

Permanent Observer Mission
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
to the United Nations



Mission Permanente d'Observation
de l'Organisation de Coopération islamique
auprès des Nations Unies

APP: GOC + OPA's advice pls.

بعثة المراقبة الدائمة لمنظمة التعاون الإسلامي لدى الأمم المتحدة

New York, 23 January 2013

No: OIC / NY – Amb. / 13/006

HE Ambassador Susana Malcorra
Chef de Cabinet
Executive Office of the Secretary General
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Fax. 212 963 2155

ACTION

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JAN 23

13-00739

**Subject: Invitation HE UN Secretary General to address the Symposium, titled
“The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Women Empowerment”**

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to note that on Tuesday, 12 February 2013, the OIC Permanent Observer Mission to the UN, in cooperation with the Peace Islands Institute, will hold a symposium, titled “The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Women Empowerment” on the occasion of the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

It is my great honor to extend this invitation to His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General, to address the symposium at the opening (even for a couple of minutes) along with His Excellency Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC Secretary General, who has already confirmed his participation.

✓ For your kind information, enclosed herewith is a provisional program of the symposium, which will take place on Tuesday, 12 February 2013, from 3pm to 6pm at the CR-1 (NLB).

Please, accept Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Ufuk Gokcen

Ambassador and Permanent Observer

5CH/08/002; COM/11/001

Symposium

The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Women Empowerment

12 February 2013 – Tuesday / 3pm – 6pm / UN Conference Room # 1 (NLB)

Tentative Program

3:00pm Welcoming Remarks

Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Observer of OIC to the UN

Mehmet Kilic, Director of Center for Global Affairs, Peace Islands Institute

3:05pm Panel I – Role of Intergovernmental and Regional Organizations

H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations *(invited)*

H.E. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC *(confirmed)*

H.E. Michelle Bachelet, Under Secretary General and Executive Director of the UN Women *(invited)*

3:30pm Panel II- Government Perspectives, Policies and Implementations

Permanent Representative of Egypt, *(invited)*

Permanent Representative of Nigeria, *(invited)*

Permanent Representative of Brazil, *(invited)*

Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, *(invited)*

4:45pm Panel III- Mobilizing Civil Society & Best Practices

Joyce Dubensky, CEO, Tanenbaum Center *(confirmed)*

Dr. Alp Aslandogan, President, the Alliance for Shared Values *(confirmed)*

Marie Claudine Mukamabano, Founder/CEO of Kuki Ndiho Foundation *(confirmed)*

Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Interfaith Center of New York *(confirmed)*

Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General, Religions for Peace *(confirmed)*

Salwa Kader, President, US Federation for Middle East Peace *(confirmed)*

5:50pm Closing Remarks

Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Observer of OIC to the UN

Organized by:

OIC Permanent Observer Mission to the UN, and Peace Islands Institute

Co-Sponsors:

Tanenbaum Center, Religions for Peace, Interfaith Center of New York, Women in Islam, Inc., Humanity Without-Borders Foundation, and Alliance for Shared Values

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peace building & Women Empowerment

12 February 2013 – Tuesday / 3pm – 6pm / UN Conference Room # 1 (NLB)

The World Interfaith Harmony Week adopted the United Nations General Assembly's resolution 65/5 aims to promote a culture of peace and non-violence through interreligious and intercultural understanding, harmony and cooperation; there hence, supports elimination of all forms of intolerance and discriminations based on religion or belief.

The international faith communities recognize the imperative need for raising awareness on empowering women by providing educational opportunities, especially for girls; collaboration on the implementation of sustainable educational programs; sharing best practices and supporting successful global initiatives throughout the world.

Religions and beliefs play an essential role in understanding the status of women and girls education according to different faith communities across the globe. The panel aims to raise awareness on empowering women and discuss multiple perspectives, implications and misconceptions on girls' education based on religions, traditions, and customs.

Are the sources of gender inequality in life derived from social customs and traditions or do religions condone and strengthen this inequality? Does gender inequality stem from the foundational principals of the religions or life practices, which reflects the culture and traditions throughout the world?

Facts:

Gender disparity in educational opportunities
Girls' education remain elusive in less privileged regions of the world
Understanding of faith traditions as a major barrier to education
Dilemma: Violence & Peace justified in the name of Religion or God
Underrepresentation of women in governance and politics

Goals:

Empowerment tools in reaching out to less privileged women/girls
Advocate for Women/Girls' rights in various communities and governments
Collaborate with Interfaith NGOs, international communities and governments
Support innovation and encourage new ideas that empower women's educational, social, economic and political status to become more creative, and self-sufficient.

Outcome:

The panel will raise awareness on empowering women by providing educational opportunities for girls; eventually, it will impact greatly on women's education, social and economic status, and eliminate inequality in women representation in governance and politics. The organizing committee aims to influence international community and policy makers in implementation of the United Nations' resolutions and UN MDGs worldwide. The panel also will echo voices of the interfaith community in developing original perspectives on the topic, generating solutions to the problems, and supporting successful practices in less privileged parts of the world.

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The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Women Empowerment

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Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, *(invited)*

4:45pm Panel III- Mobilizing Civil Society & Best Practices

Joyce Dubensky, CEO, Tanenbaum Center *(confirmed)*

Dr. Alp Aslandogan, President, the Alliance for Shared Values *(confirmed)*

Marie Claudine Mukamabano, Founder/CEO of Kuki Ndiho Foundation *(confirmed)*

Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Interfaith Center of New York *(confirmed)*

Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General, Religions for Peace *(confirmed)*

Salwa Kader, President, US Federation for Middle East Peace *(confirmed)*

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SPEAKERS OF THE PANEL III - "Mobilizing Civil Society & Best Practices"



Joyce S. Dubensky, as Tanenbaum's CEO, has directed its dramatic expansion, adding new initiatives to each of Tanenbaum's core programs. Her dynamic leadership transformed Tanenbaum from a well-regarded U.S. institution to an internationally recognized thought leader. Ms. Dubensky has overseen many firsts, each a new contribution to the burgeoning field of interreligious understanding: the first toolkit on religious diversity for workplace managers, the first comprehensive guide on the intersections of religion and health care and the first book collecting the compelling life stories of Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action*. She also conducts trainings, leads workshops and speaks internationally on all Tanenbaum programs.



Dr. William F. Vendley has served as Secretary General of Religions for Peace since 1994. He is a member of its World Council, which is composed of outstanding international religious leaders. Dr. Vendley coordinates the international activities and projects of Religions for Peace's Interreligious Councils in more than seventy states around the world. He works in areas engaged in armed conflict to mobilize and equip religious communities to mediate and mitigate violent conflict and build a climate of peace. In Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and many other countries. Dr. Vendley has led negotiations that have helped to prevent conflicts from developing, mediate peace among warring parties and rebuild societies in the aftermath of violence. Under his leadership, Religions for Peace and its local affiliates engaged religious communities in collaborative work to assist orphans of HIV/AIDS in Africa.



Marie Claudine Mukamabano is a Rwandan genocide survivor who received recognition from the New York State Assembly in 2011 on the occasion of the Africa Day Celebration for turning a life of hardship into one of leadership and advocacy. She is the Founder & CEO of Kuki Ndiho Foundation, an organization that she established in 2005 to raise awareness on the genocide in Rwanda, help survivors, and aid orphans of HIV. She won an Ambassador for Peace Award in 2010. She was awarded a Marathon Peace Medal from the International Women for Peace in Kigali Rwanda and honored for being the first artist from Rwanda

selected among 600 applicants worldwide.



Dr. Alp Aslandogan is the President of the Alliance for Shared Values, which is a not-for-profit umbrella organization that brings together interfaith and intercultural dialogue organizations for the purpose of advancing human understanding of living in peace and harmony in diversity. Prior to his current position Dr. Aslandogan served as the board president of the Institute of Interfaith Dialog in Houston, Texas where he oversaw the organization of academic as well as grassroots activities of the institute around topics such as shared values of humanity, social cognition and conflicts, the art of living together, foundations and methodology of interfaith and intercultural dialog, and the role of faithful citizens in democracy. Dr. Aslandogan recently co-edited a book entitled "Muslim Citizens of the Globalized World: Contributions of the Gulen Movement", published by the Institute of Interfaith Dialog. He is also the co-author of an upcoming book on the history of democracy in Turkey. Dr. Aslandogan is an author and an editor of the Fountain magazine, and a board member of the Journal of Interreligious Dialogue.



Dr. Sarah Sayeed has been involved in interfaith activities in New York City for more than a decade. As Program and Communications Associate, at the Interfaith Center of New York Sarah currently runs the Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreats for Social Justice, and programs that bring Catholics and Muslims together in social service partnerships. She is also a board member of Women in Islam, Inc., a social justice and human rights volunteer organization dedicated to the empowerment of women through knowledge and practice of Islam. In this capacity, she helped author the booklet, "Women-Friendly Mosques and Community Centers: Reclaiming Our Heritage." Sarah earned a degree in Sociology and Near East Studies from Princeton University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Communication from the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a certificate in Reconciliation Leadership through the Institute for Global Leadership.



Mrs. Sally (Salwa) Kader is President and Founder of the US Federation for Middle East Peace (USFMEP), which promotes the United Nations Principles and advocates peace, harmony, reconciliation and nonviolence. She has participated in interfaith dialogues with Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist leaders. She hosted and lectured at the UN headquarters to an unprecedented delegation of 30 Rabbis and Imams from 11 European countries; the first ever program of its kind at the UN. Mrs. Kader has led and participated in programs for leadership, peace, and cross-cultural understanding among the Youth. These have included the Sports for Peace Walk and the international Youth Sports Program, which brought young Muslims and Christian children together to foster a culture of peace. Mrs. Kader is an Ambassador for Children in Slavery, has extended her fight for children's rights to the Internet by working with the Virtual Global Task Force. She has worked with orphanages and youth centers in countries like Egypt and Morocco and Kenya. Mrs. Kader regularly featured by News media. She has received numerous awards from governments and organizations around the world, the Empowerment of Women Award, and the Youth Empowerment Award. In September of 2010, she received the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Award.

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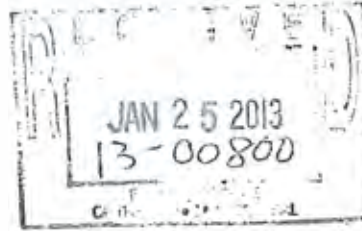
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19 January 2013

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His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
United Nations Headquarters New York
760 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Excellency Ban Ki-Moon,

3-06733 On behalf of the Peace Islands Institute, I have the pleasure to extend this invitation to you to address the symposium, titled "*The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Peacebuilding and Women Empowerment*", which we will hold in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations on the occasion of the Interfaith Harmony Week on 12 February 2013 from 3pm to 6pm at the CR-1 (NLB). ✓

The symposium aims to increase the awareness on the necessity of empowering women throughout the world, and across all nations, by providing them with educational opportunities. We believe that doing so is the key to maximizing women's potential, and enabling their contribution to their nations' socioeconomic, political and cultural development. In this vein, the symposium also aims to contribute towards the implementation of the MDG #3 "Promoting Gender Equality and Empowering Women".

As a non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting unity, education, welfare, and progress worldwide, Peace Islands Institute aims to develop original and alternative perspectives on the global and social phenomena, present explanations and solutions, and support successful practices in order to achieve world peace by creating the realms of peaceful coexistence, or "peace islands". As such, we strive to stimulate a new ways of thinking to benefit from interfaith dialogue in both peacebuilding and women empowerment.

While we totally understand how precious your time is, we would highly appreciate it, if you could kindly honor this important symposium with your participation, or designate a representative on your behalf.

Sincerely,

Mehmet Kilic

Mehmet Kilic
Director of the Center for Global Affairs
Peace Islands Institute
Contact: mkilic@peaceislands.org
Mobile: (646) 853-5133

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