond dialogue toward practical and effective FBO engagement.

In April 2008, UNAIDS led a working group in Geneva, Switzerland, on strategies for engagement with faith-based communities. An important outcome of the meeting was the development of the Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework Points of Action: Strategic Approaches and Core Outcomes.³ At the Interagency Consultation on FBO Engagement, many agency representatives agreed that the Framework might be a useful guide for other United Nations agencies to draw up similar work plans.

Key upcoming events on United Nations system engagement with faith-based communities include the following two initiatives:

- On 20-21 October 2008, UNFPA will host a Global Forum of FBOs in Istanbul, Turkey. The Forum will convene FBOs from all regions of the world to share best practices and strategies for active engagement of FBOs in realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action.
- General Assembly resolution 62/90 declares 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The intention is to provide an impetus for the development of concrete initiatives and specific events concerning intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

To continue to move forward in the area of United Nations engagement with faith-based communities, participants at the Inter-agency Consultation raised the following key points:

³ See Appendix 2.

- There is a need to take stock. Each agency needs to provide its own mapping of what has been or is being done, and what is planned for the future. The mapping should include an overview of the outcomes and results of those initiatives. It should also include an overview of the challenges and limitations encountered in working with faith-based communities.
- There is a need for clear inter-agency guidelines on FBO engagement. These guidelines would need to be developed systematically, according to consensus, and in consultation with faith-based representatives themselves. The guidelines not only would provide principles on what people or organizations the United Nations works with and why, but would also identify the parameters of FBO engagement. Agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation agreed that if “red lines” on FBO engagement are to be noted, there needs to be some consensus around these, and a level of constant vigilance.
- Interagency guidelines on FBO engagement would also need to clarify what various United Nations agencies can do to assist and enhance respective areas of work and engagement. Many agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation agreed that the Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework might provide a concrete methodology for United Nations agencies to use in the development of interagency guidelines.

II. BACKGROUND TO THE MEETING

In October 2007, a high-level dialogue took place at the United Nations General Assembly that included a half-day informal Civil Society Hearing under the overarching theme “High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace”. The purpose of the Civil Society Hearing was to provide an opportunity for NGOs, academia and the private sector to interact with United Nations Member States and bodies.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) collaborated actively with the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA),

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) to support a Steering Committee composed of global civil society representatives. The committee, which comprised representatives from various FBOs accredited by relevant United Nations bodies, and on which the United Nations representatives served as facilitators, generated a list of candidates representing FBOs, as well as academia and private sector representatives, to speak at the Civil Society Hearing.⁴

UNFPA hosted and co-organized several of the deliberations and meetings, and facilitated the process of nominating and selecting FBO representatives. It also sent out invitations to members of its global faith-based networks urging their participation in the selection process. UNFPA sponsored some of the selected FBO representatives from Africa, the Arab States and Latin America. In addition, UNFPA sponsored a round-table event that brought together some of the representatives at the Civil Society Hearing to discuss the challenges and successes of mobilizing around population in various parts of the world.

The objectives of the high-level dialogue were:

- To strengthen efforts toward interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation by engaging a variety of actors and constituencies in government, civil society and the United Nations system
- To promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations and advance multi-stakeholder coalitions on related issues
- To translate shared values into action under the high-level goal of achieving sustainable peace in the 21st century⁵

Through the Civil Society Hearing, it became apparent why religion was perceived as occupying an increasingly unique role. The FBO representatives maintained that religious spokespersons "have a distinctive spiritual and moral authority to bear the unbearable and forgive the unforgivable".⁶ FBOs have demonstrated the ability to provide important services and institutions to local constituencies, and many United Nations agencies have established working relationships with a wide variety of FBOs. Yet there is a resource deficit and a lack of knowledge as to how, and to what extent, this is being done.

FBO representatives at the Civil Society Hearing suggested, therefore, that concrete examples of successful grass-roots dialogues involving various religious communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) need to be systematically collected and disseminated, as proof of the practical efficiency of engagement with FBOs to enhance programming on population and development. Finally, participants urged that governments and religious representatives need to work together more reflectively and deliberately, targeting shared concerns.

As part of the Civil Society Hearing, the first Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement took place at UNFPA headquarters on Wednesday, 9 July 2008.⁷ The meeting comprised representatives from 10 United Nations agencies that have experience and insight regarding programmatic engagement with FBOs and faith-based communities.⁸ These were:

- Alliance of Civilizations
- Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Development Programme/HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States (UNDP/HARPAS)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

⁴ "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace" (summary report), <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>.

⁵ "High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace" (summary report), <http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>.

⁶ Excerpts from the UNFPA Report of the Civil Society Hearing around the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, compiled by Elisabeth Scheper, October 2007.

⁷ Appendix 1, Meeting agenda.

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS)
- The World Bank

This report provides an overview of the meeting objectives, proceedings, and outcomes.

III. MEETING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement were:

- To share the status of respective United Nations outreach and engagement with faith-based organizations (FBOs)
- To reflect on lessons, challenges and best practices learned from FBO engagements
- To consider actions toward parameters and strategies of engagement with FBOs

IV. ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH

Representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement provided overviews of the activities and forms of outreach undertaken by their organizations toward engagement with faith-based communities. This section highlights the key areas of action highlighted by meeting participants.

A. Alliance of Civilizations

The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) places a strong emphasis on engagement with religious leaders (RLs). This is informed by the observation that RLs play a

strong role at the “scene-setting” level—that is, in influencing opinion at the local level. Therefore, according to AoC Communications Director Emmanuel Kattan, it is in the interest of development organizations to provide progressive RLs with “the tools to resist religious extremism”.

Pursuant to this viewpoint, AoC initiatives in engaging with RLs are:

- Establishment of a formal partnership with Religions for Peace. At a working session in January 2008 in Madrid, the two organizations brought RLs together to strategize on how they could engage concretely for stability at the political level. In the view of the AoC, an important challenge is to bring political leaders to recognize the role of RLs in the political arena. A major outcome of the Madrid working session was a joint commitment to active involvement in conflict resolution, and especially to drawing women and youth into future initiatives.
- Development of a “Rapid Response Media Mechanism” (RRMM)—an online resource of experts for use by journalists who cover sensitive cross-cultural issues or events. These experts, in areas such as religion, international relations, conflict resolution and multiculturalism, can provide journalists with comment and analysis as sensitive issues or events arise.
- Publication of op-eds in major national and international newspapers, to respond to current events that may impact cultural or religious groups in different parts of the world and help defuse potential crises.
- The second Alliance of Civilizations Forum is scheduled to take place in Istanbul in April 2009. The forum will bring together FBOs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and media bodies, with the intention of fostering partnerships among the groups and launching new initiatives.

In addition, the AoC highlighted the establishment of a “Humanitarian Forum”— a network of key humanitarian and charitable organizations from Muslim donor and recipient countries, Western countries and multilateral organizations. Recognizing the challenges facing local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in many

⁸ Appendix 3, List of meeting participants.

countries, this initiative aims to foster partnerships and closer cooperation among humanitarian and charitable organizations from the communities mentioned above.

B. DESA

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has no formal engagement or specific programs with FBOs. Rather, DESA plays a facilitating role, with the issue of intercultural and interreligious relations and dialogue at the centre of its work programme.

In this respect, DESA is involved in a plurality of activities. In resolution 61/221, the General Assembly requested that a focal unit within the Secretariat be established to coordinate and facilitate the range of initiatives taking place. In resolution 62/90, the Assembly welcomed the designation of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) in DESA to play a focal role, interacting with United Nations system entities and coordinating their contribution to the intergovernmental process. However, OESC did not receive additional human or financial resources to complete this task. Despite this, it has continued to prepare the documentation for the General Assembly on intercultural and interreligious matters, and has engaged in spreading mutual awareness of the many programs and participants related to FBO engagement. For example, OESC supported a coalition of FBOs and NGOs that are accredited to ECOSOC.

DESA welcomes guidance as to how it can best put its mandate to use. That is, how can it make the initiatives of various branches and divisions more effective? Communication and feedback are needed on this issue. An important question for United Nations agencies is how they can draw on the broader mandate of DESA to improve and enhance their own work on FBO engagement.

C. UNAIDS

Part of the strategic priority of the United Nations Programme on AIDS is to engage with civil society to advance its mandate. This includes engagement with FBOs. The UNAIDS approach to working with FBOs is not premised on preconceived ideas of what the United Nations wants FBOs to do, but rather is motivated by the question: What can UNAIDS and

FBOs do *together* to move forward in the pursuit of mutual goals?

Pursuant to this, the UNAIDS policy on FBO engagement is dual-layered, comprising both “inreach” and outreach. According to UNAIDS representative Sally Smith, “the quality of outreach is measured by the quality of inreach”. Inreach involves encouraging organizations, including UNAIDS itself, to challenge the stigma attached to the issue of HIV and AIDS within their own quarters, and to ensure that their organization is providing real opportunities for people living with HIV and AIDS to take active leadership roles in the workplace. Outreach, in contrast, involves providing FBOs with services, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building.

UNAIDS has established working links with the following FBOs:

- American Jewish World Service
- ANERELA+ (African Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS)
- Art of Living Foundation
- Asian Interfaith Network on HIV/AIDS
- Caritas Internationalis
- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- INERELA+ (International Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS)
- Islamic Relief
- Micah Network
- Sangha Metta Project
- Tear Fund
- Viva
- World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP)

In addition, UNAIDS has developed a working strategy for more systematic engagement with the faith-based world. The Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework Points of Action is discussed further below.

D. UNDP/HARPAS

The HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States has invested in creating enabling environments for RLs to talk about the issue of HIV and AIDS. HARPAS representative Sherif Abdel Aziz says: “Some people ask, why go to religious leaders to discuss HIV and AIDS? I think the answer is simple: Because we want an effective response.” As such, HARPAS has created the Arab region’s first interfaith network of RLs and facilitated a number of regional and subregional meetings to draw RLs and the wider faith-based community into discussions.

In 2004, an endorsement and preparations phase in Syria brought together 30 RLs with experience in the field of HIV and AIDS. The initial consensus included religious kits for RLs, as well as a draft Action Plan. The Cairo Colloquium in December the same year brought together 80 Muslim and Christian RLs from 19 different Arab countries. Held under the auspices of the League of Arab States, the meeting received extraordinary media coverage, with 40 agencies present, including many major newspapers and regional television stations. The Steering Committee of the Cairo Colloquium was headed by 12 RLs, who led the meeting to produce the following outcomes:

- Prioritization of the Action Plan items
- Review and finalization of the religious kits
- The impetus for networking and facilitating
- Nominations of grass-roots representatives of faith-based communities for future collaboration

A follow-up to the 2004 Cairo Colloquium took the form of five subregional workshops, held in the Gulf region, the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb and the Mashriq. The workshops were designed to train 300 mid-level RLs from 21 different Arab countries, as well as to provide a catalyst for training of trainers (T-of-T). The RLs present were encouraged and motivated to take the lessons learned at the workshops to subsequently train and motivate their peers.

In 2006, another HARPAS-led meeting took place in Cairo, this time bringing together more than 250 Muslim and Christian leaders from 20 Arab states, including more than 60 women in RL positions, to

discuss strategies on combating HIV and AIDS. The 2006 forum resulted in the formation of CHAHAMA—the First Network of Arab Religious Leaders Responding to AIDS—which was officially launched on 9 November 2006.

Also in 2006, HARPAS facilitated a meeting of RL women in Tripoli. Those present demonstrated experience, and committed to training other RLs in the area of reproductive health, especially on the issue of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

Both the Cairo Declaration (2004) and the Tripoli Declaration (2006) stated: “People living with HIV and AIDS and their families deserve care, support, treatment and education, whether or not they are responsible for their illness.”

E. UNESCO

Involvement by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with faith-based communities is not undertaken in the context of development per se, but rather in the following capacities:

- Fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding
- Promoting freedom of belief
- Education
- Peacebuilding and reconciliation processes
- Protection of sacred sites and symbols

In these areas, UNESCO specifically targets women, youth, teachers and the media. UNESCO has a network of 30 university chairs who engage in academic and community work on intercultural and religious dialogue. They are tasked with developing curricula and pedagogical tools in that capacity, and also with informing UNESCO of local-level events and issues relating to culture and the United Nations mandate on the above themes.

F. UNFPA

The United Nations Population Fund supports communities in bringing about “change from within”, which involves drawing on positive cultural values and resources to promote and expand human rights. In

this respect, UNFPA partners with a diverse array of civil society actors, including FBOs, religious and tribal leaders, and indigenous peoples.

This systematic effort with what UNFPA calls “cultural agents of change” has made the difference in creating local support for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action worldwide. UNFPA has provided a detailed list of these and future activities as its submission to the Secretary-General’s Report on the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

UNFPA culture-related activities, which encompass engagement with FBOs, can be broadly categorized as falling under global advocacy and networking, capacity-building, and knowledge development and sharing.

1. Global advocacy and networking

UNFPA is holding a series of regional forums on enhancing partnerships between FBOs and the United Nations:

- December 2007: African Regional FBO Forum and launch of African Interfaith Network on Population and Development, Durban, South Africa; attended by 60 faith-based representatives from 18 countries
- May 2008: Asian and Pacific Regional FBO Forum and launch of Asian and Pacific Interfaith Network on Population and Development, Kuala Lumpur; attended by 68 faith-based representatives from 14 countries
- July 2008: Arab States Regional FBO Forum, Cairo; and launch of Arab States Interfaith Network on Population and Development, Cairo, Egypt; attended by 25 faith-based representatives from 13 countries
- September 2008: Latin American and the Caribbean Regional FBO Forum and launch of Latin American and Caribbean Interfaith Network on Population and Development, Buenos Aires, Argentina; attended by 67 faith-based representatives from 20 countries

In October 2008, the UNFPA Global Forum on Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations will take place in Istanbul, Turkey.

The forum will facilitate the launch of the Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development. The culmination of the four previously held regional FBO forums, this forum will bring together 200 of the existing and potential partners of UNFPA from the faith-based world to showcase their work on the MDGs and ICPD, and will seek ways of enhancing such partnerships in the future. The Global Interfaith Network, and its corresponding database, will be another important resource for the United Nations in the development of strategic partnerships with FBOs.

2. Capacity-building

UNFPA conducts United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Trainings on Human Rights Based and Culturally Sensitive Approaches to Programming. UNFPA has developed a tool known as the “culture lens” that enables the integration of the three UNFPA programming approaches: gender equality, cultural sensitivity and human rights. The culture lens allows for the development of programmatic designs that fit diverse national and local contexts, but without losing sight of the human rights they are promoting. The culture lens is being used in UNCT Culture Sensitivity Trainings, marking the first time that UNCTs are being trained together to link culture to development programming. UNFPA has conducted UNCT training sessions in:

- Jordan, June 2007
- Iraq, June 2007
- Iran, December 2007
- Bangladesh, January 2008
- Brazil, June 2008

UNFPA continues to organize a series of round tables on Integrating Culture in Development. Topics have included:

- Tackling Stigma in the Arab Region: Working with Religious and Media Leaders in the AIDS Response
- The Role of Faith-based Organizations in Improving Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

- Engaging South African FBOs on HIV and AIDS and Violence against Women
- The Women Faith and Development Alliance: A Process and a Future
- Interfaith Education for Children and Youth

Moreover, UNFPA sponsored the participation of several FBOs from different regions to attend a UNAIDS strategy meeting on fostering partnerships between United Nations agencies and FBOs on HIV and AIDS, and co-sponsored, together with UNAIDS, an Interfaith Prayer Service at the United Nations High-level Meeting on AIDS. In addition, UNFPA has an ongoing collaboration with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on a study assessing the relationship between religion and women's empowerment and gender equity, with a view toward emerging with concrete recommendations for programming.

In the area of indigenous peoples and human rights, UNFPA works in Latin America, in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru, while initiating work on indigenous issues in Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and other countries. UNFPA is also expanding its work in the Asia region, particularly in Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Nepal and Viet Nam. Furthermore, UNFPA is in the early stages of designing a strategy in favor of indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation and other countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

3. Knowledge development and sharing

UNFPA is working on the development of sociocultural indicators to use in programme design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). These indicators will be used in particular in UNFPA mandate areas such as reproductive health, gender equality, and population and development.

A mapping of the organization's systematic involvement with FBOs in various regions around the

world will be published as *Culture Matters: Lessons from a Legacy of Engaging Faith-based Organizations*.

At the same time, UNFPA continues its work with indigenous communities throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. In Ecuador, for example, UNFPA is supporting the development of a national statistics commission for indigenous people. In Bolivia, Guatemala and Panama, UNFPA provides technical assistance to indigenous communities and networks for strengthening access to sexual and reproductive health services. In addition, UNFPA is supporting the generation, analysis, use and dissemination of disaggregated data in some countries, as well as efforts to integrate indigenous information in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

UNFPA is also involved in ongoing collaboration with UNICEF on a trust fund for the abandonment of FGM/C. The initiative aims to reduce the practice by 40 per cent in 17 countries by 2015, using culturally sensitive approaches. At this time, the project has been launched in eight countries: Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Senegal and the Sudan.

“UN-Habitat sees a strategic opening in reaching out to FBOs: They represent an opportunity for partnerships to advance the mandate, in much the same way as do working relationships with NGOs and wider civil society.”

— *Yamina Djacta, UN-Habitat*

G. UN-Habitat

The mandate of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme is to provide shelter and sustainable human settlements where they are needed. Many FBOs perform this function in their own communities, providing shelter and food to those in need, especially in post-disaster situations. Therefore, the principle behind UN-Habitat's engagement with FBOs is not prima facie because they are faith-based, but rather because of the function they perform.

In 2001, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat met with the US Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. At this meeting, a commitment was made to scaling up involvement with FBOs to advance urban development interventions. This was to be done in close collaboration with local governments, which traditionally have been strong partners of UN-Habitat. Following its stated commitments, UN-Habitat:

- Has an agreement of cooperation with Habitat for Humanity in two strategic areas: post-conflict and disaster management and reconstruction, and slum upgrading. The agreement also incorporates projects and working principles related to housing policies, construction, infrastructure development, capacity-building, community development and mobilization, and research and monitoring of housing finance.
- Works with the Maryknoll Sisters to advance the peacebuilding process in Kenya.
- Works with the Adventist Development Relief Agency to train youth in construction, and to assist in the building of a resource centre in Thika, Kenya.
- Works with WCRP on poverty reduction in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, through the creation of opportunities for youth employment.
- Supports and interacts in the initiatives of the Aga Khan Foundation, Nairobi. For example, in 2007 UN-Habitat assisted in the expansion of the health facility at the Aga Khan University.
- Works with the Hindu Council of Kenya and East Africa in slum upgrading, providing water and sanitation facilities to poor and remote communities, and providing education to children from poor families.
- Supports and participates in almost all activities of the Shree Sanatan Sabha—for example, by providing food, clothes, and other basic necessities to poor communities, and running medical camps for free health checks.
- Supports the charitable work of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)—for example, by providing food to poor and remote villages. UN-Habitat also has a running partnership with the youth section of ISKCON.

H. UNICEF

The United Nations Children’s Fund has a long history of engagement with FBOs, recognizing

their importance as front-line actors capable of bringing about real and positive change for children. UNICEF acknowledges the need to increase and expand its work with FBOs. The following are some examples of country-specific/regional/international initiatives:

- In Bangladesh and Afghanistan, RLs have supported the dissemination of vaccination health campaigns in their communities.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNICEF works with the Latin American Episcopal Conference, churches, and a range of faith-based NGOs to raise awareness around child survival, education, child protection and HIV and AIDS.
- Many global initiatives, such as the push to eradicate polio, have benefited significantly from FBO social mobilization activities.

The following are some examples of joint research and publication initiatives:

- UNICEF and Al-Azhar University, Cairo, jointly developed a manual titled *Children in Islam, Their Care, Protection and Development*, designed to underscore how the care, protection and development of children is central to Islam.
- UNICEF, in collaboration with the Global Network of Religions for Children and UNESCO, developed a toolkit on ethics education.
- As a follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, UNICEF and WCRP are developing a joint handbook titled *What Religious Leaders Can Do to End Violence against Children*.

“The World Bank is not concerned about the personal beliefs of staff members. However, many of the people we need to reach identify strongly with particular systems of faith. Therefore, World Bank staff must be informed.”

—Katherine Marshall,
The World Bank

I. The World Bank

For much of the history of the World Bank, there was no mention of religion or faith in the working mechanisms of the organization. This is not to say that engagement with faith-based communities was non-existent, but rather that it occurred on a

personal level, behind the scenes, and remained unrecorded.

In the late 1990s, however, then-President James Wolfensohn, himself of a Jewish background, was the first to talk openly about the issue of World Bank involvement with faith-based communities. In 1998, he raised the idea of generating a strategic dialogue on the role of RLs and FBOs in development. Subsequently, the World Bank strategic review in 2000 launched the World Faiths Development Dialogue, which aims to bridge existing gaps between the worlds of development and faith, and to act as a secretariat in that capacity.

Like UN-Habitat, the World Bank stresses that its initiatives with faith-based communities are not about religion per se, but rather about helping poor people—and FBOs represent important strategic partners in this regard.

“When we talk about system engagement with FBOs, we are dealing with a subject that still generates a great deal of discomfort.”

— Marc André Dorel, DESA

Following this principle, the World Bank has undertaken a number of initiatives. In 2004, it facilitated a meeting with RLs and development leaders to begin the creation of networks between the two groups. Since then, it has published case studies on effective partnerships and success stories. In addition, the World Bank has a faith unit with an independent budget. Approximately half the faith unit’s annual budget is spent on HIV and AIDS.

V. CHALLENGES OF ENGAGEMENT

Participants at the Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement pointed to a number of issues and challenges encountered in their experience in engagement with FBOs to date. This included the difficulty of defining what is meant by the very term “faith-based organization”. Agency representatives noted the importance of differentiating among distinct faith-based actors, as too often they have been treated as uniform entities.

The ensuing discussion provided much-needed knowledge exchange; mutual advice and words of

caution; and, as discussed below, constructive debate on possible ways to move forward. In this section, the challenges raised by participants have been identified as:

- Unease with engaging religion within the United Nations system
- Awareness and assessment of the multiplicity of initiatives
- Formulation and systemization of guidelines for FBO engagement
 - Engagement with FBOs and religious leaders (RLs) on the political level
 - Resistance to engagement with the United Nations from within faith-based communities
 - Representativeness of the FBOs engaged, and engagement with women in RL positions and women-oriented FBOs

A. Countering a long-term trend of internal unease

There is some resistance from within the United Nations system to taking on board the religious dimensions of issues, and to acknowledging the relevance of faith-based events or initiatives that happen outside the auspices of the United Nations. In this respect, the point most often raised is that the United Nations is a secular organization, and should therefore maintain clear and distinct boundaries from the faith-based world.

Despite this, some Member States have advocated for increased focus on interreligious issues within the General Assembly. Member States of this orientation have stressed that just because “culture” is talked about openly in the General Assembly, this does not always mean that the religious dimensions of different issues are adequately covered.

This position was resisted by the majority of Member States. The report of the Secretary-General, therefore, while covering intercultural and interreligious dialogue, is descriptive and does not include analysis of the issues.

Some have put forward the perception that the issue of religion can too quickly become politically charged, causing conflict and division. Others have expressed concern that it is too difficult to determine which religions should be a part of secular-oriented development work, and why. Still others hold that a strict separation should be maintained between religion and state, and that engaging with faith-based communities in development work would detrimentally blur this distinction. In some people's view, religion represents a danger to development work in that it is seen as anti-modernization, especially when it comes to traditional gender roles. This perception confines religion to theology and mysticism, with no capacity to engage with or acknowledge factual, scientific evidence that informs development work.

A number of participants at the Inter-agency Consultation raised the issue that faith-based communities—particularly RLs—have been stigmatized. That is, there is a widely held assumption that religious figures or religious bodies are rigid and conservative in their views. This perception represents a problem that needs to be tackled at the organizational level. In this respect, meeting participants reiterated the importance of distinguishing between the spiritual message of systems of faith, and religious rhetoric. In addition, the United Nations and other development bodies need to recognize that the views and positions of RLs and other faith-based entities are not static. Rather, they are varied and dynamic, and can be very supportive of the various mandates of development.

To assist in fostering such a climate, it may be necessary to develop a clear and substantive way of demonstrating to Member States and personnel in United Nations agencies that FBOs and the wider faith-based community are indeed making a contribution to advancing the United Nations agenda. This relates to the need, discussed above, for United Nations bodies to develop showcases of what they have done with faith-based communities to advance the United Nations agenda. These summaries could potentially be presented to Member States in the General Assembly. This would need to be done with the understanding

“The world of faith-based actors is multifaceted, including religious leaders, faith-based organizations, local faith communities, religious congregations and religious institutions. It is important that engagement attempts take into account the varied roles and functions of these different actors.”

— Stephan Hanmer, UNICEF

that the intention is not to make FBOs a formal part of the United Nations structure, but as a matter of principle the United Nations should be accessible to all those working in line with its mandate.

B. Increasing awareness and assessment of the multiplicity of initiatives

A strong theme of the Inter-agency Consultation was an expressed lack of awareness of the huge range of initiatives taking place within various United Nations agencies, and of the need for some kind of assessment and review thereof.

Despite the fact that some agencies have a history of engagement with FBOs, there has been no production of an overview and assessment of what is being done, where, how, and how much. This situation is not confined to United Nations agencies. At the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, led by the Philippines, many participants expressed confusion about what was taking place in relation to FBO engagement at different levels of governance. This led to multiple requests that a list of activities and events be drawn up and distributed to relevant bodies.

Initiatives in this respect could include inter-agency mapping of activities, best practices and lessons learned regarding FBO engagement. This is discussed further below.

C. Formulation and systemization of guidelines for FBO engagement

Beyond the need for knowledge exchange on the range of activities and initiatives being undertaken by different agencies, the Inter-agency Consultation brought to light a more fundamental problem: Currently there are no clear policies or procedural guidelines for FBO engagement. Initiatives and activities thus far have been somewhat ad hoc. While working on an opportunistic basis may have some advantages, it is important to recognize that there are

two levels of engagement when it comes to the relationship between the United Nations and FBOs. One of these is engagement at the division and branch levels—that is, establishing links with FBOs specifically identified as doing work in issue areas relevant to each agency’s respective mandates. On another level is the question of system-wide engagement—that is, how to make the faith world a legitimate partner of the United Nations on a more systematic level. This is important in terms of sustainability.

This was revealed to be an issue of significant debate at the Inter-agency Consultation. The discussion that followed largely centered on the question of how extensive or formal proposed guidelines for FBO engagement should be.

One suggestion was that a compact with faith-based communities might be developed, similar to the compact that exists between the United Nations and the private sector.⁹ As this suggestion was further considered, however, it presented a number of problems. A compact could in fact have a limiting effect on constructive engagement with FBOs, in that it would be very difficult to determine, and then clearly define, with *whom* to work. In addition, even if such definitions were developed, they would present the danger of becoming systematically biased, and of linking engagement with FBOs to a set of “one size fits all” conditions. Thus, this raises the possibility that potentially helpful partners in the faith-based world—for example, a spiritual leader, or an influential person of faith in a small, remote village—would be missed by such a compact.

An alternative to a compact would be a more generic code of conduct, which would provide a more general system of governance over FBO engagement, as opposed to defining relationships with specific FBOs. This suggestion followed the wide acknowledgment at the Inter-agency Consultation that the United Nations does need at least *some* idea of the kind of organizations and figures that might be engaged with constructively, and how to effect such engagement. Having some degree of guidelines for engagement is

important in terms of the principle “Do no harm”. That is, transparency must be maintained, along with constant awareness of where assistance and funds are being directed, and how.

Following this discussion, participants at the Inter-agency Consultation expressed general agreement on an important issue: The development of guidelines or principles for engagement with FBOs should be done in collaboration with the stakeholders themselves. That is, a code of conduct should not be formulated at United Nations headquarters and presented to FBOs in its completion.

In this respect, many participants at the Inter-agency Consultation raised the importance of being aware not only of how United Nations agencies influence FBOs, but of how the work of FBOs can (or already does) influence United Nations agencies. The idea of mainstreaming faith sensitivity within the United Nations, similar to how gender-sensitive approaches have been mainstreamed,

was raised. However, this was met with the recognition that it remains important to acknowledge that many people within the United Nations, and indeed in the international development community, do not identify with a belief system or a system of faith.

In addition, a number of agency representatives expressed the view that engagement with FBOs should take place only in the context of clear vision and direction from the United Nations. Many participants stressed the need to maintain a strong and clear distinction between faith, and religious or cultural rhetoric. Sherif Abdel Aziz of UNDP/HARPAS for example, suggested that sometimes United Nations agencies will need to lead FBOs and RLs, especially in “the provision of tools to understand their own fears, which are often identity-based”.

D. Broadening political engagement with FBOs

AoC maintains a particularly strong focus on the connectivity between the faith-based world and

“If we [the United Nations] ask Religious Leaders to be open-minded, we must be open-minded also.”

—*Sherif Abdel Aziz, UNDP/HARPAS*

⁹ United Nations Global Compact, <http://www.unglobalcompact.org>.

political leaders. The AoC suggests, in fact, that FBOs and RLs need to be engaged with on the political level. Many agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation expressed concern with this orientation. The AoC also recognizes that providing a political platform to faith-based entities and figures is a very complex and sensitive issue.

Nevertheless, it is the position of the AoC that FBOs and RLs have something important to offer the world of politics, that indeed *some* political leaders are beginning to see the value of engagement, but that the structures and mechanisms for developing clear and systematic relationships are not available. Other political entities are fiercely resistant to any kind of engagement or even recognition of the constructive roles of FBOs and RLs; the European context provides a prime example in this respect. Using an analogy to demonstrate the point, the AoC compares the resistance to engaging with the issue of faith in the world of politics to the issue of climate change. A decade or two ago, CSOs were pushing the agenda of climate change, and political bodies were not apathetic of its importance or its relevance. According to the AoC, many CSOs today recognize the role of FBOs and RLs in the public and political spheres and advocate for their presence, whereas political leaders remain relatively more cautious.

Other agency representatives added to this discussion by pointing out that many FBOs in the Arab States, and within the wider Muslim community, are also political bodies (such as the Muslim Brotherhood). This raises the question of whether the United Nations definition of FBO needs to be expanded to include those organizations that have a political element or basis. The Palestinian crisis was raised as a further example of how engagement with faith-based communities may necessitate engagement or recognition on the political level.

Despite this, the problems associated with this issue are multifaceted. To begin with, there is the question of representation: How would organizations go about identifying those FBOs and RLs that are representative of their communities, and therefore most appropriate to engage with on a political level? In addition, many FBOs that international development agencies might identify as being useful to engage with are in fact opposed to their local governments, meaning that provision of a political

platform at the local level would be problematic. This issue is discussed further below.

There is also the possibility that attempting to engage with certain FBOs could undermine other areas of United Nations work where substantive government cooperation is crucial. For example, the Catholic Church in Venezuela plays a very important role in the provision of services, but is not on amicable terms with the government. In the final analysis, the United Nations is a system of Member States, and that fact alone precludes systematic engagement with FBOs that are opposed to their local governments, regardless of the development work in which they may be involved.

Finally, there is significant resistance to FBO engagement among some Member States of the General Assembly. The idea of providing faith-based figures or entities with a political platform is not on the agenda.

E. Dealing with skepticism among FBOs

Resistance to the development of strong and/or formal partnerships between the United Nations and FBOs does not emanate from one direction. Rather, some FBOs themselves are hesitant to be associated with the United Nations. This hesitancy is the result of three main issues: fear of being co-opted; mistrust and the perception that the United Nations is trying to impose a Western agenda; and the impression that the United Nations is an inefficient organization. Although open dialogue and communication can shift these concerns, Sherif Abdel Aziz of HARPAS suggests that it is sometimes important “to let them (representatives of faith-based communities) vent first”, and following that, to maintain the role of facilitator. In other words, to establish and keep the trust of some FBOs and RLs, in some initiatives or activities United Nations staff may need to stay in the spectator’s seat, and also keep the media away from particular events.

On the issue of HIV and AIDS, pockets of denial persist among some RLs: Views that HIV/AIDS is “God’s punishment”, or that people are somehow responsible for their illness, or that it is a conspiracy of the West, are still prevalent. Some issues—such as condom use, men who have sex with men (MSM),

commercial sex workers (CSWs), and injecting drug users (IDUs)—remain taboo.

Many agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation emphasized the need to continue to engage with RLs and the wider faith-based community even though there may be clear areas of disagreement or resistance. This requires recognizing the limits of faith-based entities and working with them in other capacities. For example, many FBOs do not work in the area of HIV prevention, but that should not necessarily preclude engagement with these entities entirely. There was consensus among the agencies represented at the Inter-agency Consultation that working with RLs and FBOs in their areas of strength and comfort can advance some goals, and simultaneously holds the prospect of effecting a shift or tempering of positions where there are areas of disagreement. At the same time, where there is expressed opposition to aspects of United Nations agency mandates, it is important not to shame and defame the FBOs, but instead to continue to focus on common goals and on what is achievable.

F. Ensuring and assessing faith-based representativeness

In the experience of the United Nations agencies represented at the Inter-agency Consultation, engagement with the faith-based world to date has been overwhelmingly characterized by links with large, globally based FBOs. An important question raised at the meeting was how United Nations agencies might identify and work with representatives of faith-based communities at the grass-roots level.

This is important because small-scale FBOs and spiritual leaders at the grass-roots level may enjoy greater popular legitimacy and be more influential in affecting opinions in their communities than regional or international FBOs and official religious leadership. Furthermore, the experience of many agency representatives suggests that grass-roots faith-based actors are more inclined to work with United Nations agencies, and to adapt changes and reforms, than traditional and official religious leaders, who have proved to be somewhat slower to change positions and shift perceptions on various issues.

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that there is no such thing as “the voice of civil

society”, including the faith-based world. For example, there has been no expression of a coherent civil society or faith-based position on the issue of HIV and AIDS. In fact, a number of agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation suggested that while faith-based communities have been somewhat sidelined by development organizations in the past, in many ways they have also sidelined themselves. Therefore, although the development of strong vertical relationships between United Nations agencies and FBOs is imperative, there may also be a need to foster better horizontal relationships between FBOs and CSOs working in line with United Nations agency mandates.

A further problem, as discussed above, is that if grass-roots faith-based representatives challenge their local governments or political leaders, this poses serious problems for legitimate United Nations engagement. In addition, in many cases the necessary funds for effective engagement are located in the hands of government.

Also falling under the question of representation is the issue of indigenous peoples and the world’s minority religions. Agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation maintained that if engagement with the faith-based world is to be advanced by the United Nations, indigenous belief systems, as well as minority religions, need to be on par with engagement with the world’s major faith representatives.

G. Including women of faith

Women who are RLs and members of faith-based communities have been under-represented in United Nations engagement with the faith-based world. At the Inter-agency Consultation, HARPAS representative Sherif Abdel Aziz noted, “Every time we talk to religious leaders, they bring us men”. Yet in the experience of many agency representatives, women-oriented FBOs have shown themselves to be innovative and proactive, not just in terms of dialogue, but in practical areas such as environment, health and migration. Some United Nations organizations have taken this observation into account in their dealings with faith-based communities. As noted in section IV above, HARPAS held a Women Religious Leaders Conference in Tripoli in 2006, comprising 80 women from all Arab States. In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) is involved in a joint project with the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) titled “Building and Equipping Women of Faith Networks in Africa”.

Indeed, there appeared to be agreement among agency representatives at the Inter-agency Consultation that facilitating places for women at the negotiating table is not simply an obligation but a strategic necessity. Addressing issues such as reproductive health, particularly female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), is crucial to successful development programmes, and it is women themselves who have an intimate knowledge of the complexities of these issues.

VI. ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Section IV on Activities and Outreach outlined a number of innovative projects that have produced or are in development to produce positive outcomes in advancing United Nations agency mandates. In this section, two additional examples have been selected as particularly useful illustrations of how effective engagement with faith-based communities might take place. Furthermore, the examples highlight a number of important lessons and insights that could inform future actions.

A. UNDP/HARPAS: Outreach to religious media sources and religious leaders to combat HIV and AIDS

The HIV/AIDS Regional Programme in the Arab States has engaged extensively with religious media sources to help reduce stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS, and to spread constructive messages of care, treatment and support. For instance, under the guidance of HARPAS, Al-Jazeera runs positive presentations on HIV and AIDS in the context of Islam.

HARPAS also indicates that getting religious leaders (RLs) to talk about the issue of HIV and AIDS in mosques has proved to be a successful way to tackle the issue. For example, following HARPAS training programmes, an imam from an important mosque in Cairo delivered a Friday sermon on HIV and AIDS to

6,000 worshippers. This was followed by a plan proposed to the Minister of *Awqaf* for the imam to share the training he had received at the HARPAS programme with hundreds of his peers. The training-of-trainers (T-of-T) initiative has indeed been successful in many countries: A senior imam from Morocco returned from the HARPAS programme to train 10 imams from each of the 14 national governates. This took on a domino effect, as more and more imams took the initiative to spread their acquired skills and knowledge. The end result was that 30,000 Moroccan imams were trained in HIV and AIDS.

Following these experiences, and in light of the many challenges encountered, HARPAS shared with other meeting participants a number of lessons learned in its engagement with faith-based communities. For example:

- It is helpful to put a human face on the issue of HIV and AIDS. In the HARPAS experience, talking about the issue of HIV and AIDS in abstraction, or in the context of governance or politics, does not yield the best results. Rather, bringing people who are actually living with HIV or AIDS to the negotiating table to share their personal stories has demonstrated the ability to shift the positions of otherwise conservative clerics and imams.
- Sharing accurate information with faith-based communities also has proved to be effective in shifting positions on HIV and AIDS. Scientific data and the opinions of health workers can encourage RLs to recognize the consequences on wider society of not confronting the issue of HIV and AIDS adequately.
- A useful strategy is to identify, from the beginning of engagement attempts, progressive religious and spiritual role models. They can be helpful not only in accessing wider constituencies, but also in establishing dialogue and constructive debate with more conservative RLs.

B. The Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework Points of Action: Strategic Approaches and Core Outcomes¹⁰

In April 2008, the United Nations Programme on AIDS led a working group in Geneva, Switzerland, on

strategies for engagement with faith-based communities. The working group comprised United Nations staff of different faith backgrounds, as well as those working in countries where faith is integral to the community structure, along with RLs, FBOs and related NGOs.

The intent of the meeting was not to come up with a definitive methodology for engagement disaggregated according to the different faith divisions, but to develop broad, overarching guidelines. The working premise of the meeting was that faith-based communities are already doing much to advance United Nations mandates on human rights, population and development; therefore, emphasis should be placed on what the United Nations and FBOs can do *together*, and how. Indeed, the presence of FBOs and RLs at the UNAIDS meeting was characterized by a strong desire and preparedness to be practical. The meeting proceeded under the central question: What are the desired *results* of engagement?

This ends-based focus informed the development of the Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework Points of Action: Strategic Approaches and Core Outcomes. The Strategy Framework is not intended to be a strait jacket for action; rather, it is a tool that can be employed and tested over a period of time, and that may be printed for wider and more systematic dissemination at some point in the future.

Despite the flexibility of the Strategy Framework, it clearly breaks down United Nations engagement with faith-based entities into different areas of activity, and provides concrete outlines as to what needs to be done to ensure that progress is made in those areas. In this sense, the Framework shows how engagement with faith-based communities is part of the broader program and goals of the United Nations, demonstrating that figures and groups from the faith-based world are doing work that is not separate from United Nations issue areas. Notably, the Strategy Framework also provides a disaggregation of what is being referenced when the terms "faith-based world" and "faith-based community" are used, by clarifying the qualitative differences between UNAIDS work with RLs, FBOs, and local faith communities (LFCs).

Suggestions were raised at the Inter-agency Consultation that the Framework might be used as a

guide for other United Nations agencies to draw up similar work plans. Many meeting participants indicated that for this to be successful, the Framework would need to be made more generic, particularly for use at the country level. Another idea raised was for a third column to be added to the Strategy Framework matrix, to include what the co-sponsors of UNAIDS are doing in the strategic areas identified in the Framework.

Should the Strategy Framework be adopted by other United Nations agencies as a general guide for how to assess activities being undertaken, it may prove to be a useful document to take to funders, as it outlines priorities, actions under way, and intended outcomes of those actions.

VII. UPCOMING EVENTS

This section provides a brief overview of some of the upcoming events on United Nations engagement with faith-based communities.

A. UNFPA Regional and Global Fora on FBO Engagement

On 20-21 October 2008, UNFPA will host the Global Forum on Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations, in Istanbul, Turkey. The forum will convene FBOs from all regions of the globe to share best practices and strategies on active engagement of FBOs in realizing the MDGs and the ICPD.

Whilst UNFPA will facilitate the Global Forum, it is intended to provide for internal dialogue among FBOs. For example, what do they identify as challenges and possible solutions? Do they have any new and innovative ideas to enhance partnerships with the United Nations? And how can UNFPA and FBOs work together?

One projected outcome of the Global Forum is the launching of a Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development. This will include an online database of FBOs.

In the lead-up to the Global Forum, over the course of 2007 and 2008 UNFPA has hosted four regional forums on FBO engagement. These took place in South Africa, Malaysia, Egypt, and Argentina. UNFPA

¹⁰ See Appendix 2.

Country Offices in each of these countries were asked to nominate FBOs or individual figures whose work was identified as being in line with the mandate of UNFPA. The regional forums have already proved to be catalysts for regional networks of FBOs working on population and development.

B. 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures

As a result of extensive discussions within UNESCO, General Assembly resolution 62/90 mandates 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The mandate is intended to provide an impetus for the development of concrete initiatives and specific events on intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

DESA has assisted a group of NGOs and FBOs advocating for 2010 to mark the beginning of a Decade for Interreligious Dialogue. However, given the resistance expressed by some Member States on this matter, prospects that the mandated year will be advanced to cover an entire decade are uncertain.

C. UNESCO: Parliament of World Religions

The Parliament of World Religions will be held in Melbourne, Australia, in 2009. It is being coordinated by the local UNESCO Chair.

VIII. Recommendations

United Nations engagement with faith-based communities is a complex issue, and one that generates significant debate. Not all United Nations agencies agree on the entire range of questions, problems and prospects raised by this very new area of strategic action. Yet an important question was raised in the closing of the Inter-agency Consultation on FBO Engagement: What is the cost of *not* engaging with faith-based communities? Future actions on engagement with FBOs may need to be informed by well-considered answers to this question.

The Inter-agency Consultation arrived at a consensus on the following needs, to enhance outreach to and with FBOs, and as United Nations entities:

The gathered participants would form the nucleus of an unofficial **Inter-agency Task Force on FBO Engagement**. This forum, or network, should eventually be expanded to include additional colleagues from other United Nations bodies, and would facilitate the sharing of knowledge, news and discussions.

There is a need to **take stock**. Each agency needs to provide a **mapping** of what has been or is being done, and what is planned for the future. The mapping should include an overview of the outcomes and results of those initiatives. It should also include an overview of the challenges and limitations encountered in working with faith-based communities. In fact, this is precisely why a mapping is so necessary: Agencies need to be aware of the multiplicity of challenges that exist.

It would also be useful to develop and keep track of an **inter-agency calendar** of faith-based events, which could be distributed to United Nations agencies, FBOs, CSOs and other development organizations. Following this, clear inter-agency dialogue is needed on the parameters of engagement with faith-based communities. If “red lines” are to be noted, there must be some consensus around these, as well as a level of constant vigilance to adhere to them.

There is a need to develop a clear and **common understanding** regarding the kinds of FBOs with which the United Nations would like to engage. This does not mean drawing up an approved list of specific FBOs; no “one-size-fits-all” strategy is appropriate, especially at the country level, since the diverse range of United Nations agency mandates will ultimately determine the nature and extent of engagement necessary.

Some kind of **guidelines**, however, outlining the faith-based entities with which United Nations agencies have engaged, would be helpful. These guidelines would need to be developed systematically, according to consensus, and **in consultation with faith-based representatives** themselves. Furthermore, the

We started an important process of reflecting together as UN entities on this critical partnership...

—Azza Karam, UNFPA

guidelines would take into account an appraisal of the qualitative differences in engaging with distinct faith-based communities.

In addition, **inter-agency guidelines** on FBO engagement would need to clarify what different United Nations entities could do to assist and enhance respective areas of work and engagement. Representatives agreed that the **Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework** would provide a concrete generic methodology for United Nations agencies to proceed in the development of inter-agency guidelines. This would entail further tweaking of the existing framework. In particular, the addition of a third column to the matrix would indicate the activities of other United Nations bodies in the issue areas identified, thereby highlighting and contrasting

various initiatives, strengths and gaps in engagement. Developing the Strategy Framework in this manner could thus be a useful and valuable way to proceed with more efficient and effective inter-agency engagement with faith-based communities.

The Inter-agency Consultation ended with a commitment of the gathered agencies and entities to reconvene during the UNFPA Global Forum on Strengthening Partnerships with Faith-based Organizations FBO Engagement, in October. In the meantime, there was broad consensus that this was the beginning of a much-needed process that should expand to include additional stakeholders from within the United Nations system itself, as well as partners from faith-based communities.

APPENDIX 1:

Meeting Agenda

- 9:00-9:15** **Opening Remarks and Welcome**
“Parameters of Engaging with Culture—Why FBO Partnerships?”
Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA
- 9:15-9:30** **UNFPA Partnerships with FBOs: Legacies and Necessities**
Aminata Toure, Chief, Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch, UNFPA
- 9:30-9:45** **Alliance of Civilizations**
“Global Dynamics and the Need to Engage Critical Constituencies”
- 9:45-10:00** **DESA—Secretary-General’s Report on the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace**
“Frameworks of Engagement: UN Reform, SC Resolutions and the Imperative of Dialogue”
Sergei Kambalov, Chief, ECOSOC and Inter-organizational Cooperation Branch, DESA
- 10:00-1:00** **SESSION I:**
Tracking Activities with FBOs: Challenges, Best Practices and Lessons Learned
Moderator: Azza Karam, UNFPA

1. What kinds of partnerships/outreach/engagement have we developed so far, and with whom?
2. What are some of the successes/achievements of these engagements? Or, what is the value added?
3. What are some of the challenges (institutional, political, resources, other) on and around engaging with FBOs?

UNAIDS: Sally Smith

UNICEF: Liza Barrie, Stephen Hanmer

UNDP/HARPAS: Sherif Abdel Aziz

DESA: Sergei Kambalov and Marc André Dorel

UN-Habitat: Yamina Djacta

Break

The World Bank: Katherine Marshall, Brady Walkinshaw, Marisa Van Saanen

Alliance of Civilizations: Emmanuel Kattan

UNESCO: Rochelle Roca-Hachem

Discussion

Meeting Agenda *(continued)*

1:00-2:30 **Lunch**

2:30-4:30 **SESSION II:
UN-FBO Engagements: Strategizing and Vision for Ways Forward**

Co-moderators: UNFPA and the Alliance of Civilizations

1. What should we be aiming for with these partnerships/engagements?
2. Can we identify elements of a strategy/strategies for engagement?
3. To that end, is there scope for working together?

We will also have participation at the afternoon session from Brian Gorlick, our colleague from UNHCR.

4:30-5:30 **CONCLUDING SESSION**

1. Intersections, complementarities and gaps
2. Next steps agreed upon

5:30 Reception

UNAIDS Religion and Faith-based Organization (FBO) Working Group Strategy Development Meeting

Meeting overview:

The following strategy was developed in Geneva, Switzerland, on 9-11 April 2008 as a result of collaboration among:

- Partnerships and Social Mobilization Officers from the United Nations Programme on AIDS Secretariat Regional Support Teams, Geneva and Country Offices
- Staff from UNAIDS and United Nations agency co-sponsors with a primary responsibility for liaison, mobilization and/or partnership with FBOs on AIDS
- Key informants from civil society, in particular FBOs and people living with HIV (a participants list is attached)

Meeting objectives were:

- To identify the extent and nature, strengths and weaknesses, and gaps and opportunities of the FBO response to AIDS
- To learn what faith communities need if they are to be empowered to act more effectively
- To agree on the methods and modalities for the faith-based working group, and to identify next steps, including ongoing communication and collaboration to strengthen UNAIDS work with religious leaders (RLs) and faith-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on AIDS
- To identify a process for and contribute to articulating a joint strategy for UNAIDS ongoing work with RLs and faith-related NGOs on AIDS

Meeting outputs were:

- An outline for a three- to five-year joint UNAIDS strategy

- An ongoing UNAIDS (Secretariat-facilitated) Religion and Faith-based Organizations working group to provide information, advice and direction to joint work between UNAIDS and FBOs

Brief meeting content overview

DAY 1: Addressing the Pandemic: Thematic Challenges and Solutions

Presentations focused on people living with HIV (including those in the INERELA+ network), and on developing additional networks for HIV-positive Muslims, especially for women and marginalized groups—men who have sex with men (MSM), commercial sex workers (CSWs) and injecting drug users (IDUs).

Primary focus of discussions:

- The critical role of faith-based communities in response to AIDS
- A review of the FBO landscape
- FBOs in prevention, treatment, care and support, and stigma
- Maximizing FBO engagement in AIDS—needs and gaps

Plenary discussions addressed how to better engage marginalized communities, challenges, opportunities, and solutions for moving forward toward effective partnerships.

DAY 2: Fostering United Nations Partnership with FBOs on AIDS

Presentations focused on partnership approaches, opportunities and challenges with FBOs across UNAIDS Secretariat and United Nations agency co-sponsors. There was also a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) presentation from the UNAIDS Secretariat.

Primary focus of discussions:

- Barriers and challenges to effective partnerships with FBOs
- Key outcomes of recent FBO meetings—the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the Global Fund for Tuberculosis, AIDS and Malaria
- Lessons learned and key resource materials
- Defining measurable “criteria for success”, recording our work

Plenary discussions explored strategic approaches and desired outcomes for FBO and United Nations partnership work with religious leaders, faith-inspired NGOs and local faith communities, and identified religion-specific opportunities and challenges toward the strategy development.

DAY 3: Effective United Nations and FBO Partnerships: Defining the Strategy Framework

The primary focus of day 3 was to finalize the Strategy Framework and collectively agree on a process for moving forward. Overarching principles and next steps were agreed upon.

Primary focus of discussions:

- Defining core strategies, relationships, skills and required resources
- Defining strategic approaches for the United Nations agency and UNAIDS Secretariat FBO partnership agenda on HIV
- Building collective understanding, communication and working relationships among United Nations agency co-sponsors, Secretariat headquarters, Regional Support Teams and UNAIDS Country Offices

Plenary discussion also outlined the purpose, methods and modalities for the Religion and Faith-based Organizations working group, and next steps, including mechanisms for ongoing communication, collaboration, experience sharing and tasks.

a. A joint UNAIDS and FBO strategic framework

A strategic framework such as this cannot capture everything, in particular the spiritual understanding of people of faith. This framework is intended to provide a structure for the development of ongoing work plans and partnerships among the UNAIDS Secretariat, co-sponsors and FBOs in response to HIV. A mutual and open learning process should pave the way for healthy partnerships among these entities and all actors involved in the HIV response. This strategic framework is suggested by the working group to support and guide work already being done globally, nationally and regionally by diverse and committed individuals and organizations. The goal of the framework is for the strategic approaches to be *nationally driven and owned*, integrating activities into existing mechanisms and processes, and thus strengthening their cultural relevance. The framework is a guide and is not meant to be prescriptive; it is meant to be a generic starting point that can then be adapted to the national and local situation, recognizing the differences of religion, culture and context in which the various partners work.

For successful implementation of this framework, various commitments are needed. Those attempting to use the framework must have qualities that cannot be captured within the limitations of the actual framework, including an open mind to faith, diversity and religious values; and deep respect, accurate empathy, resonance and other aspects of emotional intelligence and integrity.

Throughout the development of this strategic framework, participants acknowledged that:

- Religious values are important to culture; to many people, including those living with HIV; to human rights and justice; and to compassion and care. They are a cornerstone of the HIV response, and are, for many, a source of motivation and energy in their actions toward the epidemic.
- While religious values do not in themselves create stigma, discrimination and HIV vulnerability, it is regrettable that in some traditions, over time, incorrect interpretations of texts and the incorrect

application of dogma have resulted in stigma toward, and increased vulnerability among, certain people—including those living with HIV, CSWs, MSM and transgendered individuals.

- To leverage change and create enabling environments, a sincere commitment is needed from all to strive for an interpretation of religious values and teachings that eliminates stigma and promotes the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) at all levels of the response.
- In developing partnerships, plans and actions using this framework, the meaningful engagement of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and marginalized populations should be of the highest priority. In achieving such engagement, participants acknowledge the enormous transformative power that PLHIV, RLs and communities have within them to challenge all forms of stigma.

Essential in the development of this framework is the understanding of a commitment to work collaboratively as equal partners with mutual accountability. The purpose of collaborative partnerships as outlined in the strategic framework is for strengthened coherence in the HIV response. This strategic framework is not about how the United Nations system can help FBOs, but about how we can work to achieve goals together through shared FBO and United Nations action. Learning through partnership also means looking for opportunities to harness potential and create space for dialogue and programme innovation.

The division of labor among the UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsors, as well as resource allocations to co-sponsors according to their respective mandates, will mean that the Secretariat and each co-sponsor will be able to assess areas highlighted by the strategic framework where their partnership with religious communities and FBOs can be strengthened and developed toward the achievement of MDG 6¹¹ in particular. The working group hopes this framework might be a useful template for partnership activity among United Nations agencies and FBOs toward the broader achievement of other MDGs.

The United Nations system and faith communities around the world speak with different voices, using

various terminologies and words, or using the same words but with varied meanings and understandings. Along with a commitment to partnership comes a commitment to work with language through a sensitive, open-minded lens of learning. Language and terminology also have tremendous power to stigmatize, so participants must support each other in working with language to address stigma, as well as to form common understandings.

The faith community is one of many sectors engaged in the global HIV response toward the collective global commitments to Universal Access, in accord with the 2001 Declaration of Commitment and the 2006 Political Declaration. The global community is committed to halting the spread of HIV by addressing not only symptoms, but also the drivers and root causes of the epidemic. One of the primary goals of this strategy is to recognize that United Nations agencies, donors, governments and civil society, including faith communities, bring different perspectives and strengths to the table as we respond to HIV. Recognizing this, it is important to ensure that all are fully engaged in the process of planning, implementation, M&E, decision-making around funding, and accountability.

Partners with a faith-based agenda need to work collectively in the response to HIV. Together with the UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsors, they must seek to strengthen understanding among others of the importance of engaging faith-based communities at all levels of the response. Engagement of faith-based communities across the sectors in the response to HIV—such as in national planning processes, implementation, decision-making around funding of programmes, and M&E—is vital to a strengthened national commitment.

b. Overview of strategic framework approach

The strategy centers on a three-level approach, targeting religious leaders, faith-inspired non-governmental organizations and local faith communities.

The intention of the strategic framework is to outline two desired outcomes from partnership action on HIV with each of the three levels of faith communities

¹¹ MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.

UNAIDS Religion and Faith-based Organization (FBO) Working Group strategy development meeting *(continued)*

(above) in each of the nine thematic areas (below). This provides a matrix of priority areas for partnership action. The framework takes this one step further and attempts to articulate two or more United Nations/FBO partnership approaches to achieve these desired outcomes.

This was done by asking questions—not “What does UNAIDS want from religious leaders?” but rather, “What, together as United Nations agencies and FBOs, do we want to see from our engagement with religious leaders?” “What do we want them to be saying and doing, and how are we going to go about working with them to make that happen?” The matrix was created by asking similar questions for each level around each theme.

The following strategy matrix is divided to address nine themes as identified by the working group prior to the Geneva meeting:

- Working with people living with HIV
- Gender
- Work with marginalized communities
- Stigma and discrimination
- Prevention
- Treatment
- Care and support
- Youth
- Human rights/justice

c. The Joint UNAIDS and FBO Strategy Framework Points of Action: Strategic Approaches and Core Outcomes (Draft)

RELIGIOUS LEADERS (RLs)

Persons of faith who are formally recognized by the religious community of which they are a part, as the reference point, and often the decision maker, for matters of doctrine, faith, practice and, often, governance.

Overarching principles and shared strategic approaches:

- Non-confrontational approaches toward advocacy and education of RLs
- Creating space for ongoing open dialogue with and learning from RLs
- Promote a values-based approach to partnership development
- Recognize that a human rights framework is based in values, and rooted in faith traditions and practice—justice, equity, equality of persons, compassion, inclusion, respect for life, relationship, health and mutuality—and that person-centered human rights is consistent with, and dependent on, shared community responsibility; hence there need be no tension in world view

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Working with People Living with HIV (PLHIV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RLs create space for PLHIV to advocate, act and participate within the faith community • Strong networks of RLs living with HIV leading HIV responses and advocacy efforts • RLs partnering with people living with HIV in advocacy and action on HIV • Reduction of stigma and discrimination in society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe environment for engagement and dialogue between RLs and PLHIV • Support dialogue and linkages between faith-based organizations (FBOs), local faith communities (LFCs), PLHIV and RLs • Support networks of infected and affected RLs to form and operate
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RLs advocate for and, if needed, demonstrate change in attitudes and behaviors around gender dynamics, particularly in relation to HIV • RLs address practical sociocultural/physiological vulnerability of women to HIV • Male RLs advocate for equity in gender relations in the context of justice, prevention of HIV transmission, and healthy family future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with RLs and structures to support, and nurture leadership by, women, in various forms, in the faith-based response to AIDS • Create space for conversation between women scholars, gender relations advocates and male RLs • Create space for conversations between people of different genders and RLs
Marginalized Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RLs advocate for and demonstrate acceptance of the inherent dignity of all human beings regardless of basis of marginality • RLs scale up outreach to and relationships with marginalized groups • RLs model integration and leadership development of marginalized communities in faith communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations/FBO partnerships to foster space for dialogue among marginalized persons, groups and RLs
Stigma & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address stigma, RLs promote and model inclusion of PLHIV using appropriate language and providing opportunities for the leadership development of PLHIV that dispels stigma • RLs educate and model for congregations and communities the use of non-stigmatizing language, and non-discriminating behavior toward PLHIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations/FBO partnerships collaborate to explore and research the common values and foundations underlying faith responses to HIV • Support consultations and learning experiences of RLs to identify policies and practices in harmony with faith traditions, and which enhance HIV prevention, treatment, care and support

Religious Leaders (continued)

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Stigma & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs advocate for and model action to promote the rights of marginalized populations including PLHIV, and their inclusion in faith communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support mutual sensitization processes of RLs with PLHIV, affected families and communities Facilitate the engagement of RLs in policy processes and advocacy; collaborate with RLs to establish workplace policies
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs embrace, promote and refer people to comprehensive prevention services for HIV RLs promote community dialogue on values and HIV prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations/FBO partnerships with RLs focus on values-based (human rights, shared responsibility) HIV prevention and care approaches that can be supported by technical resources Involvement of RLs in multisectoral prevention strategies
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs advocate for universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for PLHIV by 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations/FBO partnership with RLs focus on advocacy for universal access, holding governments accountable for their promises and funding commitments on AIDS
Care & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs acknowledge and encourage sustained, expanded comprehensive care and support programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations/FBO partnerships work with RLs to encourage messages of hope and encouragement for sustained and expanded, comprehensive care and support programmes
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs encourage, motivate and engage youth in the response to HIV RLs develop the leadership capacity of young leaders, especially young people living with HIV The capacity of younger RLs, and students in religious training institutions, is developed to address drivers of the epidemic Policies to exclude young people living with HIV from religious training institutions are revised or revisited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations/FBO partnerships work with local faith communities to prepare emerging RLs, including male and female RLs in training, as peer educators around sex, sexuality and relationships Create space for dialogue between youth and RLs to share experiences and promote knowledge exchanges and shared learning United Nations/FBO partnerships engage RLs in dialogue and reflection on faith and practice, around cross-generational sex and various forms of sexual abuse as drivers of the epidemic.
Rights, Dignity & Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RLs build discourse and action on faith-related foundations of human rights, inclusive of community responsibility, dignity, compassion, respect for life, inclusion and justice; religious messaging in relation to HIV inherently and explicitly reflects the value of present life and the future of all communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Nations/FBO partnerships foster space for dialogue among various constituencies (e.g., PLHIV, theologians, human rights and community development advocates and actors, United Nations, governments, most at-risk populations) Include RLs and human rights advocates/lawyers from faith communities in United Nations-led HIV-related activities United Nations/FBO partnerships support formation of curriculum and scholarships for RLs related to HIV and human rights, in the context of LFCs and wider communities, FBOs, and partnership development of RLs

FAITH-INSPIRED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)—INCLUDING FAITH-INSPIRED NETWORKS

Formally structured NGOs and/or groups explicitly aligned with, supportive of and accountable to specific faith or interfaith expressions and/or religious entities.

Overarching principles and shared strategic approaches:

- National ownership promoted and facilitated
- Ensure rights dignity, and justice for all, building from a common foundation of compassion and respect for people, life and faith
- Build partnerships with other sectors and secular NGOs, as well as with faith-based organizations (FBOs), for effective and comprehensive advocacy, learning and stimulation of expanded response
- Support development of effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms, strategies, documenting work and sharing of progress

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Working with People Living with HIV (PLHIV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PLHIV are active in leadership roles in FBOs in local and other community initiatives (service planning, delivery and monitoring for the ultimate well-being of those living with and affected by HIV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist FBOs to establish and strengthen the capacity of community-based support groups of PLHIV, often linked with local faith communities ▪ Assist FBOs to develop leadership capacity of staff living with HIV
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBO programs and responses to HIV include actions to address gender inequity ▪ FBOs actively participate in and lead national initiatives to address gender issues relating to HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships facilitate community conversations for respectful partnership on gender-related issues ▪ United Nations to support FBO engagement in the development of national AIDS and gender plans and cross-sectoral initiatives to address gender inequities
Marginalized Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access for marginalized groups to prevention, care and treatment services provided by FBOs, and inclusion in local faith community (LFC) initiatives ▪ People from marginalized communities actively engaged in FBO project leadership and planning implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships identify approaches for effective engagement of marginalized groups in HIV responses and share these models widely for further application ▪ United Nations/FBO collaboration on research on the response of FBOs to HIV among and with marginalized groups
Stigma & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBO responses to HIV include activities to address stigma and discrimination and promote positive values of inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships develop capacity, skills, and knowledge transfer between FBOs and LFCs to understand HIV vulnerability and work toward reducing risk, stigma and discrimination

FAITH-INSPIRED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)—INCLUDING FAITH-INSPIRED NETWORKS *(continued)*

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBO responses to HIV include comprehensive approaches to HIV prevention and education ▪ FBOs provide or refer to comprehensive local services for HIV prevention ▪ FBOs facilitate LFC conversations on HIV prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships promote discussion of comprehensive United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) HIV prevention framework in FBOs and local faith communities ▪ United Nations partners give priority to facilitation of dialogue between FBOs and networks of PLHIV on HIV prevention ▪ UNAIDS partners with FBOs to achieve equitable universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention information and services ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships assist FBOs to strengthen their technical capacity to provide HIV prevention services and increase their M&E capacities, with specific focus on HIV prevention in local communities
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater integration of FBO-run and -managed health services into national universal access and health systems, strengthening plans, actions and budget allocations ▪ Strengthened capacity of FBO health service providers to scale up HIV treatment, train and retain staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations and FBO partners coordinate jointly with national governments to define approaches to decentralization and expansion of treatment services, including FBO hospitals and clinics, and including treatment literacy within local faith and other communities ▪ UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsoring agencies recognize and partner with FBOs toward universal access efforts ▪ Provide greater access to technical assistance to FBOs for proposal development on treatment scale-up ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships work with LFCs to support treatment adherence
Care & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased resources, technical support, for scale-up of comprehensive quality HIV care, including orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) ▪ UNAIDS supports FBO/PLHIV partnerships, providing continued care, support, and community-driven prevention services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO/PLHIV partnerships develop comprehensive care and support programmes with and for PLHIV, including spiritual support and enhanced OVC care

FAITH-INSPIRED NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)—INCLUDING FAITH-INSPIRED NETWORKS *(continued)*

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Care & Support <i>(Continued)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships increase capacity of FBOs to participate in national planning processes, prepare project proposals, and access funding for comprehensive OVC programmes ▪ UN/FBO partnerships explore with local faith communities their role in support to families living with HIV and enhanced OVC care
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people are effectively contributing to HIV prevention, care, leadership, and future security of families and communities living with HIV ▪ HIV-positive young people take active leadership roles in FBOs and LFCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop capacities for transferring knowledge and skills to youth and between youth, which effectively contribute to HIV prevention and care ▪ United Nations/FBO partnerships support the capacity of young religious leaders and youth leaders in FBOs to talk about HIV, sexual relationships, consistent with core faith values of compassion, respect for life, and acceptance ▪ UNAIDS partners with existing youth-led initiatives linked to FBOs in recognition of youth leadership in life skills development embedded in a value- and relationship - based approach
Rights, Dignity & Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FBOs are active in promoting a rights-based approach to HIV programming ▪ FBOs with capacity in legal support and advocacy for rights are integrated into national HIV action planning and advocacy efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ United Nations Secretariat and co-sponsors work closely with FBOs on HIV-related human rights agenda

LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITIES (LFCs)

People with personal faith clustered in worship groups or neighborhoods; family homes or local groups; or faith-linked movements sometimes informal, often supported by and accountable to faith structures and religious leaders (RLs).

Overarching principles and shared strategic approaches:

- Promotion of conversation in local communities and local faith groups about HIV
- Encourage local ownership of care and change processes that will expand the national response for care, support, treatments and prevention
- Partner with faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious leadership structures, with an explicit intention to expand the motivation and engagement of local faith communities (LFCs)

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Working with People Living with HIV (PLHIV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLHIV and their families openly express their faith commitment and the integral role it plays in their lives, and are part of LFCs • PLHIV and their families openly express their HIV status in LFCs; PLHIV are fully involved in local activities of faith communities—including care and support and referred services for HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the documentation of evidence and good practice, including that related to the implementation of the Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) in LFCs • Encourage networks of RLs living with and affected by HIV to form, expand and positively influence LFCs • Support the opportunities for face-to-face meetings between PLHIV, their families, neighbors and LFCs • Support monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of national responses, including LFC responses relevant to PLHIV, their families and communities
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation by LFCs in HIV programs and initiatives addressing gender dynamics in LFCs • Greater understanding of gender relations in LFCs, with corresponding action to address gender-related vulnerability, inequality and inequity • Increased support by local communities for women-led HIV initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support greater gender literacy through the facilitation of “community conversations” on gender within LFCs • Increased support by local communities for women-led HIV initiativesSupport affirmative programs with reserve of funds for women-led initiatives • Increased support by local communities for women-led HIV initiativesSupport for dialogue in LFCs around issues of gender and HIV vulnerability, compassion and care
Marginalized Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation and leadership by people from marginalized communities in LFCs’ HIV initiatives and programs • Greater understanding within LFCs of marginalized communities and root causes of vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support facilitation of “community conversations” on vulnerability, root causes of marginalization, and marginalized communities within or near LFCs

LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITIES (LFCs) *(continued)*

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Marginalized Communities <i>(Continued)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFCs identify and reach out to marginalized communities, developing HIV initiatives together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support religious training institutions in developing curriculum for motivating HIV responses, including issues of marginalization and vulnerability Disseminate accessible information on the impact of the epidemic in marginalized communities within LFCs
Stigma & Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLHIV take leadership roles in LFCs LFCs welcome PLHIV and their families, and affected neighbors and others, and together plan and act for care and prevention LFCs take public stand against HIV-related stigma and discrimination RLs, LFCs and PLHIV speak openly and together about their own experiences of risk and vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of the Stigma Index tool among PLHIV in LFCs Support local people of faith influence to speak and lead openly about their own experience/risk of HIV infection, how they are affected, and their status
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIV prevention is accepted as a “duty” of LFCs; comprehensive HIV prevention education and services or referral available at LFCs LFCs utilize voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services regularly, and provide greater access and referrals to comprehensive HIV-related services within and connected to their communities LFCs deepen their understanding of “respect for life” in the context of HIV, and provide safe spaces for those living with and affected by HIV to consider vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support, learning opportunities, information for LFCs to build capacity for expanded response to HIV prevention by LFCs Promote faith-to-faith learning and capacity development on HIV prevention Create space for dialogue between LFCs and local PLHIV, who are invited to speak openly of their experience, of linking prevention with care and support in LFCs Encourage RLs to promote the inclusion of HIV prevention and care training into religious training institutions Support theological dialogue on HIV prevention Support dialogue and mechanisms to ensure LFCs’ prevention interests and initiatives are linked to national and regional religious structures, strands and denominations
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFCs are aware of local treatment services, refer people, advocate for services, and accompany members and local neighbors to treatment facilities LFCs are treatment-literate, including literacy on adherence, and are active in treatment support Local RLs promote access to treatment for HIV-related illnesses and actively encourage members to seek medical care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support facilitation of opportunities for conversation and knowledge sharing between local treatment service providers (including traditional healers) and LFCs on treatment issues; adherence and support to families, etc. Promote the involvement of LFCs in strengthening mutual appreciation between traditional healers and biomedical practitioners Support PLHIV peer counseling and leadership in the LFCs

LOCAL FAITH COMMUNITIES (LFCs) *(continued)*

	CORE OUTCOMES	STRATEGIC APPROACHES, UNITED NATIONS/FBO PARTNERSHIPS
Care & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFC understanding of person and family-centered holistic care is valued, documented, utilized and developed (e.g., compassionate palliative care, death with dignity, and support for surviving family and partners, expanded through home- and neighborhood-based care and prevention, as an integral part of the continuum of HIV initiatives and services) LFCs participate and advocate with local service providers for access and quality care for PLHIV, expanded care and support for children and youth living with HIV, and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) LFCs actively engage in providing care, supporting families and friends caring for PLHIV LFCs actively support PLHIV who are at the end stage of life to die with dignity, and provide support to surviving family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with religious groups, FBOs and LFCs to provide programs and resources for better nutrition to PLHIV, families and caregivers in local communities Work through FBOs to promote good models of expanded care, support and prevention for all, including children and youth Support human and technical capacity-building processes, via religious structures and government related multisectoral approaches Acknowledge existing care responses support groups, local resources, and leaders within LFCs (and caregivers in LFCs), and encourage expression of full potential As an element of national measurement of impact and response, document LFCs' care responses
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth-led initiatives are developed and supported in LFCs on issues of HIV, sex, sexuality, drug use, and other causes of vulnerability Young leaders of households and communities in high-prevalence locations are acknowledged and supported as an integral element of national response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote space for youth in LFCs to talk and work together around HIV Empower youth leadership, including allocating financial resources for youth-led initiatives on HIV within LFCs Promote pilot initiatives for marginalized youth in LFCs Support positive youth networks to connect inclusively with LFCs
Rights, Dignity & Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LFCs advocate for and demonstrate rights and respectful, inclusive relationships with PLHIV, their families and communities LFCs and PLHIV reflect and act together on shared faith foundations and HIV principles such as human dignity, respect for life, justice, inclusion and compassion LFCs call for accountability on institutional, national and international HIV intervention and support promises LFCs and local RLs speak about and act on the social drivers of the epidemic (e.g., violence, gender equity, poverty, cultural practices) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build bridges between LFCs, human rights advocates and community development processes Create awareness among LFCs of legal frameworks, need for reform, and the critically important value of local action and experience toward informing the reform process

APPENDIX 3:

List of meeting participants

Alliance of Civilizations

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DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

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UNAIDS (United Nations Programme on AIDS)

Sally Smith

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